

Trust and Communication in a Virtual Working Environment: A Case Study

International Business Communication
Master's thesis
Meri Meriem Eerikiharju
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Aalto University
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Objective of the Study

This research aimed to discover the importance of trust and communication in a virtual working environment. The case company ABB Oy is an international engineering company and the case team focuses on the service of warranty repairs. This team works virtually daily and communicates through all continents daily. The research questions set were the following: (1) What is the role of trust and communication in a virtual environment? (2) What is the role of trust and communication in a global virtual team? (3) What is the importance of tools provided by the organization? (4) How does language and culture affect the communication? (5) How can global virtual teams work efficiently?

Methodology and the Theoretical Framework

This study used qualitative methods, semi-structured interviews to discuss the topics with the interviewees from the case team. Six interviews were conducted all together, including 4 nationalities across 3 continents. Interviews were conducted in English and in Finnish, transcribed then followed by a thematic analysis and finally findings were presented. The theoretical framework was built based on the research questions; on the role of trust in communication and how they both affect each other in the virtually working world, as the objective is to find out the importance of trust and communication in working relationships in the virtual setting.

Findings and Conclusions

Findings indicated that trust is indeed one of the most important elements at work place and communication plays a key role in forming relationships and trusting co-workers. Culture was brought up as well, especially when having to consider different habits and norms when working with an international organization such as the case study company. In a virtual setting active communication was considered an element for forming trust relationships at work and the opposite tended to reduce the trustworthiness of the other party. In order to work efficiently virtually, it was highly appreciated that the organization provides appropriate tools that do not slow down the processes.

Key Words: international business communication, trust, virtual working, virtual teams

Luottamus ja viestintä virtuaalisessa työympäristössä: Case tutkimus**Tutkimuksen tavoitteet**

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää luottamuksen ja viestinnän tärkeys virtuaalisessa työympäristössä. Case yritys ABB Oy on kansainvälinen insinööri organisaatio ja haastateltavien tiimi keskittyy takuuhuoltojen palveluihin. Tämä tiimi työskentelee päivittäin virtuaalisesti ja viestintää tapahtuu kaikkien mannerten välillä. Tutkimuskysymykset ovat seuraavat: (1) Mikä on luottamuksen ja viestinnän rooli virtuaalisess ympäristössä? (2) Mikä on luottamuksen ja viestinnän rooli virtuaalisessa tiimissä? (3) Mikä on organisaation tarjoamien työkalujen tärkeys? (4) Kuinka kieli ja kulttuuri vaikuttavat viestintään? (5) Kuinka virtuaalitiimit voivat työskennellä tehokkaasti?

Tutkimusmenetelmät ja teoreettinen viitekehys

Tämä tutkimus on kvalitatiivinen, käyttäen teemahaastattelu-rakennetta, joissa keskusteltiin tutkimusaiheista. Kuusi haastattelua suoritettiin, suomeksi ja englanniksi. Haastateltavat olivat kolmella eri mantereella ja edustivat neljää eri kansalaisuutta. Haastattelut litteroitiin, jonka jälkeen ne analysoitiin teemoittain ja näin saatiin esiteltyä tulokset. Teoreettinen viitekehys rakentui tutkimuskysymysten pohjalta perustuen luottamuksen ja viestinnän rooliin ja kuinka molemmat vaikuttivat toisiinsa virtuaalisessa työympäristössä, sillä tavoite oli selvittää näiden aiheiden tärkeys työsuhteiden rakentamisessa virtuaalisesti.

Tutkimuksen tulokset ja johtopäätökset

Tulokset osoittivat, että luottamus on yksi tärkeimmistä elementeistä työpaikalla ja viestinnällä on suuri vaikutus työsuhteiden luomisessa ja näin ollen luottamuksen rakentamisessa työympäristössä. Kulttuuri tuli esille tuloksissa myös, etenkin huomioidessa toisten tapoja ja normeja työskennellessään kansainvälisessä ympäristössä, kuten tämä case yritys. Virtuaalisessa ympäristössä viestintää pidettiin yhtenä tärkeimpänä tekijänä luottamuksen muodostamisessa ja vastakohta taas laski toisen osapuolen luotettavuutta. Tehokkaan työskentelyn saavuttamiseksi arvostettiin, että organisaatio tarjosi soveltuvia työkaluja tukemaan työskentelyä.

Avainsanat: kansainvälinen yritysviestintä, luottamus, virtuaalinen työympäristö

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1 Introduction

Our lives are surrounded by different kind of relationships; there is family, friends and acquaintances as well as friends from school, hobbies and work. Some relationships are valued more than others and some are built along the way. In order to have relationships with people, we require communication whatever method it is pursued through. Interaction with each other builds relationships. Communication is key and in some relationships it is clearer than in others. Communication on the other hand brings along trust, which then forms a foundation for the relationships. Personal relationships are their own subject, but when it comes to work relationships, everything is not seen the same. We spend in average 8 hours a day with our colleagues so it is inevitable relationships are being built through communication and trust is formed. As Ikonen (2013, p. 35) points out “trust is deeply involved in communication”, thus we are in a place to understand both words’ meanings and their role in organizations, especially when it comes to virtual working environment.

Trust and communication, are two big words. The role of trust at work has an important meaning, as Weckert (2000, p.245) notes that it is “difficult to have a well-functioning... workplace without a high level of trust”. He also highlights that the importance of trust has been ignored in relation to the workplace. Studies have been conducted on trust at work previously, focusing on different subjects. Strickland’s study from 1958 is amongst the early ones on trust, focusing on monitoring and how that affects trust amongst employees and managers. The major findings indicated that the person to have more monitoring had a smaller chance to be trusted by the supervisor and due to this, not getting a chance to prove the loyalty and trustworthiness (Strickland, 1958). Hence another study by Kruglanski’s (1970) developed Strickland’s study suggesting that trustworthiness of an

employee derives from reliability and deserving confidence by demonstrating to be hard workers. Yet, in order to achieve all this there needs to be communication and reciprocity as well. Recent studies have been centralized around the organizational aspect more strongly. Famous trust-researchers such as Rousseau (1994; 1995; 1998; 2001) have also contributed a lot especially on the relationship and psychological side, understanding what trust means and how it is built. One recent study by Ikonen (2013), which also influenced this research, investigated trust as an organizational phenomena and how it appeared on different organizational levels. Personal points of interests and past connections then lead to this topic of this thesis, trust and communication in a virtual working environment.

When we add the element of virtual work into the mix, more issues are to be considered. Nowadays international companies depend on virtual work one could say, and for it to be effective, communication and trust play a vital role in binding members together (Ikonen, 2013). In organizations, trust is seen as “social glue, a building block, an intangible asset, intellectual capital and a resource” (Ikonen, 2013, p.16). Hence, it can be said that trust is considered vital in nature in organizations (McKnight & Chervany, 1996). Trust can improve an organization’s competitiveness and especially cooperation amongst individuals and teams (Ikonen, 2013). Even previous research brings out a linkage towards organizational performance as well (McEvily et al, 2003).

Previous discussions have been mostly around the individual beliefs and how trust is perceived on that level. But trust isn’t the vital ingredient on the individual level only. Of course that is where it all starts, but being part of teams and an organization, further dimensions are added to the context. Gelfand and Fulmer (2012) present the different levels and referents of trust. It all starts from the individuals degree of trust, but is followed by the

degree of trust collectively shared by individuals within a unit. And from units and teams, it all leads to the combined degree of trust shared with sufficient consensus among members in an organization (Gelfand and Fulmer, 2012).

With this digitalized world organizations operate in, the trust building and cross-cultural conflict managing without the traditional face-to-face communication (Wasko et al, 2011), is one of the main challenges. Individuals need to trust the organization as an entity (Gelfand and Fulmer, 2012), and thus trust that their methods and tools are going to support the daily operations.

This research aims to find out how members of the case company trust the communication done virtually through supporting tools, which defines our research questions that are further presented in section 1.2 'Research Questions'. The importance of communication and trust has been noted especially in the context of global virtual teams (Sarker et al, 2011). As trust affects a lot of other elements at work such as performance and decisions (Robert et al, 2009) its importance is of higher value in virtual teams. Members communicate mainly through tools and information and communication technologies and are not in same geographical locations. These topics in the research position it in the international business communication setting as virtual work within this case company is performed internationally across 3 continents and the study examines trust in communication and its implementation and thus effectiveness in global virtual teams.

This research will aim to fill the gap of knowledge about trust and communication in virtual working environments. As a small limited research, there will unfortunately not be a chance of generalization, but new knowledge brought to the field certainly. This leads us to research questions

of how to trust the virtual communication in an organization. The research will bring new knowledge since previous studies have focused on the individual levels and how trust is perceived and how communication works in virtual teams, but no previous research is yet considering the subject on how to trust the tools provided by organizations such as platforms, software and equipment and thus, the communication through them. Most organizations focus almost all their communication on these tools, so it will be interesting to find out how members perceive them.

These members are a team from the chosen case company for this research, which is presented further in the following.

1.1 Case Team and Company ABB

This research's participants all work in the DriveHelp – team, where members are located in Finland, Estonia, China and Chile. This service and team started in the year of 2010, when it was realized a service between ABB-employees and end-customers were needed. The DriveHelp team provides support when organizing low-voltage product warranty repairs around the world.

