Consideration of National Culture in B2B Supply Chains:
What national cultural factors are considered in supply chain management by companies in practice and what are their relations?

Author: Romy Brand
Examiner: Dr Susanne Sandberg
Supervisor: Dr Tomas Nilsson
Term: VT 19
Subject: Degree Project on the International Sales and Marketing Program
Course code: 2FE22E
Submission: 31 May 2019
Abstract

Anderson, et al. (1994) have outlined the importance of bilateral relationships in business-to-business (B2B) marketing environments and thus the understanding of the business network context within which they are embedded. Through the globalization, this understanding has even gained in importance due to the increased challenges arising from working across cultural and national borders. However, culture in supply chain management (SCM) is an under-researched area so far. This thesis has as a purpose to investigate the research question “What national cultural factors are considered in supply chain management by companies in practice and what are their relations?”.

Furthermore, it was aimed at comparing the downstream (client) SCM side to the upstream (supplier) side.

This thesis applied a quantitative approach in combination with a cross-sectional research design. An online survey was conducted using as a sample the 195-member companies of Ljungby Business Arena. In addition, responses were also collected through the snowball method.

Based on the analysis of the survey results the following main findings were revealed:

- Not all national cultural factors mentioned in theory are considered in SCM by enterprises in practice. Language skills was in up- and downstream the most considered factor.
- The national cultural factors among themselves are correlated in different directions and at varying degrees of strength.
- Cultural distance only yielded positive correlations to the national cultural factors in the downstream side but not in the upstream side.
- Differences between up- and downstream SCM with regard to the consideration of national cultural factors exist; the downstream side considers (seen over all factors) culture more.

The main theoretical implications are that also material dimensions of culture should be considered in theory and that due to the differences in up- and downstream SCM maybe different models for each side should be developed. For companies, the findings have shown that employees do not consider all factors of national culture and that they are rather free in their decisions on how to interact with foreign clients respectively suppliers. Thus, enterprises should train and sensitize their employees more to help them adapt to the different national cultural factors during their interactions. Moreover, companies might think about introducing more guidelines, which, however, still leave space for adaptation towards the individual clients and suppliers.
Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank at this point several persons who have helped or supported the present thesis to become what it is now. First of all, the author wishes to honour Dr Susanne Sandberg, Dr Tatiana Anisimova and Dr Tomas Nilsson who have given precious advice and guidance throughout the working process in the roles of the examiners respectively the tutor. Secondly, the author would like to acknowledge the support of Ms Birgitta Kristoffersson, Project Leader of Ljungby Business Arena, who agreed on forwarding the online survey to their member companies and thus devoted of her precious time for the survey and hence this thesis. In this connection, a big thank you also to Ms Ulla-Margarethe Carlsson who helped to establish the contact to Ms Kristoffersson. Furthermore, the author would also like to thank Mr Sven Kallin who provided precious inputs in the analysis of why people did not reply very numerous at first to the survey. Thanks, are moreover addressed to Ms Ellinor Karlsson, Ms Mikaela Berglund and Ms Petra Eklund who reviewed the questionnaires for the online surveys. A special thank you also to Ms Mariangeles del Valle Bravo Guerrera, who also reviewed the questionnaire and further helped with the broader distribution of it. Lastly, a thank you also to everyone who forwarded and/or took part in the survey.
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction
   1.1 Background and Problem Discussion
   1.2 Purpose
   1.3 Research Question
   1.4 Delimitations
   1.5 Outline of the Thesis

2. Literature Review
   2.1 Conceptualization of Supply Chain
   2.2 Conceptualization of Culture
   2.3 State of Culture in Supply Chain

3. Research Questions and Hypotheses
   3.1 Hypotheses Development
   3.2 Operationalization

4. Methodology
   4.1 Research Purpose
   4.2 Research Approach
   4.3 Data Collection Method
   4.4 Sample Selection
   4.5 Data Analysis
   4.6 Quality Criteria
   4.7 Research Ethics Considerations

5. Data Analysis
   5.1 Data Description
   5.2 Results
   5.3 Discussion

6. Conclusions and Implications
   6.1 Conclusion
   6.2 Theoretical and Managerial Implications
   6.3 Limitations
   6.4 Suggestions for Future Research
   6.5 Social and/or Sustainability Aspects of this Degree Project

7. References

8. Appendix
8.1 Email invitation to survey _____________________________________________________________________ 65
8.2 Survey questionnaires ______________________________________________________________________ 67
8.3 Reminder Email _____________________________________________________________________________ 87
8.4 Survey forms from the reminder ______________________________________________________________________ 88
8.5 Details on Cronbach’s Alpha ____________________________________________________________________________ 100

List of Tables

Table 1: Overview of analysed articles according to researched SC area __ 17
Table 2: Definition/Understanding of culture in the articles ____________ 18
Table 3: Downstream survey national cultural factors mean, median, mode 44
Table 4: Upstream survey national cultural factors mean, median, mode __ 44
Table 5: Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient matrix of downstream national cultural factors ____________ 45
Table 6: Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient matrix of upstream national cultural factors ____________ 46
Table 7: Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient matrix of national cultural factors and variables for downstream survey _________________ 47
Table 8: Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient matrix of national cultural factors and variables for upstream survey________________ 47
Table 9: Spearman’s rho correlation coefficients between national cultural factors and employee experience of downstream survey respondents with leeway of 4 or 5 ____________________________________________________________________________________________ 48
Table 10: Spearman’s rho correlation coefficients between national cultural factors and employee experience of upstream survey respondents with leeway of 4 or 5 ____________________________________________________________________________________________ 48
Table 11: Comparison between down- and upstream national cultural factors mean, median and mode (downstream results - upstream)___________ 49

List of Figures

Figure 1: Conceptual model ______________________________________________________________________ 27
Figure 2: Final Pie of Clusters by Ronen and Shenkar (2013, p. 884) with values (0-5) assigned by the author ______________________________________________________________________ 38
1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Problem Discussion

In business-to-business (B2B) marketing environments, bilateral relationships are of utmost importance and in order to achieve a better understanding of them, the business network context within which they are embedded needs to be considered carefully (Anderson, et al., 1994). Håkansson and Snehota (1995, p. 11) even took it further and stated that “Market performance of a company is dependent on the functioning of its relationships to others; [...]”, which clearly marks its importance. Moreover, Cadden, et al. (2015) saw a trend that enterprises start viewing the buyer-supplier relationship as decisively crucial for achieving and maintaining on the long-term competitive advantage as supplier rationalisation further impacts the relationship nature. Håkansson and Snehota (1995) also outlined in their work that especially in international contexts a network approach can be fruitful since it is advantageous for analysing extensive relationships.

In today’s world, millions of goods and services are created, delivered and consumed or used every day. However, due to the globalization, only a small number of all those goods and services produced in one place are also consumed in that very place; the larger part of it has to travel at times around the globe and through many intermediaries in order to get to its end-consumers. This globalization of the so-called supply chain (SC) has led to an increased number of challenges. This, in turn, resulted in firms having to reconsider the coordination of the flow of materials in order to make it more efficient; the pivotal element to achieve this coordination, according to Mentzer, et al. (2001, p. 2), is “[…] an orientation toward closer relationships with suppliers.” since also greater flexibility in SC relationships is demanded to encounter marketplace uncertainties successfully. However, since the SCs have become so globalized it also means that this coordination will have to be across borders and cultures; cultural differences might hence occur and clashes may be a result of those and make this coordination even more challenging (Wong, et al., 2017) and if not managed well costly (Nes, et al., 2007). Those cultural problems are also encountered in the downstream SC; clients act and negotiate differently (Lin & Miller, 2003) and
hence different measures need to be taken in order to successfully win the clients. The focus of this thesis is to analyse how national culture has been addressed in supply chain management (SCM) research and what national cultural factors are considered in practice by enterprises i.e. their employees in a business-to-business (B2B) context. Moreover, the relationships between these different national cultural factors as well as the national cultural factors and variables connected to the companies and the employees directly interacting with foreign clients respectively suppliers will be explored.

In today’s literature, culture is being analysed in various research fields through different methods; researchers have diverging understandings of culture and set different focuses (Baskerville, 2003). Moreover, they also use different definitions of culture and supply chain (-management); this adds in complexity since the inconsistency hampers comparability among different studies and a clear picture. Kumar, et al. (2016, p. 589) noted that often in SC collaboration literature “[…] culture is either ignored or viewed as an element reflecting trust, commitment and loyalty. However, these elements are a consequence of culture.” and hence there is the necessity to further research this topic. Also, Lee, et al. (2018, p. 60) argued that the “adoption of a cultural lens” to look at SC exchanges in order to understand the “how and why cultures matters” are a burgeoning area in research. Studies also have emphasised that “[…] cultural understanding and adaptation is important in cross-national relationships (Francis, 1991; LaBahn and Harich, 1997).” (Freeman & Browne, 2004, p.180). This is the standpoint of culture in SC research, but how does it look in practice? Do enterprises consider national culture in B2B supply chains? If yes, what cultural factors and what variables influence the degree at which they consider them? In the existing literature on national culture in supply chain the focus so far was put on if and what cultural dimensions impact the actions of companies and managers (e.g. Lee Park & Paiva, 2018; Durach & Wiengarten, 2017) and for some experiments business university students (e.g. in Lee, et al., 2018; Eckerd, et al., 2016) were used hence even not knowing the realities in companies. Only in the literature on negotiations, studies could be found, which specifically looked at how cultural dimensions were
used and played out or not in practice (e.g. Lin & Miller, 2003; Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2016). Hence, how findings from national cultural studies in supply chain are applied in practice by enterprises is under-researched.

1.2 Purpose
The aim of this thesis is to first of all gain an overview of the topic of culture in SCM and to conceptualize supply chain (management) and culture as it is understood in theory in the literature. Secondly, it is aimed at uncovering what national cultural factors companies consider in their supply chains in a B2B context in practice. Moreover, this thesis wants to contribute to identifying relationships among the different national cultural factors as well as between the national cultural factors and variables that might impact the degree at which companies consider national culture in B2B SCM. Finally, it will be investigated if there are differences in up- and downstream SCM concerning the consideration of national cultural factors. This paper has also generally the ambition to contribute to the extension of the literature on national culture in B2B SCM as well as to analyse more what the current state in practice is rather than solely focussing on the state in the research literature and to compare theory and practice.

1.3 Research Question
The guiding overall research question of this study is “What national cultural factors are considered in supply chain management by companies in practice and what are their relations?”. More specifically the following concrete research questions are addressed:

1. Do companies consider national culture in their supply chain in practice?
2. If yes, what national cultural factors are considered?
3. Are the national cultural factors correlated among one another?
4. Are there variables that correlate with a certain national cultural factor?
1.4 Delimitations

The present study's main focus is set on national culture hence not having taken into account other levels of culture as it had been too broad for the scope of this thesis. This study further focuses on capturing the current state of the consideration of national cultural factors in B2B SCM. Thus, it does not investigate the "why" companies consider them or not since this would require a more in-depth analysis and is thus in conflict with the aim of gaining a broader picture of the current state in practice. Due to the limitations of resources, time and access a thorough random sample could not be applied for the survey delivering the empirical data and thus only a limited sample with regard to randomness, number of respondents and geographic area (mainly Ljungby commune) is represented in the present study's sample. However, it was decided to study companies from different industries and sizes; the focus was thus not put on any specific industry nor company size.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

This paper, first of all, presents a literature review in order to conceptualize the different fields of interest of this study and analyse in how far they already have been brought together. As next, the research questions and hypotheses development as well as the methodology will be presented. Thereafter the results of the conducted survey will be provided and discussed. In the final conclusions and implications chapter, a conclusion of this thesis will be presented followed by the theoretical and managerial implications. Lastly, the limitations of this study, suggestions for future research as well as the social and/or sustainability aspects of this degree project will be provided.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualization of Supply Chain

The terms supply chain and supply chain management are today omnipresent in the business world. The term supply chain management started becoming popular in the late 80s (Ivanov, et al., 2012; Mentzer, et al., 2001). There are different reasons why the concept of supply chain became so well-known but one of them is certainly globalization as this phenomenon compelled enterprises to find new approaches for the coordination of their material flows which led them to closer relationships and cooperation with different supply chain partners (Mentzer, et al., 2001).

A supply chain can be defined as “[…] a set of three or more entities (organizations or individuals) directly involved in the upstream and downstream flows of products, services, finances, and/or information from a source to a customer.” (Mentzer, et al., 2001, p. 4) and thus implies according to them that supply chains exist in any case; if they are being managed and taken care of or not doesn’t impact their existence. Furthermore, Mentzer, et al. (2001, p. 4) distinguish between three different degrees of supply chain complexity (1. direct supply chain, 2. extended supply chain and 3. ultimate supply chain) depending on the number of subsequent or previous SC partners involved. For the purpose of this paper, however, there will be no distinction made with regard to the levels of complexity of the supply chain.

On the other hand, the definition of supply chain management (SCM) becomes more complex; numerous different definitions exist thus leading to uncertainty and discussion as to its precise meaning (Gibson, et al., 2005). Mentzer, et al. (2001, p. 5) evaluated that the definitions of SCM from different authors can be categorized into three groups; “1. management philosophy, 2. implementation of a management philosophy and 3. SCM as a set of management process”. Simchi-Levi, et al., (2008, p. 1) defined SCM as

“[… ] a set of approaches utilized to efficiently integrate suppliers, manufacturers, warehouses, and stores, so that merchandise is produced and distributed at the right quantities, to the right locations, and at the right time, in order to minimize systemwide costs while satisfying service level requirements.”
hence adopting the viewpoint of group two (implementation of a management philosophy). Lambert and Enz (2017, p. 2) on the other hand followed a definition rather adhering to group three:

“Supply chain management is the management of relationships in the network of organizations, from end customers through original suppliers, using key cross-functional business processes to create value for customers and other stakeholders.”

Mentzer, et al. (2001, p. 18) developed based on their analysis the following comprehensive definition:

“Supply chain management is defined as the systemic, strategic coordination of the traditional business functions and the tactics across these business functions within a particular company and across businesses within the supply chain, for the purposes of improving the long-term performance of the individual companies and the supply chain as a whole.”

Furthermore, they concluded that in fact group one (SCM as management philosophy) rather describes the philosophy enterprises should adopt in order to have a so-called supply chain orientation (SCO), whereas “[...] the sum total of all the overt management actions undertaken to realize that philosophy.” (Mentzer, et al., 2001, p. 11) is SCM. Moreover, antecedents which influence a company’s SCO are the willingness to address the following topics: trust, commitment, interdependence, organizational compatibility, vision, key processes, leader and top management support (Mentzer, et al., 2001, p.12; Guimares, et al., 2002 cited in Lee, et al., 2010, p. 658). These all, however, are also influenced by culture.

al. (2001) a series of partnerships is key for an effective SCM, which implies the necessity of supply chain partners to pursue long-term relationships.

2.2 Conceptualization of Culture

What is meant with culture and what does it include? There exists a myriad of definitions of the word “culture” of researchers from the anthropological, psychological, or the management field and many more. Some also use other terms instead of “culture” depending on their research field such as “value orientations” or “world outlook” but no interdisciplinary commonly accepted definition as such exists (Taras, et al., 2009). Despite this fact, Taras, et al. (2009) have evaluated in their study that there are some elements which are present in essentially every single definition. Those elements are (Taras, et al., 2009, p. 358):

1. Culture is a complex multi-level construct.
2. It is often depicted using an “onion” diagram with basic assumptions and values representing the core of culture, and practices, symbols, and artefacts representing the outer layers of the construct.
3. It is shared among individuals belonging to a group or society.
4. It is formed over a relatively long period.
5. Culture is relatively stable.