ABB is a leader in power and automation technologies that enable utility and industry customers to improve performance while lowering environmental impact. Based in Zurich, Switzerland, the company employs about 140,000 people and operates in approximately 100 countries focusing on five divisions organized in relation to the customers and industries they serve: Power Products, Power Systems, Discrete Automation and Motion, Low Voltage Products and Process Automation. ABB in Finland operates over these five divisions with subdivisions added to them. In Finland, they also run Product Support, Service and Domestic Sales divisions.. The firm's shares are traded on the stock exchanges of Zurich, Stockholm and New York. The group is particularly proud of its record for innovation - widely

recognized through countless awards and scientific accolades. Many of the technologies we take for granted today, from ultra-efficient high-voltage direct current power transmission to a revolutionary approach to ship propulsion, were developed or commercialized by ABB.¹

Today ABB is the largest supplier of industrial motors and drives, the largest provider of generators to the wind industry and the largest supplier of power grids in the world. As the case company is an international organization, many cultures and languages are part of their daily operations and thus there is room for several interpretations.

After introducing the research and the case company and team involved, the following research questions are set to pursue this study.

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

This research aims to find out the role of trust and communication in a global virtual working environment. In order to narrow it down focus is on tools provided by the organization to conduct the daily tasks such as email, instant messaging and video calls and how all these together influence trust in the working relationship. The team of the case company presented consists of 6 persons working virtually on a daily basis, who were interviewed. The research questions are the following:

- What is the role of trust and communication in a virtual environment?
- What is the role of trust and communication in a global virtual team?
- What is the importance of tools provided by the organization?
- How does language and culture affect the communication?
- How can global virtual teams work efficiently?

In order to answer these research questions the following structure is implemented for this study.

¹ <http://new.abb.com/about/abb-in-brief>

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis starts by setting out the theoretical framework of the research. Firstly, relevant literature is reviewed and topics are more profoundly introduced. The second chapter presents the methodology of the research and how it was conducted. Findings are followed in the 3rd chapter, by bringing out interesting points of the qualitative research results. This leads to a discussion presented on chapter 4, where literature is brought to light again whether there are new points discovered in findings. Finally conclusions are presented in chapter 5 and possible recommendations, limitations and future research possibilities.

2 Literature Review

This research examines the issues of trust and communication in a virtual setting. The aim of this paper is to distinguish the different elements of the subject by investigating an international organization as a case study, more specifically one of their virtually working team. The concepts and definitions of trust, communication, virtual working environment and virtual teams are introduced in this literature review in order to provide a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the matter. Trust is a crucial element in the work environment and thus “the exploration of trust and its implications for understanding the nature of contract is essential” (Atkinson, 2007, p.229), especially when it comes to virtual working where traditional relationship building is not present the same way. The concept of trust is discussed in various contexts; first of all as a basis of communication, how it occurs, its importance in communicating and forming work relationships and in a virtual setting. Elements of language and culture are also considered as they have an effect on how we communicate with people around the world. As evident, not everyone is a native English speaker, but as a business language a majority of people working in an international organization have good skills. Thus when working in a virtual environment, one might not always realize the cultural effects and this might bring misunderstandings. That is why it is important to look at these topics and find out what is currently done, what do we know from previous research, what our case study team presents us and how we can do things better. This literature review provides definitions and understanding to the relevant topics and a basis for the research. We begin by discussing trust and trust communication.

2.1 Trust

Trust; it is such a strong word with so much meaning and yet such a complicated topic as well that has been present for a long time. Already in the late 1950s and early 1960s “scholars noticed the importance of trust as a prerequisite for managerial and organizational effectiveness” (Thomas et al, 2009, p. 287-288). Thus “decades of research have highlighted the central role of trust in organizations” as pointed out by Gelfand & Fulmer (2012, p.1168), which supports the issue of trust being vital in organizations. Although trust has been noted and researched for a long time, Mayer & Davis (1995) pointed out that there is a lack of research of trust in organizations. Hence, Ikonen (2011, p.13) argues that the need of trust research has grown to its current state because “...work relations have become looser and less easy to monitor...” due to globalization and international organization settings. This on the other hand links to problems to other subareas of trust, starting from its definition. Rousseau et al (1998, p. 394) agrees that there is no “universally accepted scholarly definition of trust”, but the importance and meaning of trust has been agreed.

Johnson-George & Swap (1982) defined trust to be about the willingness to take risks, thus to be vulnerable. Rousseau et al (1998, p. 395) see trust being “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another”. In terms of vulnerability in an organizational setting, Mayer and Davis (1995, p.712) continue the definition about being “vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action to the trustor”. Thus making one vulnerable equals to taking a risk, hence trust is about the willingness to take that risk to participate in trusting action (Mayer and Davis, 2005). Since working together with others involves interdependence, people must depend on each other to achieve common interests and goals, both personally and

organizationally. Rousseau et al (1998) point out that risk and interdependence are both required for trust to emerge. The definition can be summed up to trust being the “willingness to be vulnerable under conditions of risk and interdependence” (Rousseau et al, 1998, p. 395).

‘Trust is one of the most fascinating and fundamental social phenomena yet at the same time one of the most elusive and challenging concepts one could study’ Lyon, Möllering and Saunders, 2012, p.1 (in Ikonen & Savolainen, 2010, p.22)

Trust is based on beliefs about the other party, which then are shaped through information (Thomas et al, 2009). Hence information gives the opportunity to develop or reduce trust, depending on the quality and quantity of it and whether it is provided or there is a lack of information (Thomas et al, 2009). They continue to point out that many studies have revealed the importance and central role communication plays in the process of developing and maintaining trust (Thomas et al, 2009). Beliefs about the other party are forming trust and these are built by information received, which also means that by providing more information to other parties one presents a better opportunity for others to develop their trust – hence the other opposite of not providing information will have a negative impact on building trust (Thomas et al, 2009). It all comes down to the quality and quantity of information shared. Thus trust is also “... a means for improving individual, group and organizational performance” (Thomas et al, p.301). All in all, the essential element about trust is that it requires a choice or a decision supported by courage to accept the risk of being deceived and disappointed, thus having the emotional strength to process it (Ikonen, 2011).

Forming employment relationships is a process that doesn’t happen overnight. Like any other relationships, trust building is part of it. Usually

employment relationships are more ‘official’ and people do not tend to put that much effort in them as one would with closest friends, but in the end of the day your co-workers are the ones you spend most of your day with (if working full-time). This means relationships are being built. The traditional method of building trust in a relationship is getting to know the person face-to-face, share conversations of mutual interest, about one other etc. Trust is one of the key elements to a healthy and reliable employment relationship. It provides security for the parties that the information shared does not go further and agreements made or expectations of each other are fulfilled. Trust is seen as vital with both colleagues and managers. How trust is formed at the work place, tends to depend on personal experiences and how people perceive the new person. In most cases, trust tends to be formed and built in the progress of getting to know each other and working together, getting familiar to the way of working of the other person and how they behave at work. Weckert (2000, p.245) notes that it is “difficult to have a well-functioning... workplace without a high level of trust”. He also highlights that the importance of trust has been ignored in relation to the workplace. Trust needs to be earned and thus is usually taken for granted (Ikonen and Savolainen 2010). In addition, findings indicate several cases where trust has raised as the key element to a work relationship and thus communication.

2.2 Trust and Communication

Trust and communication are closely linked together, thus it can be stated that “communication plays an important role in the development of trust within an organization” (Thomas et al, 2009, p.287). As identified in the previous section of trust, it relies on several elements and not just words, as communication does. Words of course play a strong part of communication but behavior and context have a solid role as well (Morgan et al, 2014). These two elements provide further meaning and depth to words, and how

these are understood is often defined by feedback (Morgan et al, 2014). Feedback is identified as an important part of the communication process by Morgan et al (2014), as it allows effective communication. In a traditional face-to-face setting the tone, gestures and facial expressions provide feedback instantly, but when considering the virtual environment this element is disregarded. Hence in the virtual setting this leaves a lot of room for possible misunderstandings and different interpretations. It is suggested by Järvenpää & Leidner (1999) that communication enables relationship-building and trust, as such it doesn't just pass along information. Gibson & Manuel (2003) support the point of communication processes being the key for building relationships and trust. As in a trust forming, communication is a strong support element, where through interaction common values and norms are shared and in a continuing process as within a team, developing trust occurs and effectiveness follows (Hinds & Weisband, 2003).

Moving on to the subject of virtual working, trust communication plays an important role, especially when communication processes can possibly be limited by time and resources. Walther (1995) notes that virtual communication does not interfere with the relationship building, it is the amount of communication done that affects it. The amount of communication taken place is also affected by culture and language, thus how messages are perceived and understood. As the virtual setting takes away the body language one can read in a face-to-face situation, the issues culture and language can bring are not as clearly identified. The following section discusses these issues to consider.

2.3 Culture and Language

In most international companies English is typically used to conduct business among speakers of different mother tongues (Louhiala-Salminen et al, 2005). This brings the risk of misunderstandings and miscommunication. Hence language is key to communication and in case of virtual teams, it is

key to getting to know each other as well. As Kassis-Henderson and Louhiala-Salminen (2011, p. 17) note: "without language, the various bonding activities that are mentioned, cannot take place."