Today, reams of instruments and models exist which are supposed to measure culture in order to gain insights. However, also here hasn’t been an agreement regarding the values and aspects which comprise culture despite the fact that some models have overlapping dimensions (Taras, et al., 2009). Some of these dimensions have, however, been interpreted in various ways and thus imprecision in the terminology across the different research papers exists (Bülow & Kumar, 2011). Nevertheless, Taras, et al. (2009, p. 366) have found that “Usually, models of culture differentiate between individual, organizational and national levels of culture.”. National culture is being defined as “[…] a set of shared values among people within a specific nation that distinguishes them from other nationalities.” (Hofstede, 1980 and Kirkman, et al., 2017 cited in Boscari, et al., 2018, p. 6314). The exact role of organizational culture
in culture, however, is not exclusively terminated; some regard organizational culture as one level of culture (Taras, et al., 2009) whereas others state that organizational culture is being influenced by national culture (Lee Park & Paiva, 2018). Also, Boscari, et al. (2018) argued in their paper that while national and organizational cultures are distinct phenomena, the likelihood for an important interplay between the two is high. Naor, et al. (2010 cited in Boscari, et al., 2018, p. 6317) found for instance that organizational culture diminished the effect of national culture on strategy. Due to this ambiguity and following the above general definition of culture, the organizational and the national level of culture are both looked at for the purpose of this literature review in order to capture more holistically the understanding of culture in SC since it is suspected that the definitions are not clear cut enough and thus researches done on the subject might have mixed them or used in diverse ways. The focus of this thesis is, however, national culture, which is why the survey concentrates solely on national culture.

The focal point of most research studies has been devoted to cultural values to the detriment of other crucial cultural layers, which have hardly been taken into consideration (Taras, et al., 2009). Taras, et al. (2009, p. 359) argue that

“[…]. the strength of the relationship between different layers of culture is still unclear and thus neglecting other aspects of culture, such as basic assumptions, communication styles, cultural looseness–tightness, as well as artifactual elements of culture, limits applicability of results of cross-cultural studies.”

and hence advocate for the inclusion of other cultural layers besides the cultural values layer. However, Taras, et al. (2016) reasoned that the core values and beliefs influence the organizational behaviours and attitudes as well as the work-related outcomes decisively more substantial than the other layers of culture.

Measuring culture, however, only reached its breakthrough in popularity with the publication of “Culture's Consequences” in 1980 written by Geert Hofstede (Taras, et al., 2009). At the same time, this was the starting point of a long discussion since Hofstede set culture equal to country borders. Baskerville (2003), Taras, et al. (2009)
as well as Taras, et al. (2016) and other scholars criticized this and also proved it as being inappropriate since cultures are not homogenous within countries. Taras, et al. (2016, p. 460) specified that setting country and culture equal is only suitable if two conditions are met: "(1) within-country variance must be small; and (2) between-country variance must be large". Despite the early criticism, Hofstede’s work is widely used in business-related research (Boscari, et al., 2018) as well as the field of psychology (Baskerville, 2003) and the vast majority of cross-cultural studies are using nationality or citizenship as definition of belongingness to culture (Taras, et al., 2009). However, Minkov (2018) in his study tested the coherence and utility of Hofstede’s model and discovered severe deficiencies and limitations of the model. In 2016, Taras, et al. suggested in their study that demographic and environment characteristics seem to be more accurate than country/nationality when measuring cultural values.

Another issue can be found in the etic – emic discussion; “[…] the etic approach assumes that there is a set of universal cultural dimensions that are equally relevant to all cultures.” whereas the emic approach is advocating that “[…] at least some cultural dimensions are culture-specific and cannot be used to analyse cultures of different societies.” (Taras, et al., 2009, p. 361). Today, most studies are only etic (Taras, et al., 2009). Furthermore, Taras, et al. (2016) have detected that most of the time in studies for the assessment of cultural values, self-response questionnaires have been used in order to collect data, which inherits important limitations.

Baskerville (2003, p. 11) concludes in her paper that “The variable ‘culture’ remains just that: variable and dynamic, qualitative not quantitative.”. This statement illustrates the high complexity connected to measuring and quantifying culture.

Despite this, cultural differences have received considerable attention in business literature (Baskerville, 2003); communication is especially frequently mentioned in business research since communication is a crucial element for successful collaboration among enterprises (Dowty & Wallace, 2010; Nes, et al., 2007) and thus relationships in B2B marketing. Nes, et al. (2007) specified that communication takes in an
extended and different role in international relationships than in domestic ones. Hence the style (e.g. authoritarian vs amenable) in which is being communicated and the way (e.g. more phone calls and personal contact than only written in emails) are highly important in cross-cultural communication since they are influenced by national culture and hence differ (Ali-Lawson & Koncilja, 2017; Freeman & Browne, 2004; Nes, et al., 2007). Communication reflects the effect of several different beliefs and values such as for instance high context - low context from the cultural model by Hall, neutral - affective by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner or Masculinity and Individualism by Hofstede (Ali-Lawson & Koncilja, 2017). Nes, et al. (2007, p. 420) stated that “By proactively managing its communications, a firm can develop stronger international business relationships.”, thus clearly pinpointing the paramount importance of communication in international settings.

2.3 State of Culture in Supply Chain

Through the globalization, supply chains have become very international and hence collaboration and relationships in B2B marketing across borders and cultures have increased drastically. Collaboration across different cultures, however, causes challenges and if not tackling those challenges successfully, enterprises run the risk of suffering from decreasing performance and a deterioration of the relationship (Nes, et al., 2007; Dowty & Wallace, 2010; Wong, et al., 2017), which is thus devastating for marketing in B2B.

Culture in a B2B context has been addressed in the analysed supply chain research papers in combination with SC performance, integration, disruptions, strategy, collaboration and contracts between SC partners (see Table 1). Especially for the downstream SC of interest is the vast amount of research in the field of negotiations; “The influence of national culture on the functioning of cross-national buyer-seller interactions has received considerable attention in the international business literature (Varner, 2000; Kale and Barnes, 1992).” (Freeman & Browne, 2004, p.169). Only a few articles with particular focus on national culture were included in the present analysis since the aim was to achieve a balanced picture of the role of culture in the whole
supply chain research without particular emphasis on one area only because there is more literature available.

**Table 1:** Overview of analysed articles according to researched SC area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas where culture has been addressed in SC research</th>
<th>Authors and year of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC performance</td>
<td>• Mello &amp; Stank (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cadden, Marshall &amp; Cao (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Han, Huang &amp; Macbeth (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC integration</td>
<td>• Cao, Huo, Li &amp; Zhao (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wong, Sancha &amp; Gimenez Thomsen (2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC disruptions</td>
<td>• Dowty &amp; Wallace (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Durach &amp; Wiengarten (2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC strategy</td>
<td>• McAfee, Glassman &amp; Honeycutt, Jr. (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lee Park &amp; Paiva (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Boscari, Bortolotti, Netland &amp; Rich (2018)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC collaboration</td>
<td>• Kattman (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Kumar, Nath Banerjee, Lal Meena &amp; Ganguly (2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Zhang &amp; Cao (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nes, Solberg &amp; Silkoset (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Boscari, Bortolotti, Netland &amp; Rich (2018)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts between SC partners</td>
<td>• Eckerd, Boyer, Qi, Eckerd &amp; Hill (2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lee, Ribbink &amp; Eckerd (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiations</td>
<td>• Lin &amp; Miller (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Freeman &amp; Browne (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Saorín-Iborra &amp; Cubillo (2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Chaisrakeo &amp; Speece (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bülow &amp; Kumar (2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*article addresses both areas

The definition and understanding of culture among the different research papers varies greatly (see Table 2); some papers refer to “culture” but in fact only talk about organizational culture (which is according to Taras et al. (2009) only one level of culture), others purely talk about organizational/firm culture but don’t mention any other level of culture, even others make the distinction between organizational culture and national culture and state that the later influences the first but then mainly focus
more on one or the other in their paper and the last group of papers focuses purely on national culture.

Table 2: Definition/Understanding of culture in the articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture Category</th>
<th>Authors and year of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk about culture but in fact, it is only organizational culture</td>
<td>McAfee, et al. (2002); Zhang &amp; Cao (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk purely about organizational culture (no mentioning of other cultural layers)</td>
<td>Mello &amp; Stank (2005); Dowty &amp; Wallace (2010); Cadden, et al. (2013); Cao, et al. (2015); Kumar, et al. (2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction between national and organizational culture</td>
<td>Chaisrakeo &amp; Speece, (2004); Bülow &amp; Kumar (2011); Kattman (2014); Saorín-Iborra &amp; Cubillo (2016); Wong, et al. (2017); Durach &amp; Wiengarten (2017); Lee Park &amp; Paiva (2018); Han, et al. (2018)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the analysed studies a pattern could be observed; in SC research (other than in the negotiations area) conducted before 2014 culture has been addressed mainly through the layer of organizational culture and only rarely directly as in Nes, et al. (2007). Only after that, researchers in the SC field have started taking national culture more into consideration and few have devoted whole studies focusing on the influence of national culture on certain supply chain aspects. As pinpointed before, the negotiations area is more distinct from the other areas of culture in SC; very early on studies have focussed on the national culture level and some studies on the national culture and the organizational level (e.g. Chaisrakeo & Speece, 2004).

This shows how ambiguously the term culture is used in SC research and how little attention it has been given so far (except in the negotiations area) compared to other
issues (e.g. digitization in SC). This can be seen further at the example of levels of culture; Taras, et al. (2009) summarised that most models of culture would distinguish between individual, organizational and national levels. This is in line with the levels cited in Kumar, et al.’s (2016) work but not with Durach and Wiengarten (2017); they refer to national, organizational and group levels.

Furthermore, all studies which have considered national culture or made a distinction between national culture and organizational culture use Hofstede’s theory to at least some extent with the only exception of Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004), who are from the negotiations area. Here again, a difference between the negotiations area and the rest could be observed; in the first, researchers make reference to far more diversified cultural models such as the ones by Hall, Schwartz and Kluckhohn; Hofstede is, however, also used and also here some studies took his dimensions up.

From the analysed studies focusing on national culture, all use Hofstede dimensions; only Eckerd, et al. (2016) use a laboratory experiment without using a Hofstede tool or dimension for its analysis. However, they do refer to him in the theory part. This points out clearly the importance and predominance of Hofstede in the SC and culture context and hence is in line with the findings of Baskerville (2003), Taras, et al. (2009) and Beugelsdijk, et al. (2017 cited in Boscari et al., 2018, p. 6317) who all stated the obvious influence of Hofstede’s theory on the management literature. It was interesting to see though, that not all researches use the same dimensions of Hofstede’s model. Taras, et al. (2009) though stated that depending on the research question different cultural dimensions should be chosen due to their relevance and these studies all investigated different research questions. However, the interplay between the different dimensions should not be neglected.

On the other hand, Dowty and Wallace (2010) actively argued against the use of Hofstede’s dimensions, since some elements of organizational culture could be placed in several dimensions, which would lead to ambiguous results. Instead, they used the cultural typology of social anthropologist Mary Douglas for their analysis of organizational culture. Also, Cao, et al. (2015) use a different approach; they use the com-
peting value framework to represent organizational culture and set this in relation to SC integration.

Further problematics connected to Hofstede’s theory are that he equalizes culture with country and is hence averaging with his method the different cultures existing in one country (Baskerville, 2003). Despite the fact that culture on a national level has been proven to be a poor proxy (Baskerville, 2003; Taras, et. al, 2016), the majority of researches on culture in SC fall into this trap; only a few mention in their limitations that further studies could investigate the findings on an individual level rather than national hence admitting that different results might be found when not averaging it onto a national level. Also, Minkov (2018) found in his revision of Hofstede’s model that some dimensions were not independent and the whole model had severe shortcomings. However, Varner (2000 cited in Freeman & Browne, 2004, p.174) argued that “[…] without using some generalisations, meaningful cross-cultural business communication would become even more difficult than it is already.”, thus defending the national level approach. Also, Boscari, et al. (2018, p.6328) recommend not to abandon the national unit of analysis but instead to “[…] integrate measures of intra-cultural diversity into future research.” in order to have a more complete picture.

Another recurring concept in the analysed studies is the one of a so-called “collaborative culture” in which communication is an important factor as a mean of information sharing and planning; Wong, et al. (2017), Zhang and Cao (2018) as well as Kumar, et al. (2016) extensively researched on its influence and antecedents. Also, Han, et al. (2018) mentioned that collaborative supplier criteria are being regarded as crucial for relationship strategy as well as operational measurement criteria. Furthermore, Mello and Stank (2005) talked about the supply chain orientation introduced by Mentzer, et al. (2001), which can be linked to collaborative culture.

Cadden, et al. (2013) found evidence in their research that it is rather complementarity between SC partners than congruence that leads to more successful SC perfor-
formance. This thought of complementarity was also argued for based on other researches in Han, et al.’s (2018) study. This is, however, clearly in contradiction with McAfee, et al. (2002), Mello and Stank (2005) as well as Zhang and Cao (2018) who advocate for cultural fit and similarities for more successful SC performance. Hence further research into this area is needed in order to get clarification.

Most of the analysed studies researched only a focal firm; solely Nest, et al. (2007), Dowty and Wallace (2010), Kattman (2014), Saorín-Iborra and Cubillo (2016) and Han, et al. (2018) included two layers (supplier and focal firm) and Cadden, et al. (2013) included three layers in their study. However, all of those three layers were UK based and hence not international cross-cultural but only across organizational cultures.

Moreover, all of the analysed studies focus on the core values and beliefs layer of culture; no other layer of culture has been addressed in SC research so far. It is also found in this review that all the studies used an etic approach hence entirely neglecting the emic way and thus culture-specific characteristics (Taras, et al., 2009). As Taras, et al. (2009) have concluded 10 years ago in a review of cultural instruments, the analysed researches in this paper still also mainly use surveys, which are thus self-reported and subjective. Moreover, Taras, et al. (2009, p. 366) also pinpointed that “Some studies have suggested that survey response style is determined by culture, that is extreme responses are favoured in some cultures, while people from other cultures persistently tend to choose middle points on the scales.”, this constitutes another limitation to the comparability of self-response questionnaires across cultures. Another finding in common is that none of the cultural measure studies uses mode or median; all focus on the average, which implies marked limitations. Taras, et al. (2009) also pointed out that it’s not solely a linguistic challenge when translating surveys but also to keep item equivalence across languages. Each analysed study who used questionnaires and had to translate them stated to have double checked the translations through back-translations from other persons; this, however, does not ensure the item equivalence and hence makes the comparability doubtable.
3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

LaBahn and Harich (1997 cited in Freeman & Browne, 2004, p. 174) suggested that culture encompasses “[...] subjective dimensions (beliefs, attitudes, and values), interactive dimensions (verbal and non-verbal communication) and material dimensions (artefacts).”, these three dimensions were addressed in different ways in the analysed research papers. However, based on the literature review four recurring factors have been found which seem to be the most important ones within the B2B marketing supply chain context and also belong to two out of the three different dimensions mentioned before. Those four factors are commitment, trust, choice of negotiation strategy and communication, which consists of four aspects in this study.


The choice of negotiation strategy is connected to the basic assumptions, beliefs and values; Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004, p. 267) stated that “[...] behavior in negotiation is fairly consistent within cultures, and each culture has its own distinctive negotiation style (Simintiras & Thomas, 1998).”, this thus implies that if not one party adapts, two different strategies might clash together, making the negotiation process hampered, negotiation parties to be dissatisfied, lose trust or else adversely affecting the relationship; in a worst-case collaboration might even be terminated or a deal not reached (Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2016). However, Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004) also added that patterns and styles of negotiations within cultures might vary also depending on the national culture (more homogenous vs more heterogeneous cultures) and the level of influence of the company culture. In their study, participants though stated that they believed “[...] quite strongly that national culture influences...
their bargaining strategies, especially their psychological patterns […]” (Chaisrakeo & Speece, 2004, p. 274), which hence supports the importance of national culture.

Communication is often mentioned in the literature and four aspects of it could be found. Language skills are a crucial point in cross-cultural interactions; being able to speak a language that the two parties in a business relationship have in common is a prerequisite for communication, which is also of utmost importance in negotiations (Chaisrakeo & Speece, 2004). Among other researchers also Nes, et al. (2007) have stated that national cultural differences result in difficulties in communication. One such difficulty might also arise from expressions and idioms used by one person since they do not make sense or have a different meaning from the other persons’ cultural point of view; thus, the actual language content seen from a cultural perspective is an element too. Moreover, Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004) mention the ability of a sales representative to deal with different communication styles as an important quality. The way and the style of communication are thus as already touched upon in the chapter conceptualization of culture relevant cultural factors too.

Additionally, two more factors have been added which were not directly addressed in the analysed studies but can be classified in the material dimension of LaBahn and Harich (1997 cited in Freeman & Browne, 2004, p. 174); dress code adjustments and food habit adjustments during business lunches and dinners. These two factors were also added in order to respond to criticism of Taras, et al. (2009) who stated that artefactual elements of culture are mostly neglected in studies and that researchers only focussed on values and beliefs. Another reason why it was decided to include these two factors is that they actually seem to be very pertinent in a business context since in some cultures not dressing appropriately or eating for instance meat when being with a vegetarian Indian customer would be regarded as extremely rude and thus have a negative impact on the relationship building process and the sympathy between the two parties. This, in turn, would ultimately result in negatively affecting the relationship which is so important in B2B marketing.
Based on the foregoing conducted literature review and the discussed research gap, the following guiding research questions have been developed and will be answered in this thesis for the up- and downstream side of the SCM:

**RQ1:** Do companies consider national culture in their supply chain in practice?

**RQ2:** If yes, what national cultural factors are considered?

**RQ3:** Are the national cultural factors correlated among one another?

**RQ4:** Are there variables that correlate with a certain national cultural factor?

In addition, four specific hypotheses will be tested which were developed based on the existing literature.

### 3.1 Hypotheses Development

Based on the learning curve theory (Linton & Walsh, 2013) it is expected that the longer employees have worked with clients and suppliers from outside of Sweden, the more differences due to national culture they will have encountered during this time and thus the more experience they have gained and seen the need to consider them in order to maintain successful business relationships. Also, Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004) have found that the experience gained over the years influences the behaviour and approaches taken by sales representatives. Furthermore, Misra, et al. (2004) mentioned that the knowledge of a salesforce on customers can often only be acquired through experience, thus adding onto this time argument. Moreover, the longer they engage with suppliers or clients, the higher is the probability that they are more committed to the relationship and thus depart from a sole economic interest and add a social context layer (Zhao, et al., 2008). This social context layer comes along with trust (Zhao, et al., 2008), which is a concept influenced by national culture (Griffith, et al., 2006). Hence the more they should be inclined to consider national cultural factors. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

**H1a:** The longer the employee has worked with foreign clients, the more she/he considers national cultural factors if she/he has the leeway to do so.

**H1b:** The longer the employee has worked with foreign suppliers, the more she/he considers national cultural factors if she/he has the leeway to do so.
Grinyer and Yasai-Ardekani (1981, p. 484) in their study stated that “The strategy, structure, bureaucracy nexus is clearly size dependent.” thus bigger companies would have more complex, bureaucratic, organizational structures in order to respond to challenges of coordination and control. Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004) describe bureaucratic company cultures as tending to be rule-intensive and that close control, monitoring and rules would usually prevail. Respondents in their study reported that these rules and regulations of organizations inhibited them in their actions and that they consequently were “[…] somewhat less able to adapt to customers.” (Chaisrakeo & Speece, 2004, p. 275). Hence it is hypothesised that:

**H2a:** The bigger a company is (in terms of the number of employees), the less the individual employee in contact with that foreign client can adapt to the national cultural factors.

**H2b:** The bigger a company is (in terms of the number of employees), the less the individual employee in contact with that foreign supplier can adapt to the national cultural factors.

Differences among national cultures can be measured in terms of the so-called cultural distance, which is “the extent to which cultures are similar or different” (Shenkar 2001, p. 519 cited in Boscari, et al., 2018, p. 6317). Nes, et al. (2007) have found among other results that national cultural distance has a significant impact on trust and commitment; the further culturally distant the more negatively it affects trust and commitment. Moreover, they found that “[…] the degree of commitment toward the foreign distributor or agent is directly related to the financial performance in that market.” (Nes, et al., 2007, p. 405) thus proving the tangible relevance in the sense of monetary consequence for the companies. Due to the managerial implications of the numerous studies which indicate the importance of considering national culture, companies should be adapting the national cultural factors more the further culturally distant the company is from its client respectively supplier. Thus, it is hypothesised that:
**H3a:** The further culturally distant the client is from the Swedish company, the more the employee of the company (disregarding the degree of leeway of the individual employee) adapts the national cultural factors.

**H3b:** The further culturally distant the supplier is from the Swedish company, the more the employee of the company (disregarding the degree of leeway of the individual employee) adapts the national cultural factors.

It is further assumed that national cultural factors will be more considered in the downstream part of the SC since sales are the main revenue for companies and determine the market share. Furthermore, it is in negotiations, which is typically associated with selling, where research has done investigations in practice (e.g. Lin & Miller, 2003; Saorín-Iborra & Cubillo, 2016) and which solicited big interest. Based on this reasoning it is hypothesised that:

**H4:** National cultural factors are more considered in downstream SCM by the employee of the company (disregarding the degree of leeway of the individual employee) than in upstream SCM.

The conceptual model for this thesis is depicted in Figure 1. Besides the variables company size, cultural distance and experience with foreign clients/suppliers of the employee discussed before, the variables gender, age and knowledge of the employee of the client's/supplier's national culture are added for exploratory purposes.

As discussed beforehand it is expected that the bigger a company is, the less leeway an employee has to adapt cultural factors to its customers/suppliers. The more experience an employee has in dealing with foreign clients/suppliers the more he/she considers cultural factors and the further culturally distant the client's/supplier's country is from Sweden the more company employees adapt the cultural factors. Furthermore, it is expected that younger employees would adapt cultural factors more; this out of several reasons. First of all, younger people have had more interactions already during schooldays with children from different cultural backgrounds or origins due to the increased immigration in the last few decades. Secondly, cultural differences and cultural models are nowadays incorporated in many curriculums at universities and
thus people get more sensitised to the topic. Lastly, through social media and the easy access to transportation which enables to travel the interactions among people from different countries has increased. With regard to the gender variable, women are said (in general) to be more empathetic and understanding, thus it is anticipated that they are also more likely to adapt cultural factors than men. Lastly, people who know about cultures are better able to see national cultural differences and thus adapt accordingly to bridge those differences.

3.2 Operationalization

The six cultural factors presented in this thesis have been derived from the literature review. However, in the literature, it has been only analysed in how far they differ among cultures and thus influence the business relationship. To the knowledge of the author, however, no study has been conducted so far which analysed in how far ac-
tions are taken by companies or their employees as representatives of the companies (Bromley, 2001) to adapt cultural factors depending on the national culture i.e. the country the client or supplier comes from when interacting with them. Thus, most of the questions for the survey (see Appendix 8.2) had to be developed by the author. Wherever possible models or measures which have been used in other researches were incorporated or taken as a base for the development of the questions used in the survey.

The word "considered" which is used in RQ1 and RQ2 can be interpreted in different ways according to the Oxford Dictionary ([1], 2019). For the purpose of this study, it means “to think about and be drawn towards a course of action” (Oxford Dictionary [1], 2019, online) and that actions are also taken so to reach a 4 or 5 on the Likert scale as response for the cultural factor questions (Q3 – Q11).

The commitment factor was measured through question 8. In order for respondents to understand what was meant by commitment an explanation was given which is based on the elements that were measured by Nes, et al. (2007, p. 416) in their study and believed to constitute commitment. These examples are thought to explain what is meant by commitment and thus respondents being able to declare the degree at which they adapt the commitment they display only based on national culture.

Through the factor trust, it should be measured if respondents display a different level of trust towards their client/supplier only based on national culture in order for the respondent to look more trustworthy seen from the client’s/supplier’s perspective. Question 9 is believed to measure this. For the clarification of trust, examples were given which are based on Nes, et al. (2007, p.416) and how they measured the construct trust in their study.

Each aspect of communication was measured through one question (Q3 to Q6 in the survey). The aspects and examples are based on cultural models from the literature review such as from Hall, Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner and Hofstede (Ali-
Lawson & Koncilja, 2017) and some of them are also frequently mentioned in other articles from the analysed ones in the literature review (e.g. language skills in Chaisrakeo & Speece, 2004).

Choice of negotiation strategy is measured through question 7 in the survey. The aim was to see if the respondents change their negotiation strategy based on the national culture i.e. the country their client/supplier comes from. In the question there were examples given for what is meant by negotiation strategy; the example of the time component was taken from Saorín-Iborra and Cubillo (2016) as they studied time pressure.

Cultural distance is as described before “the extent to which cultures are similar or different” (Shenkar 2001, p. 519 cited in Boscari, et al., 2018, p. 6317). Kogut and Singh (1988 cited in Nes, et al., 2007, p 414) developed a formula which uses the Hofstede model index values between the two countries in question in order to calculate the cultural distance between them. Hofstede’s model has been criticised a lot and its dimensions have been proven to not be distinct enough and interpreted in different ways (Baskerville, 2003; Dowty & Wallace, 2010; Taras, et. al, 2016; Minkov, 2018) and furthermore also the Kogut and Singh formula is criticised (Maseland, et al., 2018). Due to these reasons, it was decided not to adopt the Hofstede/Kogut and Singh formula approach. Instead, the mapping world cultures pie from Ronen and Shenkar (2013) was used. For their national cultural distance model, they used ten studies which empirically yielded a clustering solution for national cultures. The ten used studies are Brodbeck, et al. (2000), Foley (1992), GLOBE (2004), Hofstede (2001), Inglehart and Baker (2000), Merritt (2000), Schwartz (1999), Smith, et al. (2002), Trompenaars (1994) and Zander (2005) (all cited in Ronen & Shenkar, 2013, p. 873). Based on these they developed their cultural clustering pie model. Their model thus indicates the cultural distance between the different clusters that comprise countries with similar national cultures. The model has 11 clusters and these clusters were used for the answer options in Q1 in the survey and the calculation of the cultural distance (see 4.5 Data Analysis for details).
With leeway is “The amount of freedom to move or act that is available.” (Oxford Dictionary [2], 2019, online) for the employee answering the questionnaire meant. It is measured through Q14 and the array of five categories seemed to offer adequate answers so as the respondents can temper their reply enough according to their situation.

The experience of employees is measured by asking the respondent for how many years she/he has been working with clients from abroad (Q15). The answer options were developed based on the learning curve from Misra, et al.’s (2004) study; they set the tenure of employees and the annual sales they made in relation and argued that the improvement in sales was due to among others the learnings from the employees in getting to know their clients. Most learning takes place within the first two years (steepest part of the curve), in years 3-5 there’s still learning but less than in the first phase. In years 6-10 the learning is approaching its maximum and from year 11 on there are only minimal additional learnings taking place. This learning curve was deemed to be suitable also for the learning of employees over time in dealing with foreign clients respectively suppliers since also there they need to get to know where differences might occur and how their foreign clients and suppliers are different from the local ones as well as how they have to deal with them to be successful.

Company size is measured through Q19 where respondents have to indicate the number of employees in terms of full-time level of employment (100%). The answer categories were based on the classification norms of the European Commission (2019) which are generally accepted and used. They classify companies into micro (1-9 employees), small (10-49 employees), medium-sized (50-249 employees) and large enterprises (more than 250 employees).

Gender is measured through Q18 with the options female, male, diverse. Diverse was added in order to comply with the new emerging standards in order to not discriminate transgender people.
The age of the employee is measured through the indication of the year of birth (Q17) in order to have it more accurately as else some people will question if they should indicate how old they are right now or how old they are going to be this year in case their birthday has not yet been.

The knowledge of the employee of the national culture of their client respectively supplier is measured through question 2 in the survey. Respondents have to rank their knowledge on a 5-point-Likert-scale.
4. Methodology

4.1 Research Purpose

The primary research purpose of this study is of a descriptive nature; to find out if and what national cultural factors (commitment, trust, choice of negotiation strategy, communication, dress code, food habits) are considered by companies in practice in a B2B context in SCM and if there are differences between up- and downstream SCM. Secondly, this study also aims at identifying and exploring the relationships between the different national cultural factors as well as the relationships between the national cultural factors and the independent variables (company size, experience of employee, cultural distance, gender, age, knowledge of the employee of the culture). However, no causality can be finally stated or inferred due to the research design of this study. Thus, solely the relationship can be stated but nothing about the direction of this relationship can be ultimately said. Nevertheless, researchers commonly “[…] draw inferences about causal direction based on their assumptions about the likely causal direction among related variables.” (Bell, et al., 2019, p. 322) and this is what is attempted to be done in this present thesis as well.

4.2 Research Approach

As one of the purposes of this thesis is to see if and what national cultural factors are considered by companies in practice in B2B SCM and to investigate the relationship among the national cultural factors as well as the relationship between the national cultural factors and variables, it was decided to use a quantitative research approach. Furthermore, a quantitative approach was chosen since it allows to gain a broader picture of several companies instead of focusing just on a few detailed (Bell, et al., 2019) which thus supported the aim of getting a broader representation of the current state in practice. As a quantitative approach was taken, it was mainly a deductive process that was used (Bell, et al., 2019). Hence a thorough literature research was conducted from which research questions, hypotheses and the survey questionnaires were derived. For the development of the measures the first four steps of the procedure suggested by Churchill (1979) were applied since these are regarded as a minimum requirement but the whole procedure is not possible to be applied for this re-
search due to the present constraints. For the purpose of this study a cross-sectional design seemed to be most appropriate since it enables the analysis of more than one case, at a single point in time (thus to capture the current situation in practice), allows the collection of quantitative data and further patterns of associations can be uncovered (Bell, et al., 2019).