Earlier research on the subject has been conducted around the use of the language as well and especially the most closely linked research to this possible study is the one by Kassis-Henderson and Louhiala-Salminen (2011) on language and trust. Having a common language to communicate with is the first steps of building the relationship and thus trust, but unfortunately it does not mean that "common ground is automatically established" as Kassis-Henderson and Louhiala-Salminen (2011, p.16) point out. Language can also cause its own challenges when it comes to different vocabularies used at work, in this research's case company it can get very technical as a majority of employees are engineers and of course since the product and services sold by the case company are very technical as well. Morgan et al (2014) also note that cultural and language differences provide a variety of perceptions in terms of meaning, approach, commitment and finally, communication.

The case company is an international organization and thus most employees will most likely have already been impacted by different cultures and thus have learned to understand them as well. Culture can be looked at in different classifications for this context; there is personal culture, as well as corporate culture (Furnham, 2005). He goes on to define corporate culture as "based on the needs of individuals to reduce uncertainty and to have some reference to guide their actions" (2005, p.614), more specifically the behavior standards and norms of perceiving events. Morgan et al (2014) suggest that it could be argued that the culture of the company is built by the top people and them being the ones setting the norms and basics. Thus if managers are part of the culture, there is quite a weight on the background in terms of cultures and values of these managers and how they then have

set the norms and the culture to be in the company. These in turn will derive from the personality and characteristics of these managers, their leadership, management and people skills. Watson (1994) brings out a point of using culture and shared values as a preferred way of managing compared to tight and strict ways, as it allows the human beings to work the natural way, looking for meanings, in an unpredictable world of today. This would suggest managers to adapt their leadership and management styles to more people oriented, thus giving workers more space. Managers' tasks include many areas such as planning and decision-making, allocating work, motivating, co-coordinating and controlling (Hales, 2001). The challenge of doing all these and still acknowledging the people you manage and how to manage each individual, thus being able to lead them effectively; aiming for subordinate satisfaction and good performance (Yukl, 1994).

Working with people from a variety of backgrounds presents also a variety of perspectives; these can be a positive issue but unfortunately they can bring challenges as well (Morgan et al, 2014). Differences can be present in meanings, approaches, communication and commitment according to Morgan et al (2014) discoveries. This again emphasizes the role of communication and trust in relationship building, especially in the virtual environment. This leads us to review the virtual communication in more depth with a focus on the team element.

2.4 Virtual Communication and Teams

Communication is identified by Maznevski (2008) as a vital element in all team-working. The constantly developing technology and presence of internet in the working environment plays an important role in the daily work, thus provides also more tools for communication to take place. In order for a team to build together, communication is one of the most effective elements in that process (Hayes, 2002).

When it comes to virtual communication and team building, tools used and provided by the organization are the building blocks. Virtual teams rely upon “communications media, such as teleconferencing, videoconferencing, email and other computer-mediated communications technology” (Morgan et al, 2014, p.608). In this study the following tools are present in the interviews, meaning that interviewees discuss about these tools, which they use in their daily operations:

- Microsoft Office
- Lotus Notes – general software
- Same Time – instant messaging
- Outlook as email
- PartsOnline – ordering tool online
- Migration to Microsoft 360
- Phone for calls
- Video conference rooms

Although these tools can be very formal and not provide personal attributes, they can therefore lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding (Morgan et al, 2014). This leads to the discussions of relationship building as in virtual versus traditional, or as Morgan et al (2014) call it ‘computer-mediated’ compared to face-to-face communication.

What is considered a virtual team then? Edwards & Wilson (2004, p.) present it as “a group of people that have a common goal or task to perform, but are separated by distance or time”. Järvenpää & Leidner (1999, p.792) see a virtual team as a “temporary, culturally diverse, geographically dispersed, electronically communicating work group”. Robert et al (2009) see virtual teams where members communicate mainly through information and communication technologies (ICTs) and are most likely geographically spread. They continue to argue that the communication environment

through which team members interact, whether it is face-to-face or ICT-methods, influences team members' willingness to engage in trusting behavior (Robert et al, 2009).

These trusting behaviors occur as shared experiences, similar backgrounds and norms that then lead to relationship building over time (Morgan et al, 2014). Thus these behaviors are possibly more limited to traditional teams, as there can be less time allocated for so called 'non-task interaction' (Morgan et al, 2014), which leads to fewer chances of social communication. As the face-to-face contact is non-existent or kept to minimum, it is also argued that the interaction is not as rich as traditional communication provides (Morgan et al, 2014). And yet, virtual teams are expected to perform and deliver as would traditional teams through these tools used provided by the organization (Morgan et al, 2014).

Since information technology has a strong role in virtual teams, but the teamwork virtually requires considerations in terms of social design. Trust again is one of the key elements in developing virtual teams and their effectiveness. Approaches to be taken in virtual teams are different than in traditional teams, and these affect the trust building as well. Henttonen & Blomqvist (2005) discovered in their research that the factors of trust, commitment and communication are key elements to well-functioning virtual teams.

“However, trust-building in a virtual team, in which members from different professional backgrounds work across distance, time zones and cultures, is a considerable challenge” is pointed out by Henttonen & Blomqvist (2005, p.108). Challenges are also derived from the small amount of research conducted about the role and development of trust in virtual teams (Henttonen & Blomqvist, 2005). Trust tends to be created right in the beginning of composing the virtual team and is strongly based on first

impression (Järvenpää et al, 1998 and Järvenpää & Leidner, 1998). The role of social communication is highlighted as important as in traditional when it comes to greetings, interests and further personal information (Järvenpää et al, 1998). Thus, since virtual teams schedules are mostly based on deadlines, members might not have as much time to invest in further relationship building.

Robert et al (2009, p.243) present 3 factors that differentiate virtual teams from face-to-face or traditional teams: “the limited history of team members, the temporary nature of the teams, and the use of electronic communications as a primary communication medium”. The environment through communication is done is argued to have an indirect influence on trust and how a member in a virtual team experiences the risk of the situation (Robert et al, 2009). They also discovered that at first individuals used category-based information processing to form their first judgment and after acquiring further information about their team members’, they then used this knowledge to edit their first impression towards seeing them as individuals and not in categories (Robert et al, 2009). They also found out that ICT-mediated communication environment decreased their intention to trust. Working in a virtual team offers a wide range of possibilities to combine strengths from a larger range of knowledge; workforce from further than the same local office. Especially when it comes to international organizations, virtual teams provide great opportunities to efficiently combine skills and knowledge for collaborative innovation (Henttonen & Blomqvist, 2005).

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Henttonen & Blomqvist (2005 p. 115) discovered that trust was enhanced in virtual teams by communication behavior; timely response, in-depth feedback and open communication. Other elements fostering trust were taking initiative, delivering the agreed results and fostering cooperation. Letting team members participate in decision-making also favored trust of team leader. Critical factors in building trust were shared values, keeping commitments/promises, concern for well-being of others, goal-setting, communication and critical information spreading. Results also indicated that face-to-face meetings enhanced social-based trust and team culture. I could suggest that if virtual teams would be able to set conference calls in early stages of their projects, i.e. prior to their actual work tasks starting, could provide a chance for members to get to know each other a little before taking action, which could benefit their efficiency.

Henttonen & Blomqvist (2005) also suggest that organizations operating in a knowledge-based competitive environment need to build relationships in an increasingly flexible mode. Traditional approaches cannot be fully compared to virtual teams, but some of them can support the process – virtual teams work towards common goals but as the members located differently geographically, the challenges of communication, commitment and building trust are more intense (Henttonen & Blomqvist, 2005, p.116). They also note that it seems that key factors in the success of virtual teams are based on building trust through actions and communicating individual roles and shared goals (Henttonen & Blomqvist, 2005). Although there are its own difficulties when it comes to virtual team work, some methods are still preferred over others. Of course it can depend on the person too, but in the study of Morgan et al (2014, p. 613), their findings indicated that “teleconferencing was preferred as a method of communication because of

its convenience and availability to all members”. They also pointed out that the regularity of the communication was valued highly as well. Morgan et al (2014) findings demonstrate as well that the most successful projects included an initial face-to-face meeting to start with, supported by regular face-to-face meetings and teleconferences. These were favorable conditions, but unfortunately these are not always possible with every global virtual team.

Working across time zones (and even across different cultures and languages) does not necessarily result in a drop in performance. Indeed, it can lead to increased efficiency and better business results if the dispersion is managed such that it becomes a valuable advantage, rather than a crippling liability (Ferrazzi, 2012). In order to become an effective and high-performing team the global virtual team must adhere to the basic generic conditions of team performance. These conditions are: clearly defined tasks and objectives; an appropriate composition of skills; appropriate and developed roles; conflict management; performance management processes and effective communication (Maznevski, 2008). In order to achieve high performance, teams must then develop certain additional characteristics: building respect and trust; engaging in innovative processes; and the management of team boundaries (Maznevski, 2008).

Much of the previous discussion has been mostly around the individual beliefs and how trust is perceived on that level. But trust isn't the vital ingredient on the individual level only. Of course that is where it all starts, but being part of teams and an organization, further dimensions are added to the context. Gelfand and Fulmer (2012) present the different levels and referents of trust. It all starts from the individuals degree of trust, but is followed by the degree of trust collectively shared by individuals within a unit. And from units and teams, it all leads to the combined degree of trust shared with sufficient consensus among members in an organization

(Gelfand & Fulmer, 2012). With this digitalized world organizations operate in, the trust building and cross-cultural conflict managing without the traditional face-to-face communication (Wasko et al, 2011), is one of the main challenges. Individuals need to trust the organization as an entity (Gelfand & Fulmer, 2012), and thus trust that their methods and tools are going to support the daily operations.

After reviewing our main topics, we come down to the theoretical framework of this research, which is presented in the following section.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework is constructed on the basis of research questions and based on reviewed literature, thus it explains the framework for this thesis. It concerns the main topics of this research, which are trust, trust and communication, culture and language, virtual communication and teams. The emphasis is on the overall objective of aiming to find out the role of trust and communication in the virtual working environment. This research is mainly influenced by Ikonen (2013), Kassis-Henderson and Louhiala-Salminen (2011) and Morgan et al (2014). They all discuss the main elements of trust, communication, language and culture affects as well as virtual working and virtual teams. This framework summarizes the reviewed literature and the themes presented prior.

The theoretical framework for this research is based on the literature discussed in this chapter regarding trust, communication, how these two links together, how culture and language affect them, and finally virtual teams and communication within them. The framework is based on the role of trust in communication and how they both affect each other in the virtually working world, as the overall objective of this research is to find out the importance of trust and communication in working relationships in the virtual setting.

This research comes down to investigating the role of trust and communication, thus it could also be interpreted as the role of trust in communication. Literature review provided an overview on these key subjects and clearly showed a link between trust and communication, how they go hand in hand. Research questions present the investigation being about the role of trust in communication and how virtual teams can work more effectively in this 'faceless' environment.

Although organizations always want to find ways of their employees working more effectively as well as enjoying their tasks, some issues that are part of the relationship forming and trust building cannot be influenced in a general matter and based on study results. In the end of the day each individual has their own ways of interpreting and their own perspectives. The benefit of this study and motivation is to research how these building blocks could be influenced and how virtual global teams can work effectively together and yet still experiencing similar levels of trust and open communication as they would with team members in the same office. In the end of the day, it starts from individual level to reach the organizational level and goals towards everyone are working for. For these goals to be met and job done, communication is needed, and trust is part of it. These two are emphasized in the global and international setting, when starting to cross countries and continents. It would seem communication is a natural thing, but it is way more than an obvious element, especially in an international setting.

These topics are researched in the following ways presented in the chapter of methodology, which will show how research questions will be implemented.

3 Methodology

This chapter sets out the methodology and methods used to conduct this research in order to answer the research question on the role of trust communication in a virtual environment. The chapter starts by setting the scene by defining the philosophical stance, the theoretical perspective, and how the data is interpreted. Details on the case study company, sampling and how data was collected follows.

From the outset of this chapter, it is important to identify the linkages of four elements forming the basics of a research process; methods, methodology, theoretical perspective and epistemology (Crotty, 2003). Methods, the techniques and procedures used to collect and analyze data are identified, which then forms the methodology, a strategy on how the chosen methods will achieve the wanted outcomes (Crotty, 2003). The philosophical stance informs the methodology and provides it a context and finally the epistemology, the theory of knowledge, which is “embedded in the theoretical perspective and therefore in the methodology” (Crotty, 2003, p.3). The philosophical stance is first introduced in order to understand the purposes of the research and how it is viewed.

3.1 Research Methods

This research is a qualitative investigation, using a qualitative method for data collection. Qualitative approach was chosen over quantitative as for this research, in order to answer the research question where emphasis is more on words rather than numbers and quantification as well as being able to interpret by seeing the social world from the viewpoint of the people being studied, (Bryman & Bell, 2003), instead of focusing on statistical concerns. Quantitative investigation would not suit to answer the research question, as it is more concerned with design, measurement and sampling needing detailed planning before data collection and analysis (Neuman,

2000). Hence, qualitative investigation looks for richness of data, for its texture and the feeling of raw data as the emphasis is on “developing insights and generalizations out of the data collected” (Neuman, 2000, p.122). Qualitative investigation also provides the possibility for interaction with the participants, being able to have the “human experience” (Silverman, 2010, p.6) as an important part of the research. Bryman & Bell (2003), note that qualitative researchers are influenced by interpretivism, which links with the theoretical perspective taken for this research; interpreting the participants and their responses.

The qualitative method chosen to answer the research question is interviews, more specifically semi-structured interviews. They suit to the research question, they allow researchers to cover a list of themes and giving the chance to “probe answers” (Saunders et al, 2007, p.315), requiring for more detailed and explained responses when needed. Interviews provide “an interpersonal situation, a conversation between two partners” (Kvale, 1996, p.125), which provides the possibility for closer interaction with participants to obtain the rich data, compared to fixed questionnaires where hardly any interaction is involved.

“A key feature of the qualitative research interview method is the nature of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee” (King, 2004, p.11). Interviews are chosen as they help to gain valid and reliable data (Saunders et al, 2007) through direct, face-to-face interaction with participants (Neuman, 2000). Participants actively shape the course of the interview and as King (2004, p.21) notes, “most people like talking about their work... but rarely have the opportunity to do so with interested outsiders”. Kvale (1996) sees the relationship of the interviewer and interviewee as a conversation between the two, and the research interview being a professional conversation with structure and a purpose.

The research question entails several themes to be covered in order to receive a variety of views from the participants to provide answers. Semi-structured interviews also give the possibility to have “openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and the stories told by the subjects” (Kvale, 1996, p.124). This gives more flexibility to the interview and a better chance to interpret the interviewee and the answers. Semi-structured interviews also adopt an interpretivist epistemology concerning on understanding the meanings of responses by participants (Saunders et al, 2007), which again links to the theoretical perspective stated at the very beginning of this chapter. In order to conduct these interviews in the chosen way, it is important to consider the ethical questions relating to the participants’ anonymity, data protection and their privacy.

Ethical considerations are acknowledged during the process of the research especially when it comes to privacy of participants and handling data. Considerations are made especially towards ensuring the privacy of participants and the voluntary nature as well as make sure participants are aware of them being able to withdraw at any point from the process (Saunders et al, 2007). Collection, analysis and reporting of data are also ethical as it is ensured that data is stored safely and findings are written anonymously. I gained access to the company through previous experiences with the organization and thus found a suitable team for this research. These six participants all come from different backgrounds and cultures as well and all have different mother tongues. Anonymity was promised and thus no names were used in this research. Their privacy was protected by also recording the interviews and after transcribing them, deleting them safely. Interview transcripts were also saved in a safe location and still protecting their anonymity. Trustworthiness is part of these ethical considerations and thus of business ethics: “To be ethical is to be trustworthy” (Dietz &

Gillespie, 2011 in Ikonen, 2013 p, 32), which includes fairness, integrity, keeping promises, etc. Hence, the following section presents how these interviews were conducted and analyzed.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

This research is a qualitative investigation and consists of six semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews enable a sequence of themes to be covered as well as pre-prepared questions and are open to change in order to follow the answers given by the participant (Kvale, 1996). The interviews took place during the summer of 2014 in the Product Support- division of the case organization. Access agreement for the interviews was agreed with the Technical Support-manager, who gave permission to interview the necessary participants. The sample population consisted of six individuals from the same team. After conducting interviews and transcribing them, data was coded and analyzed using thematic analysis (see Appendix C).

The level of analysis refers to the “level of social reality” (Neuman, 2000, p.132). This research stays on the micro-level with a small sample of six participants. The unit of analysis is the type of unit used for measuring (Neuman, 2000), “the what or whom being studied” (Babbie, 2004, p.94). The units of analysis for this research are the individuals (Babbie, 2004) representing a virtual team.

The sample for this research was limited at six participants. There is an element of convenience sampling as the sample is available by the accessibility (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Another element is purposive sampling using “judgment to select cases that will best enable you to answer your research question” (Saunders et al, 2003, p. 230).

Before analyzing and coding the data collected from the interviews, they were transcribed. After transcribing the audio-recorded interviews, each one

was saved as a separate word-processed file and named in a manner that confidentiality and anonymity was not breached (Saunders et al, 2007). Before starting the process of analyzing and coding, the transcripts were prepared for it by highlighting the main themes and key quotes in each interview. This task eased the process followed by transcribing, analysis and coding.

“Data analysis means a search for patterns in data” states Neuman (2000, p.426). The analysis method used in this research is thematic analysis, combined with elements of template analysis. Saunders et al (2007, p.496) define template analysis as “essentially a list of the codes or categories that represent the themes revealed from the data that have been collected”. The work of King (2004) is of high relevance for this research, he refers to this method as techniques for “thematically organizing and analyzing contextual data” (King, 2004, p. 256). It also allows more flexibility with fewer specified steps and provides a chance to match it to own requirements. Although the analysis method is critical, it is also important to recognize the importance of coding in order to fully analyze the data.

As identified above, the analysis method includes identifying themes and categorizing them. Coding the data collected from the interviews, tags or labels are assigned for units of data. The codes are labels attached to a section of data to indicate it being related to a certain theme (King, 2004, p.257). Miles & Huberman (1994, p.56) highlight that “it is not the words themselves but their meaning that matters”.

Themes present on the interviews were organizational support, trust, trust relationships, trust forming, differences between traditional and virtual, personal experiences, cultural issues, possible language barriers and communication. Appendix A and B provide examples of a coded interviews with themes emerging in both Finnish and English. Interviews varied in

length from 20 minutes to 45 minutes. Two interviews were held in Helsinki at the premises of the organization and four by phone. Language was English in general but two interviews were held in Finnish, since they preferred to express themselves better with their native language. English was not the native language of none of the interviewees but as a business language it was a daily used language for all of them. Interviews and their findings are presented in the following chapter and quotations of interviews are marked by the number of the interview transcribed, examples are provided as seen in Appendix A and B.