4.3 Data Collection Method

It was decided to employ self-completion questionnaires as a data collection method. This decision was mainly taken as it is a quantitative study and thus accordingly a high number of respondents were envisaged, which had been hard to manage in a structured observation method due to the time, resource and access constraints. Furthermore, the topic of national culture and how an individual adapts to others or not is a sensitive one and thus respondents will feel more comfortable answering it alone and anonymous (Bell, et al., 2019). This will also lead them to be less inclined to answer in a certain way only to comply with social norms or please the researcher (Bell, et al., 2019). Content analysis and official statistics were not taken as method since the latter is non-existent on this topic and the former is not suitable because of the subject of the study; the adaptation based on national cultural factors happens in communication and interactions with clients/suppliers and this will hardly be recorded and even if it was, it would be company internal and thus not available to the researcher of the necessary number of companies to take a quantitative approach. Thus, the self-completion questionnaire method, which is a structured method, was evaluated as being most appropriate for this study.

Hence, two online surveys (see Appendix 8.2) were developed for the data collection; one survey addressed the upstream SCM whereas the other targeted the downstream SCM. As the study of Baruch and Holtom (2008) has shown, electronic data research efforts yield the same high or higher response rates than traditional mailing methods and are hence appropriate for organizational studies. It was decided to separate the survey into these two parts since in most enterprises they are also different departments and one person will most probably just work in one or the other department. Thus, one person can answer for itself, but they most probably have no knowledge
about if their colleagues in the other department consider cultural factors in their communication and interactions with foreign clients respectively suppliers and to what degree. Thus, having a single questionnaire would be much less reliable since for one SC side assumptions would be made by the respondents based on what they think the others are like.

All questions of the online survey were marked as mandatory questions so that respondents could not skip a question and would not overlook one by accident or forget to fill it in. This was done in order to ensure the data completeness and thus ultimately achieve a higher response rate as none will have to be sorted out due to missing data (Bell, et al., 2019). Moreover, a progress indicator was used in the online surveys as it has been suggested that in these cases fewer people abandon the questionnaire throughout the completion process (Couper, et al., 2001 cited in Bell, et al., 2019, p. 204). The survey also consisted only of multiple-choice questions since it has been suggested that people do not like to write a lot in surveys (Bell, et al., 2019).

Once the online questionnaires were created, they were sent to three Swedish native speakers (two Bachelor students and one Master student) as well as a Spanish native speaker having some Swedish language skills (Master student) in order to ensure that the questions were understandable from a language point of view (since the survey was conducted in English but with Swedish based companies) as well as the comprehensibility of the formulations. This measure was also taken to address best possibly (seen the time and resource constraints) the issue of item equivalence across different languages, which Taras, et al. (2009) had criticized to be missing in some studies since the three Swedish native speakers were also asked to reflect upon this point and the survey was conducted solely in English.

The member companies of Ljungby Business Arena were asked by email (see Appendix 8.1) to fill in the online questionnaires (to which they received internet links to in the email) until May 10, 2019; the emails were sent on April 26, 2019. On May 7, 2019, a reminder was sent to all companies (see Appendix 8.3) in order to encourage them once more to fill in the surveys and the response period was extended until
May 14, 2019. Since the response rate was very low at that point in time (2 out of 195 replied) it was decided to attach to the reminder email the surveys also as Word forms (see Appendix 8.4) and leave the respondents the choice between this option of attached email survey (Bell, et al., 2019) and the internet link to the online survey. This was done as it was suspected that people might be more inclined to quickly open the attachment to check it and then see immediately that it would not take them a long time to complete it and that they thus would fill in the survey then. Since the questions did not build up and were not dependent on one another, the sequencing was not of importance and that the respondents could see all the questions at once hence has no influence on the answers. However, in the end, all respondents used the online survey. All emails were sent from Ljungby Business Arena to their members thus in this sense from a familiar and trustworthy source, which is believed to have decreased the fear of viruses (Bell, et al., 2019), increased the response rate and hence lowered the non-response rate which leads to fewer non-sampling errors (Bell, et al., 2019).

Since the response rate from the members of Ljungby Business Arena was very low after more than a week, the snowball method was additionally employed in the hope to get more responses; a professional published the survey links on his LinkedIn profile, a post was published on the Facebook page of Växjö Campus (also former students who work now in companies are subscribed to the page) and seven friends of the author were asked to forward the survey to people they knew work in the requested area in Sweden and are thus able to fill in one of the surveys (everything sent out on May 4, 2019). As Baltar and Brunet (2012) have found, social media are an effective way to expand the sample size in snowball methods.

All the data collection methods applied resulted in voluntary responses since no one could be forced to answer to the survey (Stine & Foster, 2014). However, through sending the reminder to the member companies of Ljungby Business Arena more people were encouraged to participate. The main reason for people not reacting to the survey is suspected to lie in not taking the time to fill it in rather than in diverging
opinions, which hence makes the sample less flawed through biased responses by people with strong opinions and consequently more reliable (Stine & Foster, 2014).

4.4 Sample Selection
As an initial sample, the member companies of Ljungby Business Arena were chosen. They were mainly chosen due to access restrictions to company contacts. It was approximated that at least 85% of all the members of Ljungby Business Arena have at least one or more foreign B2B client and/or supplier which makes them fulfil the prerequisite for being able to answer the questions of the survey. For the remaining 15%, it was not clear if they had foreign B2B clients respectively suppliers. Due to this fact, it is possible that some did not respond since the survey is not applicable to them, but they did not inform the author of it. However, since the member companies are of different sizes, industries and ages, which makes them very diverse and thus suitable for the study, it was decided to take them as a sample despite these shortcomings. Furthermore, as this study also wants to investigate if the company size has an impact on how much national cultural factors are being considered in practice or not, these member companies represent a suitable sample. Moreover, the number of member companies and thus companies receiving the survey, which is 195, seemed very promising for achieving the goal of getting a broader picture of how national cultural factors are considered by companies in practice in a B2B context. Also taking these member companies as a sample seemed to yield the most representative sample possible to get for this thesis due to time and resource constraints and thus reducing biases and sampling errors (Bell, et al., 2019) as well as possible. However, it cannot be claimed that the member companies are a probability sample. Despite this fact, it is believed that they are representative of the population, which is set to be all companies in the commune of Ljungby that have to do with foreign clients and/or suppliers in a B2B context; thus, the population onto which the findings can be generalized is set very narrowly for purposes of cautiousness, the limited randomness of the sample and the low number of respondents.
The additionally applied snowball method makes it theoretically possible that also people working in companies located outside of Ljungby received the survey since it was opened to the national level (Sweden) in order to achieve more responses as it was published on broader channels (LinkedIn, Facebook, referrals of friends of the author). However, since they are fewer in number and no patterns in the responses could be detected they do not seem to inhibit the generalization onto the level of Ljungby commune but rather help to make it a more random sample through complementing the members of Ljungby Business Arena which are to a majority small- and medium-sized companies. The respondents reached on this second way were informed that they must be in contact with at least one foreign supplier and/or client in a B2B context depending on which survey they want to fill in and that they need to be working in Sweden.

4.5 Data Analysis

After the end of the online survey, the results were exported and filled in in the master data sheet in Excel. Excel was used as a tool since it seemed appropriate as a first step to get an overview of the data and being able to order and also filter them. Once the data was represented usefully in the Excel master data sheet, the raw data was checked for any obvious flaws and response sets. No obvious flaws or response sets could be detected. Moreover, the T-interval calculations of the differences between the first and the second half of respondents for each client- and supplier-side survey did not identify any differences between early and late respondents with one exception. In the client-side survey, more respondents had their clients in the Nordic cluster in the second half, however, their responses to the cultural factors were not statistically significantly different from the first half apart from the food habits/meal choice adaptation national cultural factor. This makes sense since the food in Nordic countries is very similar due to the same climatic conditions and thus no adaptation is needed.

In a next step, the cultural distance was calculated; as mentioned in the operationalization part Ronen and Shenkar’s pie (2013) was used (see Figure 2). In order to get
the cultural distance in a numerical value which could be used for the analysis, the different clusters were assigned numbers from zero to five. Sweden, which is in the Nordic cluster, is the culture of departure and thus the cultural distance between the Nordic cluster and the one indicated by the respondents in question 1 is determined. Hence the closer the value is to zero, the smaller is the cultural distance and the bigger the value (maximum 5) the larger is the cultural distance.

**Figure 2:** Final Pie of Clusters by Ronen and Shenkar (2013, p. 884) with values (0-5) assigned by the author

Thereafter the data was copied into the TI-Nspire CX CAS Student Software from Texas Instruments in which the analysis was carried out. First of all, the boxplots of all national cultural factors and variables (where possible) were drawn and checked for outliers. In the downstream (client-side) survey one outlier in the national cultural factor variable language (content from cultural perspective) was found. In the upstream (supplier-side) survey two outliers were detected in the national cultural factor variable language skills. The outliers were included in the analysis since the sample
size was very small and thus with a bigger sample, the "outliers" detected might just be at the end of the skewness and not real outliers. Furthermore, also Walfish (2006, p. 1) has argued that "Removing data points on the basis of statistical analysis without an assignable cause is not sufficient to throw data away.", thus supporting the inclusion decision.

Thereafter the mean, median and mode for all the national cultural factors and variables were calculated. As next, the different national cultural factors were tested on correlations whereas each pair was drawn first of all in a scatterplot to see if the correlation appeared to be linear. After that, the same was done for each national cultural factor and the variables (where possible) where a pattern was suspected based on the data. These analyses delivered the data for answering the four guiding research questions.

In a next step, the four concrete hypotheses were tested. For H1 only the cases where respondents have replied with a 4 or 5 on the leeway question (Q14 in the survey) were considered. From the cases left the correlation between the experience of the employee i.e. the years they have worked with foreign suppliers respectively clients and the national cultural factors were calculated. If H1 is true there should be a positive correlation (experience increases, consideration of the national cultural factors increases). In order to answer H2, the correlation between company size and each single national cultural factor is measured. If H2 is true a negative correlation should be found (company size increases, the national cultural factors should have lower values). H3 checked the correlation between cultural distance and the value indications on the scales of the national cultural factors’ questions (Q3 to Q11). If H3 is true a positive correlation should be found (the more cultural distant, the more the national cultural factors should be considered). For H4 the mean, median and mode of each national cultural factor in the survey on upstream and downstream will be compared against one another. It was decided to calculate mean, median and mode to have more insights into the data and represent them more precisely as well as to answer to criti-
cism by Taras, et al. (2009), who stated that researchers should not solely focus on averages.

4.6 Quality Criteria

The data was collected through self-completion/self-administered online questionnaires thus the so-called interviewer-effect (Bell, et al., 2019) is eliminated. Furthermore, there is also no interviewer variability and since the data coding was done only by the author the inter-rater reliability is granted. Moreover, there were only multiple-choice questions in the questionnaire which reduces coding mistakes and variances over time significantly. With regard to the reliability of this study, it needs to be acknowledged that the stability might only be moderate since company policies, as well as management changes, exert influence on the responses since individual employees mostly have to comply with the new situations and adapt their behaviour accordingly. However, in the absence of such events, the stability should be high. The internal reliability of all national cultural factors together resulted for the downstream survey in a Cronbach’s alpha (based on standardized items) of 0.56864 and for the upstream survey in a Cronbach's alpha of 0.44075. This means that the level for the downstream survey is on an almost acceptable minimum level, whereas the upstream shows a very low alpha. Hence it was tried out to increase the Cronbach's alpha through excluding certain items (national cultural factors). However, the alpha had been increased through excluding different items in the two surveys which hence would have meant to lose the possibility for direct comparison. For instance, to increase the downstream alpha, language (content from cultural perspective) would have had to be excluded which on the other hand had further lowered the alpha of the upstream side (see Appendix 8.5 for details). Due to this reason, it was decided to proceed with all the national cultural factors for the analysis. The low alpha is most probably caused by the extremely low response number (N=17 for the downstream survey and N=20 for the upstream survey, whereas the responses for upstream were more diverse, showing fewer patterns in our sample), which makes its calculation base very limited, and that each national cultural factor was only measured through one question (this as the survey had become far too long with more questions and
thus even fewer people would have answered). The later reason though seems to have less weight as it still achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.56864 in the downstream survey.

As the national cultural factors have been developed from the existing literature and cultural models it is believed that face validity is thus given. In the existing literature, different approaches have been used for the different national cultural factors to arrive at their importance; researchers used quantitative self-completion questionnaires, observations and qualitative in-depth interviews. Therefore, convergent validity seems to be existent. As with any cross-sectional research design also the present one lacks internal validity which could be achieved through an experimental design (Bell, et al., 2019). In this study, solely inferences based on the sample can be drawn and thus the credibility level of causal findings derived from experimental research cannot be reached.

It is believed that the procedures used for this study have been described in enough detail to enable replication and thus the quality criteria of replicability seems to be satisfied.

4.7 Research Ethics Considerations
Bell, et al. (2019, p. 109) stated four ethical principles, which researchers need to live up to: avoidance of harm, informed consent, protection of privacy through confidentiality and preventing deception. Participants of the survey were free to fill in the survey anytime they wanted to during the response period, thus they could organize it to a time slot when it was suitable for them and they did not have to feel stressed about it. Since the survey was anonymous and the gathered data treated confidentially, no inferences to the individual responding nor the company they work for can be made thus eviting any harm to career prospects or future employment (Bell, et al., 2019). Furthermore, participants only had to fill in the online questionnaire or the Word form (depending on the format they chose); they did not have to perform any acts. To address the concern of “harm to participant’s development or self-esteem” (Bell, et
al., 2019, p. 114) it was clearly written in the introduction text of the survey that there is no right or wrong answer and they were also asserted that their responses were anonymous and confidential. Moreover, they could fill it in alone which enhances their feeling of security and comfortableness as they could be in their used environment. Through the collection method of an online survey and the fact that the survey was anonymous and confidential, the protection of privacy is believed to be granted. The respondents who would have chosen to fill in the Word form (in practice 0 respondents) had been known to the author as they had to return it by email but since their answers had then been transferred into the master data excel sheet they would have been it no longer during the analysis. Moreover, only the author had access to these emails. So also, here privacy would have been upheld. The links to the surveys were accompanied by an email (see Appendix 8.1) which provided information on the survey purpose, practical information on the survey itself, the use of their data and the author’s contact in case they had any questions or enquiries. Thus, participants gave their consent when deciding to fill in the questionnaire which was voluntarily, and they were in no way forced or pushed into doing it. This accompanying email also has given a brief outline of the research and its aim and thus is assumed to have ruled out deception of participants. The social media posts had a much shorter accompanying text, but the first page of the online survey provided the same information as in the email invitation, which thus gave information to all participants and thus deception is assumed to have been ruled out also on this way.
5. Data Analysis

5.1 Data Description

The downstream survey was filled in by 17 respondents of which six were women (35.3%) and 11 men (64.7%). Respondents were on average 37.2 years old (range of 21 to 74). Five have worked for 0-2 years with foreign clients (29%), five for 3-5 years (29%), three for 6-10 years (18%) and four for 11 and more years (24%). Eight work in a company with 1-9 employees (47.1%), four in a company with 10-49 employees (23.5%), one in a company with 50-249 employees (5.9%) and four in a company with 250 and more employees (23.5%). Of the respondents, four indicated working in downstream (23.5%), two in upstream (11.8%) and 11 indicated working in both (64.7%). Moreover, 10 out of the 17 respondents (58.8%) indicated to have their clients (based on which they answered the survey) in the Nordic cluster; the average cultural distance in the downstream survey was thus only 1.176 (out of 5). The respondents had on average knowledge of their client's national culture of 3.7 (out of 5). Respondents indicated to be bound to guidelines to an average extent of 2.47 (out of 5), which leads them to have an average personal leeway of 3.53 (out of 5).