The following table presents the interviewees

Table 1.1

Interviewee Number	Country	Interview Language	Position	Years in ABB	Pseudonym
1	Finland	Finnish	Process Owner	5	#1
2	Finland	Finnish	Intern	1	#2
3	Estonia	English	Process Owner	18	#3
4	Chile	English	Region Owner	7	#4
5	China	English	Process Owner	4	#5
6	China	English	Region Owner	8	#6

The next chapter demonstrates what was discovered after these methods were applied and findings are discussed.

4 Findings and Discussion

The data collected from the interviews provided interesting insights to the research of trust and communication in a virtual environment; the topic of communication, the role of trust in it and the importance of tools for proceeding. Of course we must bear in mind that generalizations cannot be concluded from these interviews, since it is such a small sample, but this team still provided some issues to consider and points to take forward in possible future research.

This team was an interesting sample for this research because they have members in three different time zones and four different cultures. Already this setting presented exciting perceptions. Even though all members had different backgrounds and experiences in the company, each of them had valid points and their opinions altered on the subjects. Experience in the work field and especially in the international setting was very valuable in terms of forming relationships and the people with the most experience had naturally more specific examples in some cases. Recently new members of the team provided also interesting observations. Some of the data supported each other and some were completely opposite, which was also fascinating to discover. Communicating with colleagues around the world is nothing new or different; it is part of the daily work. Hence, this normal setting has its challenges when it comes to forming and maintaining virtual work relationships. Findings support this view of virtual work being part of everyday life, but also provide proof of its difficulties and issues that are being considered by individuals and issues that individuals are faced with even on a daily basis.

Research questions of this project were the following:

- What is the role of trust and communication in a virtual environment?
- What is the role of trust and communication in a global virtual team?
- What is the importance of tools provided by the organization?
- How does language and culture affect the communication?
- How can global virtual teams work efficiently?

This chapter of findings will present the answers towards these questions. Main findings included the highlighted role of trust once again and how it goes hand-in-hand with communication. Trust cannot be formed without a way of communicating with one another and thus communication enforces the building of trust, hence the relationship building. Other major findings were that it would be preferred if there was a possibility to meet colleagues who are worked with virtually at least once if possible, it would take the edge off and ease the communication and trust towards the other in future communications and thus raise the efficiency of working virtually. Organizations' support was also valued in terms of providing proper and functioning tools for virtual working and also support in terms of understanding each other globally; preparing individuals to understand different cultures and how to communicate with them correctly and that way build trust. Let's now look further into the details of the findings, starting with the ones on trust and communication.

4.1 Trust and Communication

When it comes to relationships at the work place, the forming of the trust relationship is different than in everyday life. It has a lot of similar aspects, but since it is a professional environment where most issues discussed are work related, there is not much room for personal information to be shared. Although it is a little bit contradictory since trust is seen as a very important element in the work place too, as noted in the literature chapter of this

research, and trust is formed by getting to know the person. Findings indicate that experience has a lot to do with forming trust relationships at work. Some have a lot of international and multicultural experiences from previous work tasks or/and from personal life. Some are new to the environment and are a little bit more naïve, but with time and learning how the other party behaves and responds, one starts to form trust in that relationship, or in some cases not. It can also vary, for example this data proved that if some don't respond as requested or needed, and it occurs often then that responded might get a so called 'label' to be watched out for and paid more notice to. Some respondents on the other hand are very co-operative and create very positive feelings in terms of correspondence.

Forming relationships at work can also depend on the type of work and service provided. In a smaller team it is easier to connect with your colleagues but when having to go further than that it usually brings some challenges with it, as the quotation below shows:

“To make the job better we need to trust the other one. If we cannot trust more communication is needed to build up the trust”. (#3)

There is no doubt that trust forms an important element in the working environment as well. Findings support this view very strongly. At work it can be linked to behavior:

“trust is important for us in work, we trust other people based on behavior at work” (#5).

Track record is also closely related to behavior and was mentioned earlier that how one does things, can have an effect on the perceptions in the future either positively or negatively.

“If you reach someone and he or she ignores or don't take action immediately it will affect the trust relationship” (#1).

“Our work cannot function without confidence in each other. The more we socialize the better we know each other and the better the relationship is” (#5).

Forming trust relationships can be tricky and it surely depends on individuals how they perceive different signs. But in this case of an international company and where virtual work is normal, it brings an extra twist to it. Virtual relationships are not as easy as traditional ones. And creating trust in a virtual setting is another great challenge. Again it comes down to individual level, but findings indicated some mutual signs in terms of forming trust virtually. It shows that without the face-to-face traditional meeting, it lacks some value. Being able to put a face to the person behind the other screen can bring walls down as well. But on the other hand for some the value of the face-to-face meeting is higher after building the relationship virtually first

“when people are active on SameTime, ask how you are doing etc, it starts to build the relationship already that way before I even see them on video” (#2).

Most likely it depends on the nature of the work and of course individual preferences, as more findings also indicate that video conferences allow a better base for trust and relationship building, but

“the main communication issue is our daily chat. That is where we share the most. It is good; it is the best way for daily work” (#4).

On the other hand, as some of the literature presented as well, it does bring down barriers if one has the possibility to see the person and put a face to the voice and/or messages. And as such, it eases the communication as well, especially when it comes to colleagues with whom one deals less with. But

the face-to-face possibility is highlighted even more when it is a colleague dealt with on a daily or otherwise often.

“It is easier grab the phone, call the other person and ask for something once you have met them face-to-face... In a way the edge of bothering the other on their worktime, taking their time and adding to that I am asking that person to do something is way lower and becomes less official. It is easier to approach that person after that point” (#1).

Thus, whatever works for each individual that makes them feel more comfortable and valued at their job and their communication processes, is best for each we could say. Different studies will provide similar or dissimilar results to this matter, so I believe we can come to the conclusion of giving the choice to the individual and team, as in what works best for them in order to work efficiently. In the end of the day it is a work environment and everyone has goals to reach on different levels of the organization. How each performs and handles their responsibilities is important to take care of as well. Reporting and keeping track of information is also considered very central according to findings. This also brings a trust element, since it is expected that everyone does this properly so no important information is lost which means time is not lost either. In terms of customer service it is also valuable that no necessary information is lost.

“We are giving online service every day, we work 24 hours 7 days a week. I think it is important for us to be communicative, to save information; we have to trust in our job. We are saving all the needed information that the customer may need. I don't know, I think that is our way to work. We could lose information and that means we are losing important time, becomes loss of time and of production” (#4).

Trusting that colleagues are doing their part of their responsibilities is a vital element in the work relationship. Communication is a key point in this as well:

“I think we have a good relationship between us, and that allows us to communicate well. We don’t keep doubts, we always share them. We are supporting each other”(#4).

In daily work tools provide the foundation for information records and communication. Even though having a face to the person you are working with daily virtually does not mean it is necessary on a daily basis;

“It is good to look each other a bit, but the main base is the chat groups. I see that as most efficient.”(#4).

From efficient communication within the team and in the organization, we move on to look at the findings on how culture and language issues might affect the communication and thus trust.

4.2 Culture and Language

In general, findings indicate that organizational support is on a high level and work tasks are supported in a correct way, meaning the organization provides tools that work and provide a basis for efficient working. As an international company, it was interesting to find out that trainings were also offered to understand different cultures around the world where colleagues are located, in order to ease the communication flow, avoid misunderstandings, as well as create more mutual understanding and respect.

“I myself went to one course about Indian culture in the working environment; it was a very eye-opening experience. We received a lot of information about their ways of working, how they think, how they value things and what you cannot possibly know unless you actually get to learn it

from somewhere... It was very useful experience to see and experience yourself how things work out over there". (#1)

Findings also highlighted that employees are aware of these kinds of trainings and courses, which they would be interested to take at some point to learn more about their colleagues, especially the ones they consider to have most difficulties with regarding culture and language issues;

"I haven't been trained for communicating with different cultures. But I know that there is a training course that we can apply for" (#5).

Another interesting point highlighted was said that:

"It's hard for us to change the sayings and culture issues, more support from management level and ABB organizations would be needed" (#6),

which makes sense naturally, we cannot change other cultures we can only learn to understand them and thus work more efficiently together. It was clear in the findings that India was one country and culture to stand out causing most problems when communicating.

"India has a lot of open cases and it feels like they are not taking care of their responsibilities and we have to follow-up a lot through email and SameTime. Sometimes it feels cultural issues are country-specific, but India seems to be very busy. Another country is Arab Emirates, such as Saudi-Arabia. European countries like Germany and UK are the easiest to work with; they reply quickly and easily to messages." (#2).

Of course these country specific issues cannot be generalized but it was interesting to find out that within this sample team almost everyone pointed out issues with India and also Thailand. Although the organization offers courses on Indian culture so one can learn to understand them better and adapt to their ways, which can also give one some peace of mind when

trying to work with them, after understanding better why it is so hard to reach them. Issues of culture and language are present daily and they come out mostly in terms of communication and habits, which are learned and observed by other colleagues along the way. One has to observe others ways and habits, which influence communication. Definitions of ‘today, now, ASAP’ are considered differently and not only because of a different culture but also in the same country. People just have diverse ways of working and everyone has their own perceptions and understandings of situations. Sometimes they clash with others’ views and sometimes they blend. As pointed out it is

“... challenging and sometimes hard to understand why some things are considered so differently somewhere else. On the other hand one must think to themselves also that how do I communicate with this culture to make sure my message is perceived the correct way, in the same importance as it is to the client for example” (#1).

Findings indicate strongly that culture and language are in a very important role when it comes to communication and their importance should not be neglected or taken for granted. The better you can acknowledge the differences and multicultural aspect the better you can succeed in communication. This is learned through experience and it improves your communication skills as well. Hence findings also show that

“the cultural differences aren’t too big since they are an international company. They are more used to these conditions” (#6).

Even the data proves that it is individuals’ perceptions that count in the end of the day, everyone considers these issues differently. Much of this discussion about culture and language issues has been about Finns understanding foreign cultures or Chinese. But what about how do people perceive the Finnish work culture? One of the respondents answered that

you rarely ever think how us Finns are considered and you settle for finding ways to adapt and communicate yourself better and in different ways depending of the respondent. For example within the team colleagues learn to understand the Finnish way as well and get used to the very direct and straightforward way of speaking about work issues and how requests and favors are asked and set. It sounds like bossing around at first but you learn that Finns don't mean it that way. This leads to the role of communication, which is vital in this multicultural rich world we operate in to avoid misunderstandings and successfully work together.

Findings indicate that cultural issues can be considered from the angle of relation to

“local laws, like customs procedures, documentations and national holidays. For example some need many documents before they can be delivered. This has an effect on our handling. Also, availability of ABB people, if there is a lot of work to do they have to prioritize, it is not easy to do things so quickly” (#3).

An engineer based company brings its own tricks as well as not all employees might understand the engineering vocabulary and different work roles might require different levels of communication skills. I.e. a talented engineer who fixes the products might not be as good of a communicator and highlight trust as a marketing or customer service person would be. This is just part of the company. Language issues in general were not noted as such a big problem in the findings as

“the majority speaks English and understands each other” (#4)

and in case there is some misunderstandings it is just a case of elaborating and explaining more (#3).

4.3 Virtual Teams and Communication

Tools provided by the organization played an even heavier role of virtual work, naturally. These tools were used for emailing, conference calls, daily office job, keeping record of clients and daily communication throughout the team and organization.

“Most important tools are the emailing tools; Outlook, same time and link systems. Also the ordering tools are very important. Then we can get the information and forward it to responsible parties to handle the requests.” (#3).

These tools like email, and direct messaging provided by the software used by the case organization, were considered the main tools used daily and opinion on them was also that

“they are very well established” (#3).

As with every technical tool improvements and updates are constantly made, thus findings still presented some varying opinions on the tools used by the team:

“there is a need for a better tool especially for order handling... it cannot be disturbed by slow loading and crashing down constantly. It feels like a waste of time and efficiency having to wait and especially when knowing that there must be better options available” (#1).

Although some considered the tools to be perfectly suitable for the job and some hoped for better quality tools for more efficient working, especially on the virtual setting it is all about speed and connection. At the time of the interviews, the organization was going through an update of some tool and there were still difficulties in the merging and transforming data from one tool to the other. At this time it is most likely finished and the new tools are in full use, so this is not an issue to be considered in this research at this

point anymore. It was mentioned that hopes for updates were requested a while ago and data proved that it caused disappointment in the organization having to wait for long without any success. Other opinions on the tools also presented some discontent in the functioning of the tools, but it was easier to accept the situation as it is and make the most out of what was available at the time as pointed out by two of the interviewees;

“They could always be better, and I am sure they will in the future”(#5) and “I think that there are improvements coming all the time”(#3).

Working in a multicultural and international company the presence of virtual relationships is inevitable. It is clearly stated in the findings that trust is key to communication, it makes it easier. Although

“radio meetings can and face to face communication can make people communicate easier”(#5).

Getting that look and having that so called ‘wall’ brought down brings a more familiar element to the upcoming communications. It is almost like you are there with that person but still not. Findings point out also that if there was a chance to meet people ‘it would be better’. It is also said that working if a lot more efficient when one feels that the relationship is based on trust and both appreciate first of all the client to whom all of the work effort is put for and of course each other’s work and time. One has built a mutual trust and respect that you are able to ask for help and to help the other as well.

“The most important thing is having your own desire to get to know your colleagues as individuals as well. Learn how your team members talk, communicate and react to things... Put a little more effort in building those work relationships for example use 20 minutes of your time sometimes to talk a little bit more than the work facts”(#1).

It has been mentioned several times how important trust is perceived in communication and work relationships. As research shows people are able to work virtually together perfectly fine, but the value and effectiveness changes enormously when one has a face and a little bit more knowledge about the other one than just work related conversations. Next we will discuss the relation between the findings and of previous research.

5 Conclusions

This Chapter concludes the study and is divided to four sections. Section 5.1.summarizes the research and contrasts the findings with earlier research. Section 5.2.discusses the practical implications, while section 5.3 explains the limitations of the study. Finally, section 5.4.suggests topics for further research.

5.1 Research Summary

The aim of this research was to find out the role of trust and communication in a global virtual working environment. Other elements are part of this main aim and thus further research questions were set to investigate the topic. The research questions were the following:

- What is the role of trust and communication in a virtual environment?
- What is the role of trust and communication in a global virtual team?
- What is the importance of tools provided by the organization?
- How does language and culture affect the communication?
- How can global virtual teams work efficiently?

These research questions were answered in the interviews conducted with the case team of 6 persons located across 3 continents. Their daily work was highly dependent on the tools provided by the organization and thus valued importance on their reliability and effectiveness. Trust and communication were built and conducted through the use of these tools as their operations are based on an online tool and thus having to communicate with colleagues and clients around the world, these tools provided an easier platform for it. Ongoing communication with these colleagues around the world raised their perception on their trustworthiness and thus building a relationship virtually. Amongst the team, they communicated on a daily basis and scheduled video meetings monthly. It was presented in the findings that having a few extra

minutes to ask how the other person was doing made a vast impact on their relationship with them, and thus grew their trust and eased communication. Lacking the traditional side of face-to-face meetings was not a huge loss according to the findings, but having the opportunity to meet these people at least one time made a difference in future communications and thus trusting them as colleagues. Even though the common language used throughout the whole organization globally is English, language and culture issues were not neglected in the study. Some countries' strong cultures and hierarchies stepped out in daily operations and sometimes caused misunderstandings. Language issues were pointed out when it came to communicating and understanding words and expressions differently. Especially in the virtual setting it is harder to understand what words can mean compared to when they are said face-to-face and one can read and understand body language and facial expressions to support the communication.

Literature reviewed presented a foundation for the research and emphasized especially the role of trust and its recognized importance in previous research (Sztompka, 1999). Several researchers also indicated the correlation of trust and communication, and how they both influence each other (Thomas et al, 2009; Järvenpää & Leidner, 1999; Gibson & Manuel, 2003; Ikonen, 2013). Varying opinions were presented on how virtual teams perform compared to traditional teams, but the expected results delivered were the same (Morgan et al, 2014). Language and culture were not to be neglected, as they influenced daily operations. English as a common business language forms a common ground for communication (Kassis-Henderson and Louhiala-Salminen , 2011) but as it is not the majority's native language misunderstandings most likely (Morgan et al, 2014). These issues can be cut down by further communication and with possibilities of building the relationship through a mixture of communication methods virtually and traditionally (Morgan et al, 2014).

5.2 Practical Implications

The findings of the study provide practical implications for ABB, to their virtually working teams and within the organization as a whole international unit. They provide general further knowledge on how employees currently perceive their ways of working, methods and support provided for their virtual work and also how it could be improved considering relationship building, trust building and communication. All teams and individuals working virtually can benefit from these findings and improve their performance and skills.

The most significant implication is probably the importance of trust and communication in relationship building virtually. How it can be done better, what elements affect it and how one can understand the other better in order to work with less misunderstandings, lower barriers and finally more efficiently. In the end of the day, even virtual work is working with other people and interacting with others, but without the physical presence. Findings present issues to consider in order to make the virtual method pleasant and efficient as well for individuals and teams.

Another important implication is to consider the barriers across cultures, countries and continents. As an international organization, ABB has a lot to consider in terms of providing tools and support for all its different cultures and languages and thus also help them to interact with each other the best way possible. Findings also pointed out it is appreciated to learn about other cultures in order to respect and understand their ways of working better. Experience is of course one important way of learning, but with such diversity as in this organization, it would most likely be good for everyone to learn a little bit more about one another. Also providing the individuals and teams a possibility to get to know each other a little bit further than only business-focused, was also a finding that suggested would bring the edge down from reaching out to someone. Examples of these situations were the

chance for video conferences or a little extra time to chat about how one's day has been after or before the work-related issues are sorted out.

These findings could be useful for other international organizations as well where virtual work is present daily and across cultures. They provide suggestions on how to improve their performance, efficiency and most importantly skills and ability to build virtual relationship without the physical presence and still able to trust each other and communicate proficiently.

5.3 Limitations

This research is a single case study, which is the main limitation, as it doesn't allow much room for generalization of the findings. Having to limit the topic as well narrows down the research to focus on its main subjects as trust on its own could be a very vague study. Adding the other elements of the study broaden the possibilities of research largely.