The upstream survey was filled in by 20 respondents of which seven were women (35%) and 13 men (65%). The respondents were on average 36.55 years old dispersed on a range of age between 21 and 69. Four respondents have worked for 0-2 years with foreign suppliers (20%), seven for 3-5 years (35%), five for 6-10 years (25%) and four for 11 and more years (20%). Nine respondents work in a company with 1-9 employees (45%), three in one with 10-49 employees (15%), two in one with 50-249 employees (10%) and lastly six work in companies with 250 and more employees (30%). Of the respondents, four indicated working in upstream (20%), two in downstream (10%) and 14 in both (70%). Moreover, 11 out of 20 (55%) indicated to have their suppliers (based on which they answered the survey) within the Nordic cluster; the average cultural distance in the upstream survey was thus only 1.3 (out of 5). Respondents had on average knowledge of their supplier's national culture of 3.45 (out of 5). Respondents indicated to be bound to guidelines to an average ex-
tent of 2.2 (out of 5), which leads them to have an average personal leeway of 3.9 (out of 5).

When comparing the two surveys, similar demographics of the respondents are found thus there are no significant differences between the two. In the upstream survey a slightly higher cultural distance (by 0.124) could be found on average, meaning that there are more and more culturally distant suppliers represented than clients. On the other hand, respondents in the client survey had on average a higher value (by 0.25) on their knowledge about the national cultures of their clients than the ones in the upstream had on their suppliers. Furthermore, respondents of the upstream survey were on average by 0.27 less bound to guidelines than respondents in the downstream survey. This difference could be seen also in the personal leeway of respondents; respondents in upstream had on average a by 0.37 higher personal leeway.

5.2 Results

RQ1: Do companies consider national culture in their supply chain in practice?
As stated in the operationalization, a value of 4 or 5 is regarded as "considered". Table 3 and Table 4 show the mean (average), median and mode of each national cultural factor (range 1-5) in the downstream respectively upstream survey.

Table 3: Downstream survey national cultural factors mean, median, mode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Language skills</th>
<th>Language (content)</th>
<th>Way of communication</th>
<th>Style of communication</th>
<th>Negotiation strategy</th>
<th>Dress code</th>
<th>Food habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>median</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mode</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 &amp; 4 (same count)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Upstream survey national cultural factors mean, median, mode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Language skills</th>
<th>Language (content)</th>
<th>Way of communication</th>
<th>Style of communication</th>
<th>Negotiation strategy</th>
<th>Dress code</th>
<th>Food habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>median</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mode</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 &amp; 5 (same count)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RQ2: If yes, what national cultural factors are considered?

It can be seen when analysing the means that in down- as well as upstream SCM only language skills are being considered. However, when looking at the median, it is detected that in downstream SCM language skills, language (content from cultural perspective), negotiation strategy choice as well as food habits are considered. In upstream SCM based on the median language skills, language (content from cultural perspective) and style of communication are considered. The respective aforementioned national cultural factors are thus considered by the majority of companies in practice.

RQ3: Are the national cultural factors correlated among one another?

Table 5 and Table 6 show the Spearman’s rho correlation coefficients for the national cultural factors in down- respectively upstream SCM.

Table 5: Spearman's rho correlation coefficient matrix of downstream national cultural factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Language skills</th>
<th>Language (content)</th>
<th>Way of communication</th>
<th>Style of communication</th>
<th>Negotiation strategy</th>
<th>Dress code</th>
<th>Food habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>0.69801***</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language skills</td>
<td>-0.39681*</td>
<td>-0.36659*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language (content)</td>
<td>-0.03327</td>
<td>-0.17746</td>
<td>0.28165*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of communication</td>
<td>0.27478*</td>
<td>0.11655</td>
<td>-0.26915*</td>
<td>-0.0945</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style of communication</td>
<td>0.17886</td>
<td>-0.2091*</td>
<td>0.02707</td>
<td>-0.03413</td>
<td>0.13768</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation strategy</td>
<td>0.25068*</td>
<td>0.25683*</td>
<td>-0.1085</td>
<td>0.18657</td>
<td>0.07906</td>
<td>0.07984</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress code</td>
<td>0.66127***</td>
<td>0.23237*</td>
<td>-0.35452*</td>
<td>-0.22321*</td>
<td>0.50495**</td>
<td>0.57592**</td>
<td>0.06514</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food habits</td>
<td>0.43794**</td>
<td>0.19735</td>
<td>-0.2086*</td>
<td>-0.21864*</td>
<td>0.68519***</td>
<td>0.59071**</td>
<td>0.00201</td>
<td>0.77331***</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*weak correlation (0.2-0.39), **moderate correlation (0.4-0.59), ***strong correlation (0.6+)

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
Table 6: Spearman's rho correlation coefficient matrix of upstream national cultural factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Language skills</th>
<th>Language (content)</th>
<th>Way of communication</th>
<th>Style of communication</th>
<th>Negotiation strategy</th>
<th>Dress code</th>
<th>Food habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>0.35803*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language skills</td>
<td>-0.34366*</td>
<td>-0.33135*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language (content)</td>
<td>-0.04327</td>
<td>0.0915</td>
<td>0.31541*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of communi-</td>
<td>0.0663</td>
<td>-0.22565*</td>
<td>0.3834*</td>
<td>0.20557*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style of commu-</td>
<td>0.06821</td>
<td>0.14198</td>
<td>0.09635</td>
<td>0.27907*</td>
<td>0.07659</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>0.24779*</td>
<td>-0.02745</td>
<td>-0.12312</td>
<td>0.08882</td>
<td>-0.25596*</td>
<td>-0.48229**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress code</td>
<td>0.53027**</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.05593</td>
<td>-0.09532</td>
<td>0.13551</td>
<td>0.3213*</td>
<td>0.05552</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food habits</td>
<td>0.58908**</td>
<td>0.2261*</td>
<td>-0.19069</td>
<td>0.11789</td>
<td>0.00873</td>
<td>0.45083**</td>
<td>-0.2099*</td>
<td>0.42898**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*weak correlation (0.2-0.39), **moderate correlation (0.4-0.59), ***strong correlation (0.6+)

From the tables, it can be seen that there are a couple of weak correlations as well as few moderate and strong correlations in both up- and downstream SCM. Interestingly, however, the strong correlations are not the same ones in the up- and downstream SCM but they are rather quite different. In downstream SCM statistically significant correlations at a level of alpha 0.01 could be found for commitment and trust, commitment and dress code, way of communication and food habits and lastly for food habits and dress code. In upstream SCM on the other hand, a statistically significant correlation at a level of alpha 0.01 could only be found for commitment and food habits.

RQ4: Are there variables that correlate with a certain national cultural factor?

Table 7 and Table 8 present the Spearman's rho correlation coefficient matrixes between the national cultural factors and the variables for the down- respectively upstream SCM surveys.
Table 7: Spearman's rho correlation coefficient matrix of national cultural factors and variables for downstream survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Language skills</th>
<th>Language (content)</th>
<th>Way of communication</th>
<th>Style of communication</th>
<th>Negotiation strategy</th>
<th>Dress code</th>
<th>Food habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company size</td>
<td>0.15482</td>
<td>0.03471</td>
<td>0.01133</td>
<td>-0.16056</td>
<td>0.24965*</td>
<td>0.13136</td>
<td>0.00412</td>
<td>0.46783**</td>
<td>0.36268*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of employee</td>
<td>0.23384*</td>
<td>0.01382</td>
<td>-0.26419*</td>
<td>-0.13479</td>
<td>0.07002</td>
<td>-0.10461</td>
<td>0.12542</td>
<td>0.26961*</td>
<td>0.01127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural distance</td>
<td>0.44957**</td>
<td>-0.00285</td>
<td>-0.2143*</td>
<td>0.07302</td>
<td>0.39628*</td>
<td>0.3101*</td>
<td>0.09995</td>
<td>0.67278***</td>
<td>0.54576**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.14221</td>
<td>-0.06302</td>
<td>0.26549*</td>
<td>0.1067</td>
<td>0.03486</td>
<td>0.29726*</td>
<td>-0.24912*</td>
<td>-0.05397</td>
<td>0.20134*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.21179*</td>
<td>-0.07821</td>
<td>0.37594*</td>
<td>0.44508**</td>
<td>-0.0404</td>
<td>0.18249</td>
<td>-0.01315</td>
<td>-0.15788</td>
<td>0.05252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of employee</td>
<td>0.29492*</td>
<td>0.12551</td>
<td>-0.17626</td>
<td>0.03868</td>
<td>-0.4532**</td>
<td>0.30042*</td>
<td>0.32189*</td>
<td>-0.03774</td>
<td>-0.18965</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*weak correlation (0.2-0.39), **moderate correlation (0.4-0.59), ***strong correlation (0.6+)

Table 8: Spearman's rho correlation coefficient matrix of national cultural factors and variables for upstream survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Language skills</th>
<th>Language (content)</th>
<th>Way of communication</th>
<th>Style of communication</th>
<th>Negotiation strategy</th>
<th>Dress code</th>
<th>Food habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company size</td>
<td>0.3393*</td>
<td>0.24568*</td>
<td>-0.03732</td>
<td>-0.44205**</td>
<td>0.03162</td>
<td>-0.02921</td>
<td>-0.00041</td>
<td>0.07834</td>
<td>0.27792*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of employee</td>
<td>0.28433*</td>
<td>0.13344</td>
<td>-0.03968</td>
<td>-0.00326</td>
<td>0.10517</td>
<td>0.07395</td>
<td>-0.08123</td>
<td>0.26784*</td>
<td>0.0961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural distance</td>
<td>0.12641</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>-0.40101**</td>
<td>-0.22797**</td>
<td>-0.41854**</td>
<td>0.07003</td>
<td>-0.01956</td>
<td>-0.23837*</td>
<td>0.3571*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.16535</td>
<td>0.13726</td>
<td>-0.08376</td>
<td>-0.01333</td>
<td>-0.18425</td>
<td>0.14336</td>
<td>-0.03915</td>
<td>-0.20263*</td>
<td>0.16977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.03936</td>
<td>0.12648</td>
<td>0.49271**</td>
<td>0.32596*</td>
<td>0.35015*</td>
<td>-0.20603*</td>
<td>0.13818</td>
<td>0.27158*</td>
<td>0.26784*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of employee</td>
<td>0.40263**</td>
<td>-0.345*</td>
<td>0.09817</td>
<td>0.09683</td>
<td>0.37628*</td>
<td>-0.32589*</td>
<td>0.58506**</td>
<td>-0.02091</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*weak correlation (0.2-0.39), **moderate correlation (0.4-0.59), ***strong correlation (0.6+)

In the downstream survey, cultural distance proved to be the variable having most and also of the strongest correlations to the national cultural factors. Furthermore, several other weak and moderate correlations could be found such as for instance between gender and language skills as well as company size and dress code. In the upstream survey, on the other hand, no strong correlation could be found but only weak and moderate ones such as between knowledge of the employee and negotiation strategy choice for instance.
Hypothesis 1
From the 17 respondents of the client survey, 10 indicated to have a personal leeway of 4 or 5 and build thus the base for this hypothesis. As Table 9 shows, interestingly the correlations are mainly negative, which indicates that the longer employees have work experience with foreign clients and the leeway to decide themselves, the less they adapt the national cultural factors based on where the clients come from. The correlations are overall however rather low. This means thus that we reject H1a.

Table 9: Spearman's rho correlation coefficients between national cultural factors and employee experience of downstream survey respondents with leeway of 4 or 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee experience</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Language skills</th>
<th>Language (content)</th>
<th>Way of communication</th>
<th>Style of communication</th>
<th>Negotiation strategy</th>
<th>Dress code</th>
<th>Food habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-0.18881</td>
<td>-0.07461</td>
<td>-0.2414*</td>
<td>-0.38919*</td>
<td>0.06145</td>
<td>-0.43357*</td>
<td>-0.24676*</td>
<td>0.16902</td>
<td>-0.11755</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*weak correlation (0.2-0.39), **moderate correlation (0.4-0.59), ***strong correlation (0.6+)

From the 20 respondents of the supplier survey, 14 indicated to have a personal leeway of 4 or 5. As Table 10 shows the correlations are much stronger than in the client survey and mainly positive. Hence H1b is by trend to be accepted with the exception of the national cultural factors language skills and negotiation strategy choice.

Table 10: Spearman's rho correlation coefficients between national cultural factors and employee experience of upstream survey respondents with leeway of 4 or 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee experience</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Language skills</th>
<th>Language (content)</th>
<th>Way of communication</th>
<th>Style of communication</th>
<th>Negotiation strategy</th>
<th>Dress code</th>
<th>Food habits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.44675**</td>
<td>0.17112</td>
<td>-0.48062**</td>
<td>0.12612</td>
<td>0.32719*</td>
<td>0.58453**</td>
<td>-0.36068*</td>
<td>0.4258**</td>
<td>0.4298**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*weak correlation (0.2-0.39), **moderate correlation (0.4-0.59), ***strong correlation (0.6+)

Hypothesis 2
When looking at the variable company size and the national cultural factors in Table 7 for the downstream survey, it can be seen, that there are only two weak correlations and one moderate. Furthermore, there's one very weak negative correlation. In order for H2a to be true though negative correlations would have had to be found, which is
not the case. Thus, H2a is rejected. For the upstream SCM side (see Table 8) three weak positive correlations were found, one moderate negative one and the others were all almost zero. Hence also here H2b cannot be supported and is thus rejected.

**Hypothesis 3**

From Table 7 it can be seen that there are two weak positive correlations, two moderate positive correlations, one strong positive correlation as well as one weak negative correlation between cultural distance and the national cultural factors. The other three are almost zero. These results are thus by trend in favour of H3a; the further culturally distant the client, the more the national cultural factors are adapted.

For the upstream side, it can be seen in Table 8 that there's only one weak positive correlation; on the other hand, there are two weak and two moderate negative correlations. This is hence opposing H3b.

**Hypothesis 4**

When comparing the results between the down- and upstream SCM surveys from Table 3 and Table 4 (see Table 11 for differences) it can be seen that in the downstream SCM side national cultural factors are more considered than in the upstream side, which is thus supporting H4; national cultural factors are more considered in downstream SCM by the employee of the company (disregarding the degree of leeway of the individual employee) than in upstream SCM.

**Table 11: Comparison between down- and upstream national cultural factors mean, median and mode (downstream results - upstream)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Language skills</th>
<th>Language (content)</th>
<th>Way of communication</th>
<th>Style of communication</th>
<th>Negotiation strategy</th>
<th>Dress code</th>
<th>Food habits</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>median</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mode</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0 &amp; 1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 &amp; 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0/1/3/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Discussion

First of all, it needs to be noted that the averages, medians and modes of the national cultural factors are rather low since the majority of respondents has their clients and suppliers in the Nordic cluster and thus does not have to adapt a lot as their cultures are according to the literature similar. However, even some respondents working with clients and suppliers within the Nordic cluster indicated values of 4 or 5 for different national cultural factors, thus partly contradicting the literature. As the responses are based on their rating and thus personal perception, it can be possible, however, that they compare it to interacting with Swedish clients and suppliers and thus find it even though different but do not consider how much more different it then would be if they were to interact with clients and suppliers from a culture much further culturally distant.