Previous research is one limitation as well, as pointed out, the subjects can be researched to so many extents and in different contexts, which allows a lot of room for research. Hence, drawing the focus on this study and which studies are most related to this one is challenging.

Finally, the amount of data is always a limitation for studies as it continues to the issue of generalizability. Six interviews were conducted for this study and it gave sufficient data for this study and its focus, but in terms of being able to state that this is how it goes is very difficult. We would need more interviews with different teams, different contexts and possibly more organizations as well, because there are surely variations.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Further research could be conducted on the topic of trust and communication in a virtual setting in a larger scale or across cultures. It

would be interesting to know whether there are differences in the findings within other countries and cultures.

This team had four nationalities, but focusing for example on the difficult case of India, which was mentioned in the findings, would be interesting to see their point of view and whether they feel that other countries are difficult to work with as well. Also other domains of business could see these subjects investigated differently. As ABB is an engineer-based company, how would the findings differ within other industries, this could be one interesting point of research as well.

This study sets a base for further research on the topic and provides possibilities to develop and vary the focus. Trust and communication are important topics in everyday life, and focusing it to business and international settings, it can open up several possibilities for further research.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Transcript – Finnish Employee 1

Pseudonym - Interviewee #1

Job title - Process Owner

Language - Finnish

Subject	Transcript	Code
Rooli ja työnkuva	drivehelpo prosessin omistaja, 5 vuotta abb, koko ajan tässä palvelussa, tiimin jäsenenä ja nyt 1,5v prosessiomistaja. keskittynyt seuraamaan toimintaa ja edellytykset tehdä työtä, työkalut ja ohjeistukset kunnossa.	WORK WORKPER
Työkalujen käyttö ja tarve	tiimissä tällä hetkellä 4 vakkaria, 1 osa-aikainen helsingissä. global operations tiimin alla. maissa omat esimiehet vielä. palvelu sama, keikkamäärät lisääntyneet.	ORGSUP ORGTOO ORGCOMMS
Suurimmat ongelmat työkalujen kanssa	tarve saada kehittyneempi työkalu, nopeempi ja tehokkaampi. suurimmat ongelmat notes sama vanha ja toimii huonosti, turhaa aikaa tietokannan lataukseen ja kaatumiseen. tuntuu turhalta, tarkoituksen mukaisempiakin työkaluja varmasti olemassa nykyään. useamman vuoden asia ollut jo esillä ja ei saada ylemmällä tasolla päätöksiä mikä tuntuu kurjalta.	ORGTOO
Yrityksen tuki	vanhanaikaisuus ja toiminnallisuus ei tue sitä mahdollisimman joustavaa asiakaspalvelua. yritystasolta, group tasolla ollut päätös jumissa pitkään, valitettavaa että ei saa aikaiseksi.	ORGSUP ORGTRA ORGCOMMS ORGTOO
	vaikka takuupalvelu pieni osa yritystä, keikkamäärät pieniä	

<p>Työkalut päivittäisessä työssä</p> <p>Viestinnän työkalut</p>	<p>tilauksiin nähden, mutta koen silti että pidetään tärkeänä palveluna ja arvostetaan ylemmällä tasolla. jostain syystä työkalu asia huonolla tolalla. vanha partsonline vielä, simppele ja aikansa elänyt. uusia migraation kautta microsoft sites. yammer. outlook migraatio – hyvä juttu, mutta vanhat tietokannat ei vaihdeta vielä outlookkiin, niin käytössä vanha notes kanta sposti ja outlook ja muut. muutostila tällä hetkellä.</p> <p>omassa työssä eniten notes, partsonline, nettiselain pohjaisia työkaluja monta päivittäisessä käytössä.</p>	<p>ORGTOO</p> <p>ORGCOMMS ORGTOO</p>
<p>Kieli ja kulttuuri viestinnässä</p>	<p>sametimea paljon, outlookin myötä lync, vierekkäin siinä pitkään kun sposti laatikko vielä notesissa. yammer paljon käytössä, kätevä kun työskennellään eri aikavyöhykkeillä, vähän nopeampi kuin sposti tai teamspace, asiaa infota eteenpäin jotta jää jälki ja kaikki näkee mutta myös nopeasti niin näppärä siihen, kommentit ja muistiinpanot jotka hyvä että kaikki näkee ja havaitsee.</p> <p>haasteita tulee tosi paljon, päivittäin sen joutuu huomioimaan. ihmisillä on eri äidinkieli ja kulttuuritaustat ja tavat tehdä töitä. käsitteet heti tai tämänpäivän aikana, kiire tarkoittaa eri asiaa monelle eri ihmiselle. haastavaa ja välillä vaikea ymmärtää miksi jotkut asiat toimii niin eri tavalla jossain muualla. tosi iso juttu ja haastavaa. toisaalta täytyy miettiä että miten mun pitäisi viestiä jonkun tietyn ihmisen tai kulttuurin kanssa jotta saisin tämän asian eteenpäin, sillä tärkeysjärjestyksellä kuin se esim asiakkaalle on.</p>	<p>CRE ORGCOMMS TRUSTCOMMS TRUSTFORM TRUSTIMP TRUSTCOMMS</p>
<p>Viestinnän tärkeys ja kokemusten jako</p> <p>Luottamus viestinnässä</p>	<p>haastavaa ja välillä vaikea ymmärtää miksi jotkut asiat toimii niin eri tavalla jossain muualla. tosi iso juttu ja haastavaa. toisaalta täytyy miettiä että miten mun pitäisi viestiä jonkun tietyn ihmisen tai kulttuurin kanssa jotta saisin tämän asian eteenpäin, sillä tärkeysjärjestyksellä kuin se esim asiakkaalle on.</p> <p>tosi isossa roolissa, mitä paremmin pystyy huomioimaan sen</p>	<p>TRUST TRUSTCOMMS</p> <p>TRUSTCOMMS</p>

<p>Yrityksen tuki viestinnässä</p>	<p>erilaisuuden ja monikansallisuuden niin sitä paremmin voi onnistua viestinnässä. on sillä todella iso rooli. kokemus ja oma kokemus on tärkeä ja vie eteenpäin ja kehittää.</p> <p>ehdottoman tärkeää hyödyntää kaikki esim tiimikeskustelut tai kollegan kanssa keskustelut täällä paikallisesti omalla toimistolla tai muiden drivehelp tiimijäsenten kanssa, voi käydä läpi myös muiden kokemuksia ja niistä ottaa sitten oppia.</p>	<p>ORGTRA ORGSUP ORGCOMMS CRE</p>
<p>Suomalaisten suhtautuminen</p>	<p>se näkökulma että jos jonkun tietyn ihmisen kanssa on paljon tekemisissä oppii hahmottamaan sen mikä parhaiten toimii ja miten kannattaa kommunikoida</p> <p>on myös olemassa koulutuksia, itse olen ollut yhdellä intialainen kulttuuri työelämässä, oli hyvin silmiä avaava. sai tosi paljon tietoa siitä miten siellä on tapana toimia, miten he ajattelevat ja arvostaa asioita ja mitä ei välttämättä voi todellakaan voi tietää jos ei pääse jostain oppimaan.</p>	<p>ORGCOMMS CRE ORGTRA</p>
<p>Tiimin kasvu</p>	<p>tosi hyödyllisiä, isoimmassa roolissa tekemisistä ja kanssakäymisistä muiden ihmisten kanssa pääsee itse kokoamaan miten se käytännössä sujuu.</p> <p>suomessa ollaan niin pieni osa maailmanlaajuisesti, harvemmin ajattelee että meitä huomioidaan ja etsii itse keinoja sopeutua tilanteisiin. rehellisesti jos ajattelee tiimin sisällä, varmaan jonkun verran kyllä ajattelevat. ja mitä enemmän ollaan tekemisissä niin hekin oppivat/tottuavat/ymmärtävät että täällä ollaan suorasanaisia työasioista ja esitetään pyyntöjä ja</p>	<p>WORK TRUSTCOMMS TRUSTCULT CRE</p>