As mentioned in the literature review, culture encompasses according to LaBahn and Harich (1997 cited in Freeman & Browne, 2004, p. 174) subjective dimensions, interactive dimensions and material dimensions. In the literature, the focus is put on the first two dimensions. The present study also found that employees in practice in both down- and upstream SCM consider interactive dimensions (the four communication factors) the most of all dimensions. This is in line with Nes, et al. (2007), who stressed that communication takes in a different and extended role in international relationships and that communication thus needs to be proactively managed in order to develop stronger international business relationships. These, in turn, are important in B2B marketing. Hence, companies seem to have found that out and act upon it accordingly. The findings further can also be connected to the idea of the so-called "collaborative culture", which is argued for by Wong, et al. (2017), Zhang and Cao (2018) and Kumar, et al. (2016), in which communication is a very important element.

Moreover, in downstream SCM also the choice of negotiation strategy, which can be linked to subjective dimensions, is achieving higher values compared to the others. This hence shows the importance of the role of national culture in negotiations in practice and thus is in line with the findings of Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004) as well.
as the big amount of literature in general available in this field within the SC area. When looking at the median also food habits, thus a material dimension is considered in the downstream side in practice, which hence shows the relevance of Taras, et al.’s (2009) criticism that also these dimensions should be considered in studies.

Kumar, et al. (2016) stated that commitment and trust are consequences of culture and thus important to consider. In practice, however, commitment and trust are only little considered; in downstream SCM trust achieves only 2.82 and commitment 2.47 on average and in upstream 3 respectively 1.9 (out of 5). Reasons for the low consideration in practice could be a lacking awareness, the fact that these two factors are not very easy to adapt in practice or that the suppliers and clients adopt "international standards" and thus there is no need for adaptation based on national culture.

A point where the literature and practice are unanimous is language skills. Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004) pinpointed it but also other authors and the empirical data from this study support it as well; language skills was the national cultural factor most considered of all in both surveys down- and upstream SCM.

According to the learning curve theory (Linton & Walsh, 2013) as well as Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004) with regard to negotiation strategy choice, it was expected that the work experience of respondents with foreign clients and suppliers would increase their consideration of national cultural factors. Over all respondents on both sides, there could not be found a correlation between negotiation strategy choice and their work experience with foreign clients respectively suppliers. Besides this, only a few weak correlations between work experience and other national cultural factors could be found. This leads to the conclusion that the length of the work experience does not seem to matter regarding the consideration of national cultural factors. When checking only on the bases of the respondents with a high personal leeway (4 or 5) even the opposite is the case on the client side; the longer they have worked with clients from abroad, the less they consider the national cultural factors. However, for the supplier side, in this case, the more experience the more they consider it holds for most fac-
tors. A possible explanation could be that the longer they work with foreign clients, the more they develop their own style and way of handling them and once successful they just stick to it in any case. Or they get used to considering and adapting to the cultural factors so much that it does not feel any more a lot to them and they thus choose lower values than someone who just has started and for whom it requires more effort in the beginning. This explanation would then support the learning curve theory and thus hypothesis 1. A further explanation could be that the more experience they have, the more important deals they can negotiate and thus also their counterpart is likely to have more experience with international clients since the same is true for her/him; hence if also the counterpart adapts, the respondent herself/himself needs to adapt less. This aspect can be also connected to the discussion of an international corporate culture which takes precedence over the national culture as among others also Kattman (2014) suggested.

A last interesting aspect of the empirical data is that respondents in down- as well as upstream report to have a rather big personal leeway; downstream 3.53 and upstream even 3.9 (out of 5) on average. In the downstream survey respondents on average indicated to be bound to guidelines to 2.47 and in the upstream even only 2.2 (out of 5). This shows that the individual employee thus has a big influence on how much to consider national cultural factors; however, they need to be aware of them and see their importance in order to do so.
6. Conclusions and Implications

6.1 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to gain an overview of the topic of culture in SCM and to conceptualize supply chain (management) and culture as it is understood in theory in the literature. Furthermore, the aim was to find out if companies consider national culture in their supply chain in practice and if yes what national cultural factors they consider. Also, the relationships between the different national cultural factors as well as the national cultural factors and several variables were of interest. Finally, the aim was also to investigate if there were differences between up- and downstream SCM.

It could be found that in the literature, culture and SCM have been connected only in some areas of SCM but not in all of them. Moreover, the understanding of culture varies among the different articles. Companies in practice were found to consider only a few national cultural factors; language skills were considered most important, which makes sense as one needs to understand one another to close a deal. The correlation coefficient matrix showed that only a few national cultural factors are correlated among one another; in the downstream survey the factors commitment and trust, commitment and dress code, way of communication and food habit as well as dress code and food habits were strongly correlated. In the upstream survey solely commitment and food habits were strongly correlated. Moreover, the variable cultural distance proved to be the variable having most and also of the strongest correlations in the downstream survey. Other variables had only weak and moderate correlations to the national cultural factors. In the upstream survey, no strong correlations could be found between any variable and the national cultural factors. The most interesting finding, however, was that up- and downstream results were quite different from one another; national culture was overall more considered in the downstream side of the SC, which is in line with the outset expectations as the downstream side needs to gain clients and is thus more inclined to adapt to them in order to gain them. The findings from this study can be seen as trend indications and might be generalized on Ljungby commune level; more empirical data is, however, needed for broader generalizations and absolute statements.
6.2 Theoretical and Managerial Implications

As discussed in the introduction, in literature the area of supply chain exchanges adopting a "cultural lens", as Lee, et al. (2018, p. 60) expressed it, is a burgeoning area and thus this paper adds to the extension of research in this field. Moreover, the perspective of how findings from national cultural studies in supply chain are applied in practice by enterprises is as stated under-researched so far and thus this thesis contributes to its development. To the knowledge of the author, the particular line of research interest of this study is non-existent so far and thus an enrichment for the theory; no study has tested and directly compared the consideration of national cultural factors in upstream against downstream supply chain management in a B2B context. Hence this study might also raise awareness among scholars and/or provide ideas for further studies into this interesting area.

The combination of national cultural factors as in the composition of this paper is novel and should be subject to further investigations as the findings are in some respects contradicting to the literature (e.g. the role of the national cultural factor commitment). Furthermore, the finding that the national cultural factors are considered differently in down- and upstream SCM might imply that different theoretical models for the two sides should be developed in order to represent the reality more adequately. The national cultural factors of dress code and food, which are in theory highly neglected, are in fact more considered in practice than commitment which is highly debated in theory. Hence a further theoretical implication is that the theory also should start exploring more material/artefactual dimensions and include those.

For managers, this study is of interest since it shows that the respondents in the sample indicate to a majority that they are very free in deciding how to interact with foreign clients respectively suppliers and do not have an extensive number of guidelines to which they have to adhere to. Since this sample has shown that some national cultural factors are neglected by the majority, managers should consider raising the awareness of their staff with regard to certain national cultural factors and provide them with specific ideas on how they can address these in everyday business situa-
tions. This could be done through internal training, external training and workshops as well as the institution of more guidelines, which, however, still should allow space for adaptation to the individual clients respectively suppliers. This paper also provides an overview of the current situation in several companies and thus allows practitioners the possibility of some kind of benchmarking. It further provides information with regard to the importance of considering national culture and its controversies. Through the consideration of national culture and its implications in B2B supply chain management in practice, the collaboration among the different SC partners in today’s globalized supply chains could be improved and made more efficient which would lead to improved relationships. This, in turn, influences the exchange relationships in B2B marketing, would foster the network understanding and thus ultimately improve the performance of the enterprises.

6.3 Limitations

Due to the cross-sectional research design of this thesis, the survey is only a snapshot of the current moment and only inferences about the direction of a detected relationship can be drawn. Furthermore, cross-sectional designs also lack the internal validity that can be found in experimental studies, which is a further limitation of the chosen research design. As with every survey, also the present one relies on the answers given by the respondents, thus it reports what they say to do; no observations or other triangulation methods were carried out to verify the answers due to time and resource constraints.

The biggest limitation, however, is regarding the sample and its size; only 17 respondents filled in the downstream survey and 20 the upstream survey. The sample of this thesis is not a thorough random sample but chose the members of Ljungby Business Arena as well as respondents found through the snowball method, which is why the findings are restricted to be generalized to Ljungby commune. Else a much larger and especially purely random sample had to be taken, which was unfortunately due to the time and especially access constraints to company contacts not possible for this paper. As a consequence of the low number of respondents, only very limited statisti-
cal analysis methods could be applied since the minimum sample requirements for more elaborate calculations were not fulfilled. The findings of this study should be thus regarded cautiously and only taken as indicative for a trend rather than absolute. Moreover, the low Cronbach's alpha values found in the quality criteria testing constitute a limitation for the reliability of this study.

Despite these limitations, it is believed that this work even though provides interesting insights from which some trends can be seen and that it can serve as a starting point for future research in this area.

6.4 Suggestions for Future Research
As the field of interest of this paper has not yet been researched to a big extent, many areas for further research exist. Future research could instead of only relying on self-completion questionnaires also add observations of the employees in a company in order to evaluate if they do in practice what they indicate in the survey. This triangulation would thus also increase the validity of the study and compensate for the shortcoming of the survey method. Moreover, future research could employ a qualitative approach to find out about the "why" companies consider national cultural factors at the degree they do respectively do not since the reasons behind it and hence a deeper understanding can be best collected through qualitative research. This would also help in the interpretation of the results of this study and the explanation of the differences between down- and upstream SCM.

Furthermore, a future study could look at some companies in more detail, thus to take focal firms, do for instance interviews with the employees who interact with foreign clients and suppliers and then also to interview their counterparts at the foreign suppliers and clients to see if the employees of the focal firms consider national culture or if they only think they do. Also, it could be checked how much the counterparts already adapt to the national culture of the focal firms as well as how they perceive the employees of the focal firms to adapt to them or not.
Future research could also pick up on the conceptual model developed in this thesis and try it out on a larger and random sample including also more culturally diverse clients and suppliers. This would show if the Cronbach’s alpha would then also be higher as the bigger sample would reduce the effect of extreme responses (but not yet outliers) as it would provide a broader data calculation basis. Moreover, the survey questionnaire could be extended so that each national cultural factor could be asked through multiple questions, which would increase the reliability and allow for more accurate measurement of the different factors. This would also open the possibility to exclude then factors in case it is discovered that they do not measure the actual concept and is most likely to also increase the value of Cronbach’s alpha. A bigger sample size will also allow the use of more elaborate statistics, which in turn will lead to more insights.

6.5 Social and/or Sustainability Aspects of this Degree Project

Globalization is a very highly debated topic affecting societies on a large scale. The interaction of people between different national cultures can be very challenging whereas if one is aware of the cultural differences and considers them, these challenges can be dealt with in a successful way resulting in mutual benefits for both parties and creating a better understanding. The present thesis is promoting the increase of awareness of national cultural differences in a B2B SCM context. Through the surveys, which more than 195 companies received, the recipients already saw the topic and thus could make the connection that national culture most probably is affecting SCM and that this was the reason why the topic was researched. Even more, those who filled in the survey have become through the questions they were asked aware of the different aspects of national culture, which might have made them reflect upon their own behaviour.

Furthermore, this thesis is through the connection of culture, SCM and marketing interdisciplinary and thus promotes research, which integrates theories and perspectives from different research fields.
This degree project is sent to the respondents of the survey who indicated the wish to receive the final thesis with the results and will also be published in the online archive DiVA portal. Furthermore, it will also be available in the library of LNU.
7. References


Cadden, T., Marshall, D., Humphreys, P. & Yang, Y., 2015. Old habits die hard: exploring the effect of supply chain dependency and culture on performance


8. Appendix

8.1 Email invitation to survey

Dear Madam, / Dear Sir,

You are receiving this email because Ms. Birgitta Kristoffersson has agreed on forwarding my Bachelor Thesis Survey to all members of Ljungby Business Arena. I am a student of the International Sales and Marketing Programme in Ljungby. Currently, I am working on my Bachelor Thesis on the topic of National Culture in business-to-business (B2B) Supply Chain Management for which I am conducting a survey. The survey is in English and divided into two parts; one survey requires knowledge of the handling of the supplier side of the supply chain management (upstream) and the other survey concerns the client side of the supply chain management (downstream) both in a business-to-business context. Each survey takes about 7 minutes to be completed and consist solely of multiple choice questions. In order to be able to fill in the survey, you need to be interacting with at least one foreign supplier respectively client (depending on which survey you fill in) in a business-to-business context.

The aim of the survey is to find out how national culture is addressed within the supply chain management by enterprises in practice in a business-to-business context and more specifically if there are variables that impact the consideration of national culture.

For this purpose, I would like to ask you to complete the surveys below (or to forward the links to persons working in this area for completion) until Wednesday, May 8, 2019. Your participation would be highly appreciated and contribute to the success of this survey.

Downstream / Client side survey on National Culture in Supply Chain Management:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3TVB5GG
Upstream / Supplier side survey on National Culture in Supply Chain Management: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3XHR655

Your answers are anonymous and hence cannot be traced back to you nor your company. The gathered data will be treated confidentially and will solely be used for the purpose of this study, which is a study on Bachelor level at Linnaeus University/CIL. In case you will have questions with regard to survey content, the use of your answers or any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me by email rb222pk@student.lnu.se.

Thank you very much in advance for your time devoted to these surveys! I appreciate your participation a lot! Have a good week.

Kind regards,

Romy Brand
Bachelor student at LNU/CIL/Bern University of Applied Sciences
8.2 Survey questionnaires

Survey questionnaire “Downstream / Client side survey on National Culture in business-to-business (B2B) Supply Chain Management” as it was presented in the online survey tool SurveyMonkey. The design was also compatible with smartphones. The questions were shown in the centre and when the answer was chosen, the system moved automatically the next question into the centre (the other questions faded visible).

Page 1

downstream / client side supply chain management survey

Welcome to the survey on National Culture in business-to-business (B2B) Supply Chain Management!

Thank you very much that you’ve decided to devote some of your precious time for this survey.

This is the questionnaire for downstream / client side supply chain management. If you are working in upstream / supplier side supply chain management then please go back to the email and choose the other link for the Upstream / Supplier side questionnaire. In order to be able to fill in the survey, you need to be interacting with at least one foreign client in a business-to-business context and refer your answers to this one.

The questionnaire will take you about 7 minutes and will ask you questions with regard to National Culture in B2B Supply Chain in your company. There is no right or wrong reply to any of the questions and I thus would like to encourage you to reply according to how you do it in everyday practice. Your answers will be anonymous and can hence not be traced back to you or your company. The data will be treated confidentially and will solely be used for the purpose of this study, which is a study on Bachelor level at Linnaeus University/CIL. In case you’ll have questions with regard to survey content, the use of your answers or any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me by email rb222pk@student.lnu.se.

Kind regards,

Romy Brand
Bachelor Student in International Sales and Marketing at LNU/CIL/Bern University of Applied Sciences
downstream / client side supply chain management survey

*1. In which region do you have most of your clients located (the clients you personally interact with)?

- Nordic (e.g. Denmark, Norway)
- Germanic (e.g. Germany, Austria)
- Latin Europe (e.g. France, Spain)
- East Europe (e.g. Russia, Poland, Hungary, Albania)
- Near East (Greece, Turkey)
- Latin America (e.g. Argentina, Brazil, Puerto Rico)
- Arab (e.g. Morocco, Kuwait)
- Far East (e.g. Iran, Thailand, India, Indonesia)
- Confucian Asia (e.g. China, South Korea)
- Anglo (e.g. Australia, Canada, UK, USA)
- African (e.g. Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia)

Page 3

downstream / client side supply chain management survey

Instructions
Please answer the following questions based on the clients you were thinking of when responding to this first question and how you do it in everyday practice.

*2. How much do you know about the national cultures of the countries your clients are located in (e.g. religion, customs, attitudes, dressing etc.)?

- 1 nothing
- 2 few things
- 3 some things
- 4 quite a lot
- 5 a lot
* 3. How likely are you to adjust your language level to the language skills of your clients (e.g. if your counterpart has a lower level of English do you use simpler words/sentences)?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely

* 4. How likely are you to adjust the expressions you use (e.g. idioms and comparisons for instance “att köpa grisen i säck”) to the country background of your clients?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely

* 5. How likely are you to employ different styles of communication (e.g. more indirect (message between the lines, not directly spoken out) instead of direct (message spoken out straight forward) in talking, more authoritarian than amenable, body language) with your clients depending on from which country they come from?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely
* 6. How likely are you to employ different ways of communication (e.g. *more phone calls instead of emails*) with your clients depending on from which country they come from?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely

* 7. How likely are you to employ different negotiation strategies (e.g. *higher price but then giving a considerable discount, setting price fixed with only marginal discount, pushing for deals or taking a lot of time for negotiations etc.*) with your clients depending on from which country they come from?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely

* 8. How likely are you to display a different level of *commitment* towards your clients to adapt to them only depending on the country your clients come from?

*commitment* (e.g. actions or words to emphasize how much attached you feel to the relationship, how important it is to you, that you want to continue working with them for long-term, efforts you put for the maintenance of the relationship)

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely
9. How likely are you to display a different level of trust (e.g. do you take other actions or say different things to look more reliable, and trustworthy from the clients perspective, do you put more time (meetings) for trust building) towards your clients to adapt to them only depending on the country your clients come from?

○ 1 very unlikely
○ 2 unlikely
○ 3 about as likely as unlikely
○ 4 likely
○ 5 very likely

10. How likely are you to adapt the way you dress based on from which country your clients come from?

○ 1 very unlikely
○ 2 unlikely
○ 3 about as likely as unlikely
○ 4 likely
○ 5 very likely

11. How likely are you to change your food habits (choice of meal) at a business lunch or dinner to adapt to the customs of the country your clients come from?

○ 1 very unlikely
○ 2 unlikely
○ 3 about as likely as unlikely
○ 4 likely
○ 5 very likely
downstream / client side supply chain management survey

*12. To what extent do you have guidelines (formally written and/or informally practised in your company) from your company which you need to follow when interacting and communicating with clients from different countries?

- 1 none at all
- 2 to some extent
- 3 to a moderate extent
- 4 to a high extent
- 5 to a very high extent

This is a filter question. If respondents replied “1 none at all” then they were directed to question 14 (then numbered 13 and so on, thus they had 21 questions). Respondents replying with any of the other options continued with question 13 below and hence had 22 questions in total.
downstream / client side supply chain management survey

* 13. What areas/topics do these guidelines cover? Please tick (all) the corresponding ones.

☐ Commitment
☐ Trust
☐ Language skills
☐ Language (with regard to content)
☐ Way of communication
☐ Style of communication
☐ Negotiation strategy choice
☐ Dress-code
☐ Food habits/choices in business settings
☐ Other(s):

* 14. What’s your personal leeway in making decisions with regard to how to interact and communicate with clients from different countries (consider the consequences you face in cases of not adhering to rules e.g. there are rules but no one controls you or says something if they are not followed, means you have a high leeway)?

☐ 1 I’m bound to guidelines, I don’t decide myself
☐ 2 I’m pretty bound to guidelines, I can decide only a few things myself
☐ 3 I’m about half bound to guidelines, half I can decide myself
☐ 4 I’m only little bound to guidelines, I can decide a lot myself
☐ 5 I have full decision power and can interact and communicate as I please
15. Please indicate for how long you've been working personally with clients from abroad.

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 and more years

16. Please indicate whether you work in upstream (supplier side), downstream (client side) supply chain management or both and your current position (job title).

- Upstream (supplier side)
- Downstream (client side)
- Both

Job title: 

17. Please indicate the year you were born in (e.g. 1986).

18. Please indicate your gender.

- Female
- Male
- Diverse
19. How many employees in terms of full-time level of employment (100%) are employed in your company (including subsidiaries in and outside Sweden)? E.g. Employee A works 40% and employee B works 60% = 100% hence counts as 1 employee

- 1-9 employees
- 10-49 employees
- 50-249 employees
- 250 and more employees

20. Which industry/industries is your company working in? *Please tick the corresponding one(s), multiple answers are possible.*

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Mining and quarrying
- Manufacturing
- Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
- Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities
- Construction
- Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
- Transportation and storage
- Accommodation and food service activities
- Information and communication
- Financial and insurance activities
- Real estate activities
- Professional, scientific and technical activities
- Administrative and support service activities
- Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
- Education
- Human health and social work activities
- Arts, entertainment and recreation
- Other service activities
downstream / client side supply chain management survey

21. Would you like to add any remarks/comments/feedback?

- No
- Yes:

22. Would you like to receive the final thesis with the results of this survey by email at the beginning of June?

- No
- Yes, my email address is:

Page 7

downstream / client side supply chain management survey

Thank you very much for your time!
I highly appreciate your participation!
Have a nice day.

Kind regards,
Romy Brand

OK
Survey questionnaire “Upstream / Supplier side survey on National Culture in business-to-business (B2B) Supply Chain Management” as it was presented in the online survey tool SurveyMonkey. The design was also compatible with smartphones. The questions were shown in the centre and when the answer was chosen, the system moved automatically the next question into the centre (the other questions faded visible).

Page 1

**upstream / supplier side supply chain management survey**

Welcome to the survey on National Culture in business-to-business (B2B) Supply Chain Management!

Thank you very much that you’ve decided to devote some of your precious time for this survey.

**This is the questionnaire for upstream / supplier side supply chain management.** If you are working in downstream / client side supply chain management then please go back to the email and choose the other link for the Downstream / Client side questionnaire. In order to be able to fill in the survey, **you need to be interacting with at least one foreign supplier in a business-to-business context** and refer your answers to this one.

The questionnaire will take you about 7 minutes and will ask you questions with regard to National Culture in B2B Supply Chain in your company. There is **no right or wrong reply to any of the questions** and I thus would like to encourage you to reply according to how you do it in everyday practice. Your answers will be **anonymous** and can hence not be traced back to you or your company. The data will be treated **confidentially** and will solely be used for the purpose of this study, which is a study on Bachelor level at Linnaeus University/CIL. In case you'll have questions with regard to survey content, the use of your answers or any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me by email rb222pk@student.lnu.se.

Kind regards,

Romy Brand
Bachelor Student in International Sales and Marketing at LNU/CIL/Bern University of Applied Sciences
upstream / supplier side supply chain management survey

* 1. In which region do you have most of your suppliers located (the suppliers you personally interact with)?

- Nordic (e.g. Denmark, Norway)
- Germanic (e.g. Germany, Austria)
- Latin Europe (e.g. France, Spain)
- East Europe (e.g. Russia, Poland, Hungary, Albania)
- Near East (Greece, Turkey)
- Latin America (e.g. Argentina, Brazil, Puerto Rico)
- Arab (e.g. Morocco, Kuwait)
- Far East (e.g. Iran, Thailand, India, Indonesia)
- Confucian Asia (e.g. China, South Korea)
- Anglo (e.g. Australia, Canada, UK, USA)
- African (e.g. Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia)

Page 3

upstream / supplier side supply chain management survey

Instructions

Please answer the following questions based on the suppliers you were thinking of when responding to this first question and how you do it in everyday practice.

![OK button]

* 2. How much do you know about the national cultures of the countries your suppliers are located in (e.g. religion, customs, attitudes, dressing etc.)?

- 1 nothing
- 2 few things
- 3 some things
- 4 quite a lot
- 5 a lot
* 3. How likely are you to adjust your language level to the language skills of your suppliers (e.g. if your counterpart has a lower level of English do you use simpler words/sentences)?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely

* 4. How likely are you to adjust the expressions you use (e.g. idioms and comparisons for instance “att köpa gris i säcken”) to the country background of your suppliers?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely

* 5. How likely are you to employ different styles of communication (e.g. more indirect (message between the lines, not directly spoken out) instead of direct (message spoken out straight forward) in talking, more authoritarian than amenable, body language) with your suppliers depending on from which country they come from?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely
6. How likely are you to employ different ways of communication (e.g. more phone calls instead of emails) with your suppliers depending on from which country they come from?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely

7. How likely are you to employ different negotiation strategies (e.g. higher price but then giving a considerable discount, setting price fixed with only marginal discount, pushing for deals or taking a lot of time for negotiations etc.) with your suppliers depending on from which country they come from?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely

8. How likely are you to display a different level of commitment towards your suppliers to adapt to them only depending on the country your suppliers come from?

*commitment (e.g. actions or words to emphasize how much attached you feel to the relationship, how important it is to you, that you want to continue working with them for long-term, efforts you put for the maintenance of the relationship)

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely
9. How likely are you to display a different level of trust (e.g. do you take other actions or say different things to look more reliable, and trustworthy from the suppliers perspective, do you put more time (meetings) for trust building) towards your suppliers to adapt to them only depending on the country your suppliers come from?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely

10. How likely are you to adapt the way you dress based on from which country your suppliers come from?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely

11. How likely are you to change your food habits (choice of meal) at a business lunch or dinner to adapt to the customs of the country your suppliers come from?

- 1 very unlikely
- 2 unlikely
- 3 about as likely as unlikely
- 4 likely
- 5 very likely
upstream / supplier side supply chain management survey

12. To what extent do you have guidelines (formally written and/or informally practised in your company) from your company which you need to follow when interacting and communicating with suppliers from different countries?

- 1 none at all
- 2 to some extent
- 3 to a moderate extent
- 4 to a high extent
- 5 to a very high extent

This is a filter question. If respondents replied “1 none at all” then they were directed to question 14 (then numbered 13 and so on, thus they had 21 questions). Respondents replying with any of the other options continued with question 13 below and hence had 22 questions in total.
upstream / supplier side supply chain management survey

*13. What areas/topics do these guidelines cover? Please tick (all) the corresponding ones.

☐ Commitment
☐ Trust
☐ Language skills
☐ Language (with regard to content)
☐ Way of communication
☐ Style of communication
☐ Negotiation strategy choice
☐ Dress-code
☐ Food habits/choices in business settings
☐ Other(s):

* 14. What’s your personal leeway in making decisions with regard to how to interact and communicate with suppliers from different countries (consider the consequences you face in cases of not adhering to rules e.g., there are rules but no one controls you or says something if they are not followed, means you have a high leeway)?

☐ 1 I’m bound to guidelines, I don’t decide myself
☐ 2 I’m pretty bound to guidelines, I can decide only a few things myself
☐ 3 I’m about half bound to guidelines, half I can decide myself
☐ 4 I’m only little bound to guidelines, I can decide a lot myself
☐ 5 I have full decision power and can interact and communicate as I please
* 15. Please indicate for how long you’ve been working personally with suppliers from abroad.

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 and more years

* 16. Please indicate whether you work in upstream (supplier side), downstream (client side) supply chain management or both and your current position (job title).

- Upstream (supplier side)
- Downstream (client side)
- Both

Job title: 

* 17. Please indicate the year you were born in (e.g. 1986).

* 18. Please indicate your gender.

- Female
- Male
- Diverse
* 19. How many employees in terms of full-time level of employment (100%) are employed in your company (including subsidiaries in and outside Sweden)? E.g. Employee A works 40% and employee B works 60% = 100% hence counts as 1 employee

☐ 1-9 employees
☐ 10-49 employees
☐ 50-249 employees
☐ 250 and more employees

* 20. Which industry/industries is your company working in? Please tick the corresponding one(s), multiple answers are possible.

☐ Agriculture, forestry and fishing
☐ Mining and quarrying
☐ Manufacturing
☐ Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
☐ Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities
☐ Construction
☐ Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
☐ Transportation and storage
☐ Accommodation and food service activities
☐ Information and communication
☐ Financial and insurance activities
☐ Real estate activities
☐ Professional, scientific and technical activities
☐ Administrative and support service activities
☐ Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
☐ Education
☐ Human health and social work activities
☐ Arts, entertainment and recreation
☐ Other service activities
upstream / supplier side supply chain management survey

21. Would you like to add any remarks/comments/feedback?

☐ No
☐ Yes:

22. Would you like to receive the final thesis with the results of this survey by email at the beginning of June?

☐ No
☐ Yes, my email address is:

Page 7

upstream / supplier side supply chain management survey

Thank you very much for your time!
I highly appreciate your participation!
Have a nice day.

Kind regards,
Romy Brand
8.3 Reminder Email

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

On April 26th, you were invited to fill in a survey (see initial email below). Unfortu-
unately, only 2 people have filled in the survey. The survey and with it my thesis,
however, stands or falls with the number of responses. Hence, I'm very much de-
pendent on your collaboration; please take about 5-6 minutes of your time to fill in
the survey until very latest Tuesday, 14th May, 2019, 20:00 o'clock or forward it to
people who can fill it in. I'd really appreciate it a lot.

You can fill in the survey online (see links below) or via the attached Word form
(click on the box you want to answer, save the document and send it to
rb222pk@student.lnu.se).

Downstream / Client side survey on National Culture in B2B Supply Chain Manage-
ment:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3TVB5GG
Upstream / Supplier side survey on National Culture in B2B Supply Chain Manage-
ment:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3XHR655

Thank you very much in advance for your numerous participation!

Kind regards,

Romy Brand
Bachelor student
8.4 Survey forms from the reminder

Downstream / Client side survey Word form

Page 1

downstream / client side supply chain management survey

Welcome to the survey on National Culture in business-to-business (B2B) Supply Chain Management!

Thank you very much that you’ve decided to devote some of your precious time for this survey.

This is the questionnaire for downstream / client side supply chain management. If you are working in upstream / supplier side supply chain management then please go back to the email and choose the other link for the Upstream / Supplier side questionnaire. In order to be able to fill in the survey, you need to be interacting with at least one foreign client in a business-to-business context and refer your answers to this one.

The questionnaire will take you about 7 minutes and will ask you questions with regard to National Culture in B2B Supply Chain in your company. There is no right or wrong reply to any of the questions and I thus would like to encourage you to reply according to how you do it in everyday practice. Your answers will be anonymous and can hence not be traced back to you or your company. The data will be treated confidentially and will solely be used for the purpose of this study, which is a study on Bachelor level at Linnæus University/CIL. In case you’ll have questions with regard to survey content, the use of your answers or any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me by email rb222pk@student.linu.se.

Kind regards,

Romy Brand
Bachelor Student in International Sales and Marketing at LNU/CIL/Bern University of Applied Sciences
Please only choose one answer option (except for where it is written that several are possible)

1. In which region do you have most of your clients located (the clients you personally interact with)?
   - Nordic (e.g. Denmark, Norway)
   - Germanic (e.g. Germany, Austria)
   - Latin Europe (e.g. France, Spain)
   - East Europe (e.g. Russia, Poland, Hungary, Albania)
   - Near East (Greece, Turkey)
   - Latin America (e.g. Argentina, Brazil, Puerto Rico)
   - Arab (e.g. Morocco, Kuwait)
   - Far East (e.g. Iran, Thailand, India, Indonesia)
   - Confucian Asia (e.g. China, South Korea)
   - Anglo (e.g. Australia, Canada, UK, USA)
   - African (e.g. Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia)

Please answer the following questions based on the clients you were thinking of when responding to this first question and how you do it in everyday practice.

Page 2

2. How much do you know about the national cultures of the countries your clients are located in (e.g. religion, customs, attitudes, dressing etc.)?
   - 1 nothing
   - 2 few things
   - 3 some things
   - 4 quite a lot
   - 5 a lot

3. How likely are you to adjust your language level to the language skills of your clients (e.g. if your counterpart has a lower level of English do you use simpler words/sentences)?
   - 1 Very unlikely
   - 2 Unlikely
   - 3 About as likely as unlikely
   - 4 Likely
   - 5 Very likely
4. How likely are you to adjust the expressions you use (e.g. idioms and comparisons for instance "att köpa grisen i sacket") to the country background of your clients?

- [ ] 1 Very unlikely
- [ ] 2 Unlikely
- [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
- [ ] 4 Likely
- [ ] 5 Very likely

5. How likely are you to employ different styles of communication (e.g. more indirect (message between the lines, not directly spoken out) instead of direct (message spoken out straightforward) in talking, more authoritarian than amenable, body language) with your clients depending on from which country they come from?

- [ ] 1 Very unlikely
- [ ] 2 Unlikely
- [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
- [ ] 4 Likely
- [ ] 5 Very likely

6. How likely are you to employ different ways of communication (e.g. more phone calls instead of emails) with your clients depending on from which country they come from?

- [ ] 1 Very unlikely
- [ ] 2 Unlikely
- [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
- [ ] 4 Likely
- [ ] 5 Very likely

Page 3

7. How likely are you to employ different negotiation strategies (e.g. higher price but then giving a considerable discount, setting price fixed with only marginal discount, pushing for deals or taking a lot of time for negotiations etc.) with your clients depending on from which country they come from?

- [ ] 1 Very unlikely
- [ ] 2 Unlikely
- [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
- [ ] 4 Likely
- [ ] 5 Very likely
8. How likely are you to display a different level of commitment towards your clients to adapt to them only depending on the country your clients come from?

   *commitment* (e.g. actions or words to emphasize how much attached you feel to the relationship, how important it is to you, that you want to continue working with them for long-term, efforts you put for the maintenance of the relationship)

   - [ ] 1 Very unlikely
   - [ ] 2 Unlikely
   - [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
   - [ ] 4 Likely
   - [ ] 5 Very likely

9. How likely are you to display a different level of trust (e.g. do you take other actions or say different things to look more reliable, and trustworthy from the clients’ perspective, do you put more time (meetings) for trust building) towards your clients to adapt to them only depending on the country your clients come from?

   - [ ] 1 Very unlikely
   - [ ] 2 Unlikely
   - [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
   - [ ] 4 Likely
   - [ ] 5 Very likely

10. How likely are you to adapt the way you dress based on from which country your clients come from?

    - [ ] 1 Very unlikely
    - [ ] 2 Unlikely
    - [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
    - [ ] 4 Likely
    - [ ] 5 Very likely

11. How likely are you to change your food habits (choice of meal) at a business lunch or dinner to adapt to the customs of the country your clients come from?

    - [ ] 1 Very unlikely
    - [ ] 2 Unlikely
    - [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
    - [ ] 4 Likely
    - [ ] 5 Very likely

91 (100)
12. To what extent do you have guidelines (formally written and/or informally practised in your company) from your company which you need to follow when interacting and communicating with clients from different countries?

- 1 None at all (please skip question nr. 13 and continue with nr. 14)
- 2 To some extent
- 3 To a moderate extent
- 4 To a high extent
- 5 To a very high extent

13. What areas/topics do these guidelines cover? Please tick (all) the corresponding ones.

- Commitment
- Trust
- Language skills
- Language (with regard to content)
- Way of communication
- Style of communication
- Negotiation strategy choice
- Dress-code
- Food habits/choicos in business settings
- Other(s) (please specify) __________

14. What’s your personal leeway in making decisions with regard to how to interact and communicate with clients from different countries (consider the consequences you face in cases of not adhering to rules e.g. there are rules but no one controls you or says something if they are not followed, means you have a high leeway)?

- 1 I’m bound to guidelines, I don’t decide myself
- 2 I’m pretty bound to guidelines, I can decide only a few things myself
- 3 I’m about half bound to guidelines, half I can decide myself
- 4 I’m only little bound to guidelines, I can decide a lot myself
- 5 I have full decision power and can interact and communicate as I please

15. Please indicate for how long you’ve been working personally with clients from abroad.

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 and more years
16. Please indicate whether you work in upstream (supplier side), downstream (client side) supply chain management or both and your current position (job title).
   □ Upstream (supplier side)
   □ Downstream (client side)
   □ Both
   Job title:  

17. Please indicate the year you were born in (e.g. 1986).

16. Please indicate your gender.
   □ Female
   □ Male
   □ Diverse

19. How many employees in terms of full-time level of employment (100%) are employed in your company (including subsidiaries in and outside Sweden)? E.g. Employee A works 40% and employee B works 60% = 100% hence counts as 1 employee
   □ 1-9 employees
   □ 10-49 employees
   □ 50-249 employees
   □ 250 and more employees

---

20. Would you like to add any remarks/comments/feedback?
   □ No
   □ Yes:  

21. Would you like to receive the final thesis with the results of this survey by email at the beginning of June?
   □ No
   □ Yes:  

Thank you for participating in this survey!

Please send the filled in form to rb222pk@student.lnu.se until Tuesday, 14th May 2019
upstream / supplier side supply chain management survey

Welcome to the survey on National Culture in business-to-business (B2B) Supply Chain Management!

Thank you very much that you’ve decided to devote some of your precious time for this survey.

This is the questionnaire for upstream / supplier side supply chain management. If you are working in downstream / client side supply chain management then please go back to the email and choose the other link for the Downstream / Client side questionnaire. In order to be able to fill in the survey, you need to be interacting with at least one foreign supplier in a business-to-business context and refer your answers to this one.

The questionnaire will take you about 7 minutes and will ask you questions with regard to National Culture in B2B Supply Chain in your company. There is no right or wrong reply to any of the questions and I thus would like to encourage you to reply according to how you do it in everyday practice. Your answers will be anonymous and can hence not be traced back to you or your company. The data will be treated confidentially and will solely be used for the purpose of this study, which is a study on Bachelor level at Linnaeus University/CIL. In case you’ll have questions with regard to survey content, the use of your answers or any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me by email rb222pk@student.lnu.se.

Kind regards,

Romy Brand
Bachelor Student in International Sales and Marketing at LNU/CIL/Bern University of Applied Sciences


Please only choose one answer option (except for where it is written that several are possible).

1. In which region do you have most of your suppliers located (the suppliers you personally interact with)?
   - Nordic (e.g. Denmark, Norway)
   - Germanic (e.g. Germany, Austria)
   - Latin Europe (e.g. France, Spain)
   - East Europe (e.g. Russia, Poland, Hungary, Albania)
   - Near East (e.g. Greece, Turkey)
   - Latin America (e.g. Argentina, Brazil, Puerto Rico)
   - Arab (e.g. Morocco, Kuwait)
   - Far East (e.g. Iran, Thailand, India, Indonesia)
   - Confucian Asia (e.g. China, South Korea)
   - Anglo (e.g. Australia, Canada, UK, USA)
   - African (e.g. Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia)

Please answer the following questions based on the suppliers you were thinking of when responding to this first question and how you do it in everyday practice.

Page 2

2. How much do you know about the national cultures of the countries your suppliers are located in (e.g. religion, customs, attitudes, dressing etc.)?
   - 1 nothing
   - 2 few things
   - 3 some things
   - 4 quite a lot
   - 5 a lot

3. How likely are you to adjust your language level to the language skills of your suppliers (e.g. if your counterpart has a lower level of English do you use simpler words/sentences)?
   - 1 Very unlikely
   - 2 Unlikely
   - 3 About as likely as unlikely
   - 4 Likely
   - 5 Very likely
4. How likely are you to adjust the expressions you use (e.g. idioms and comparisons for instance "att köpa grisen i säcken") to the country background of your suppliers?
   - 1 Very unlikely
   - 2 Unlikely
   - 3 About as likely as unlikely
   - 4 Likely
   - 5 Very likely

5. How likely are you to employ different styles of communication (e.g. more indirect (message between the lines, not directly spoken out) instead of direct (message spoken out straightforward) in talking, more authoritarian than amenable, body language) with your suppliers depending on from which country they come from?
   - 1 Very unlikely
   - 2 Unlikely
   - 3 About as likely as unlikely
   - 4 Likely
   - 5 Very likely

6. How likely are you to employ different ways of communication (e.g. more phone calls instead of emails) with your suppliers depending on from which country they come from?
   - 1 Very unlikely
   - 2 Unlikely
   - 3 About as likely as unlikely
   - 4 Likely
   - 5 Very likely

7. How likely are you to employ different negotiation strategies (e.g. higher price but then giving a considerable discount, setting price fixed with only marginal discount, pushing for deals or taking a lot of time for negotiations etc.) with your suppliers depending on from which country they come from?
   - 1 Very unlikely
   - 2 Unlikely
   - 3 About as likely as unlikely
   - 4 Likely
   - 5 Very likely
8. How likely are you to display a different level of *commitment* towards your suppliers to adapt to them only depending on the country your suppliers come from?

*commitment* (e.g. actions or words to emphasize how much attached you feel to the relationship, how important it is to you, that you want to continue working with them for long-term, efforts you put for the maintenance of the relationship)

- [ ] 1 Very unlikely
- [ ] 2 Unlikely
- [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
- [ ] 4 Likely
- [ ] 5 Very likely

9. How likely are you to display a different level of trust (e.g. do you take other actions or say different things to look more reliable, and trustworthy from the suppliers' perspective, do you put more time (meetings) for trust building) towards your suppliers to adapt to them only depending on the country your suppliers come from?

- [ ] 1 Very unlikely
- [ ] 2 Unlikely
- [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
- [ ] 4 Likely
- [ ] 5 Very likely

10. How likely are you to adapt the way you dress based on from which country your suppliers come from?

- [ ] 1 Very unlikely
- [ ] 2 Unlikely
- [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
- [ ] 4 Likely
- [ ] 5 Very likely

11. How likely are you to change your food habits (choice of meal) at a business lunch or dinner to adapt to the customs of the country your suppliers come from?

- [ ] 1 Very unlikely
- [ ] 2 Unlikely
- [ ] 3 About as likely as unlikely
- [ ] 4 Likely
- [ ] 5 Very likely
12. To what extent do you have guidelines (formally written and/or informally practised in your company) from your company which you need to follow when interacting and communicating with suppliers from different countries?

- [ ] 1 None at all (please skip question nr. 13 and continue with nr. 14)
- [ ] 2 To some extent
- [ ] 3 To a moderate extent
- [ ] 4 To a high extent
- [ ] 5 To a very high extent

13. What areas/topics do those guidelines cover? Please tick (all) the corresponding ones.

- [ ] Commitment
- [ ] Trust
- [ ] Language skills
- [ ] Language (with regard to content)
- [ ] Way of communication
- [ ] Style of communication
- [ ] Negotiation strategy choice
- [ ] Dress-code
- [ ] Food habits/choices in business settings
- [ ] Other(s) (please specify):  

14. What's your personal leeway in making decisions with regard to how to interact and communicate with suppliers from different countries (consider the consequences you face in cases of not adhering to rules e.g. there are rules but no one controls you or says something if they are not followed, means you have a high leeway)?

- [ ] 1 I'm bound to guidelines, I don't decide myself
- [ ] 2 I'm pretty bound to guidelines, I can decide only a few things myself
- [ ] 3 I'm about half bound to guidelines, half I can decide myself
- [ ] 4 I'm only little bound to guidelines, I can decide a lot myself
- [ ] 5 I have full decision power and can interact and communicate as I please

15. Please indicate for how long you've been working personally with suppliers from abroad.

- [ ] 0-2 years
- [ ] 3-5 years
- [ ] 6-10 years
- [ ] 11 and more years
15. Please indicate whether you work in upstream (supplier side), downstream (client side) supply chain management or both and your current position (job title).
   - [ ] Upstream (supplier side)
   - [ ] Downstream (client side)
   - [ ] Both
   Job title: 

17. Please indicate the year you were born in (e.g. 1986).

18. Please indicate your gender.
   - [ ] Female
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Diverse

19. How many employees in terms of full-time level of employment (100%) are employed in your company (including subsidiaries in and outside Sweden)? E.g. Employee A works 40% and employee B works 60% = 100% hence counts as 1 employee
   - [ ] 1-9 employees
   - [ ] 10-49 employees
   - [ ] 50-249 employees
   - [ ] 250 and more employees

20. Would you like to add any remarks/comments/feedback?
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Yes: 

21. Would you like to receive the final thesis with the results of this survey by email at the beginning of June?
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Yes: 

Thank you for participating in this survey!

Please send the filled in form to rb222pk@student.lnu.se until Tuesday, 14th May 2019
8.5 Details on Cronbach’s Alpha

### Downstream (client side) survey Item-Total-Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
<th>Squared Multiple Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language skills</td>
<td>24.7647</td>
<td>29.816</td>
<td>-0.255</td>
<td>0.317</td>
<td>0.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language (content)</td>
<td>25.3529</td>
<td>29.868</td>
<td>-0.218</td>
<td>0.327</td>
<td>0.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style of communication</td>
<td>26.1176</td>
<td>23.235</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td>0.609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of communication</td>
<td>26.1765</td>
<td>22.779</td>
<td>0.455</td>
<td>0.739</td>
<td>0.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation strategy</td>
<td>25.8824</td>
<td>24.485</td>
<td>0.204</td>
<td>0.192</td>
<td>0.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>26.8235</td>
<td>21.904</td>
<td>0.643</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td>0.549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>26.4706</td>
<td>24.515</td>
<td>0.217</td>
<td>0.757</td>
<td>0.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress code</td>
<td>26.5294</td>
<td>17.015</td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td>0.864</td>
<td>0.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food habits</td>
<td>26.2353</td>
<td>17.941</td>
<td>0.697</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>0.493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Upstream (supplier side) survey Item-Total-Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
<th>Squared Multiple Correlation</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language skills</td>
<td>23.0500</td>
<td>25.839</td>
<td>-0.217</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>0.513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language (content)</td>
<td>23.4000</td>
<td>19.621</td>
<td>0.253</td>
<td>0.354</td>
<td>0.354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style of communication</td>
<td>23.9000</td>
<td>18.937</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td>0.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of communication</td>
<td>23.9500</td>
<td>20.997</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.435</td>
<td>0.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation strategy</td>
<td>24.0500</td>
<td>25.629</td>
<td>-0.201</td>
<td>0.640</td>
<td>0.518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>25.2000</td>
<td>19.326</td>
<td>0.411</td>
<td>0.719</td>
<td>0.304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>24.1000</td>
<td>21.674</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>0.344</td>
<td>0.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress code</td>
<td>24.9000</td>
<td>17.989</td>
<td>0.414</td>
<td>0.427</td>
<td>0.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food habits</td>
<td>24.2500</td>
<td>17.776</td>
<td>0.442</td>
<td>0.651</td>
<td>0.267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>