<p>Luottamussuhteen luominen ja muodostuminen</p>	<p>toiveita. saattaa usein kuulostaa semmoiselta käskyttämiseltä mutta he ehkä ikään niin kuin tottuu siihen. – en oo miettinyt, mielenkiintoinen ajatus. harvoin yhteydessä olevien ihmisten kanssa suomen ajattelu on varmaan melko vähäistä</p>	<p>TRUSTFORM TRUSTCOMMS TRUSTCULT</p>
<p>Virtuaaliset työsuhteet ja kommunikointi</p>	<p>kiinaan mahtuu niin monenlaisia ja taustaisia, opiskellut paljon englanniksia ja ollut ulkomailla vaihdossa, sujuva englanti, helpompaa kanssakäyminen, tosi sujuvasti viestii englanniksi, se on helppoa. alkuun vaikutelma työ ja asiasisältö keskeinen, voi olla kulttuuriin liittyvää pidättäväisyyttä, sitten kun tutustutaan ja tullaan tutummiksi niin sitten tavallaan tulee enempi persoonallisuutta siihen viestimiseen.</p> <p>nopeasti pääsi mukaan ja varmasti kielitaito iso osa että on tuntunut helpolta päästä hänen kanssa laadukkaan ja luottamuksellisen kommunikoinnin tasolle. koen kyllä että hyvin toimii ja helppo tehdä yhteistyötä.</p>	<p>TRUSTVIRT TRUSTFORM TRUSTCOMMS</p>
<p>Tapaamisen vaikutus</p>	<p>uskon että videopalikset auttaa ja vaikuttaa. eri asia ja helpompaa kun on ainakin kerran nähnyt sen ihmisen. monesti chätit helppo ja hyvä asiasisällön puolesta viestimiseen, toisaalta voi tulla helposti väärin ymmärryksiä tai sellasta vähän niiku hassu sanajärjestys niin ymmärrät sen vähän tylynä tai epäkohteliaana. tai kiiressä kun käydään juttuja läpi, saattaa tulla vaikutelma että ymmärsinkö kaiken nyt oikein että ehkä se ei nyt ollut noin epäkohteliaasti tarkoitettu.</p>	<p>TRUSTCOMMS TRUSTFORM</p>
<p>Luottamuksen rooli ja arvo työssä</p>	<p>saattaa tulla ihan suoranaisia väärinymmärryksiä, kaksi ihmistä ymmärtää asian aivan eri tavalla.</p>	<p>TRUSTIMP TRUSTCOMMS TRUSTCULT</p>

	<p>siinä mielessä on hyvä ja auttaa tosi paljon se video. siihenkin liittyy ne omat haasteensa, ääni ja kuvanlaatu.</p>	
Luottamuksen horjuminen	<p>kyllä uskon että se aina vaikuttaa, ainakun tapa ihmisiä kasvotusten, sen jälkeen huomattavasti helpompaa tarttua puhelimeen ja soittaa ja pyytää jotain. ”tavallaan se semmoinen kynnyks että mä nyt niinku häiritsen tätä ihmistä hänen työajalla ja otan siltä aikaa ja vielä pitäis pyytää jotain asiaa ja pyytää häntä tekee jotain, välittömästi tulee epävirallisemmaksi ja helpompi lähestyä ehdottomasti.</p> <p>joo kyllä ehdottomasti. jonkun verran ollut semmosta videopalaverointia, joskus pystytään järkkäämään että otetaan joku tietty maa mukaan videopaliksii, otetaan jostain maasta ihmisiä mukaan ja voidaan kommunikoida sieltä.</p>	TRUSTCONT TRUSTCOMMS
Oma raja	<p>moniulotteinen kysymys, luottamus on tärkeää, voinko luottaa siihen että ihmiset kantaa oman osuutensa ja vastuunsa ja hoitaa oman vastuu alueensa. Ja vaikka niinku ensin lähtökohtaisesti oman tiimin sisällä pitää löytää se, tavallaan kun tulee uusi ihminen niin tavallaan pitää löytää se balanssi että tietää mitkä on niitä merkkejä että onko homma hallinnassa vai ei. Miten se ihmisen ilmaisee niitä tilanteita ja tuleeko kysymyksiä. Oppii tulkitsemaan sitä että onko kaikki nyt ihan ok vai pitääkö ruveta selvittämään enemmän. Tietysti laajemmalti ajateltunua ihan koko työyhteisössä esim täällä Drivesissä Suomessa ja tietenkin ne paikalliset yksiköt on</p>	TRUSTCONT

<p>Oman tiimin luottamussuhteet</p>	<p>meille hirveen tärkeitä ja päivittäisiä kontakteja. Sitten täytyy myös olla luottamus siihen että he on myös tavoitettavissa ja tekee oman osuutensa. Jos se rakoilee se luottamus tai tulee epäily siitä että joku ei nyt ihan täysin hoida sitä omaa aluettaan, kyllähän se tuottaa ongelmia heti ehdottomasti. Saattaa olla myös kauhean aikaavievää, täytyy varmistella moneen kertaan. Sen voi sanoa myös että tottakai on myös tehokkaampaa tehdä töitä jos kokee että se kollegasuhde on luottamuksellinen että molemmat arvostaa ensinnäkin sitä asiakasta jota varten kaikki tehdään ja arvostaa toistensa työtä ja työaika. On sellainen keskinäinen luottamus että voi pyytää apua ja auttaa toista ja tekee ne tarvittavat asiat ja loppujen lopuksi siitä on kyse että täytyy pyytää jotain muuta joko kertoo tietoja tai tekemään jotain asioita ja sitten ehkä välittämään se tieto siitä takaisin.</p> <p>valitettavasti joskus käy niin että lyödään se leima päälle että täällä ei tapahdu mitään. Se on huono juttu sillä se muuttuu negatiiviseksi ja kaikki kommunikointi jotain tiettyä maata tai henkilöä kohtaan. Siihen ei sais koskaan mennä koska aletaan parjaamaan että koska siellä ei ja me täällä. Pitäisi havaihtua siihen kun alkaa valittaminen että mitä pitäisi tehdä. Se ei kuitenkaan muuta tai paranna sitä tilannetta ja pahimmillaan mustamaalaa muillekin ihmisille ja yleistää-</p> <p>Kokemuksen myötä häilyvä se käsite että milloin täytyy ruveta tekee jotain muuta ja ottaa yhteyttä seuraavalle tasolle. Kyllä se vaihtelee paljon maittain että kuinka nopeasti voi odottaa</p>	<p>TRUSTCOMMS ORGCOMMS</p>
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<p>Vaikuttavat elementit</p>	<p>toimenpidettä tai palautetta takaisin. Tietysti eri ihmisille ja eri organisaatioilla on hirmu erilainen työkuormakin. Kansainvälisesti tiedetään että missä maissa on liian vähän resursseja ja on hyvin ymmärrettävää että heillä ei riitä yksinkertaisesti aika tekemään kaikkea ja joutu priorisoimaan ja antaa anteeksi että jossain vaiheessa saattaa tulla pientä viivettä. Menee aikalailla maittain, tietyt yleistäen kulttuurilliset erot tietyissä maissa ja tietyissä maissa tällaista lainsäädännöllistä ja byrokratiaan liittyvää viivyketä tai pitkiä etäisyyksiä. Ei voi sanoa että henkilökohtaista kyllä siellä täytyy olla muita syitä taustalla.</p>	<p>TRUSTFORM TRUSTVIRT TRUSTCOMMS</p>
<p>Muita ajatuksia aiheista viestintä, luottamus ja työkalut</p>	<p>on ihan hyvä fiilis, hirmu erilaisiin asenteisiin tai henkilökohtaisiin lähtökohtiin törmää täällä Helsingissäkin, ihmisillä on hirmu erilainen näkemys siitä että mitä se tarkoittaa se tavallaan laadukas työntekeminen tai laadukas asiakaspalvelu tai oma rooli tässä kokonaisuudessa. Joskus koen että joutuu motivoimaan esim, kyllä me tarvittaisiin juuri sinulta tätä toimenpidettä tai tietoa että voisitko auttaa, tää on tärkeä juttu ja toisessa päässä asiakas odottaa, että ei voida jatkaa huomenna että täytyy tehdä tänään. Tai toisaalta mielestäni jos ajattelee että lähtökohtana on monia erilaisia ihmisiä eri maissa, eri aikavyöhykkeet, kulttuurit ja työtavat ja odotukset, paikalliset odotukset ja mitä kollegat saattaa heiltä vaatia. Siinä suhteessa hyvä luottamus tiimin sisällä ja kommunikointi toimii. Mutta joskus törmää hassuihin ennakoasenteisiin myös tiimin sisällä että voisi olla vielä jotenkin avoimempaa ja toisen enemmän huomioonottavaa</p>	<p>TRUST ORGCOMMS ORGTRA TRUSTCULT TRUSTCOMMS TRUSTCULT</p>

	<p> asennoitumista. Ei saisi olettaa että ei se nyt siellä tajua koska ne on siellä Kiinassa, tai tulee hassua kulttuurillista vastakkainasettelua. Se tapa kommyunikoida on kuitenkin niin erilainen ja kenenkään äidinkieli ei ole englanti, pitäisi malttaa olla vielä enemmän kärsivällisempi sen suhteen että viesti ei mene perille ensimmäisellä kerralla. Selitän tän toisella tai kolmannella tavalla, jos ei sittenkään vielä niin sitten pitää lisää jatkaa selvittelyä. Ei ole reilua eikä kohteliasta eikä ole siihen varaa että jos ei toinen ymmärrä heti niin sitten lyödään ruksit päälle että ei tää nyt vaan tajuu että ei mun kannata nyt vaan enää yrittää. </p> <p> vaatii just tutustumista ja kasvokkain kanssakäymistä tai niitä videopalavereita mutta niissä täytyisi olla kauheasi aikaa kommunikointiin, usein se aika menee asiasisällön käymiseen ja mietitään kuka hoitaa ja minkä. Tärkein juttu että on omaa halua tutustua myös yksilöinä niihin muihin tiimikavereihin, että miten ne puhuu ja miten kommunikoi ja miten kokee juttuja. Muuten jää hyvin pintapuoliseksi ja tulee niitä että ei oikein tajua että mitä se ajaa takaa. </p> <p> Näkis vähän lisää vaivaa. Vaatii sen että on valmis ottamaan omasta työajasta sen vaikka 20min, ei välttämättä joka päivä mutta jonain esim että varaa sen vaan siihen että koittaa tutustua ja kommunikoida. Voi se olla vaan työasiaa mistä mpuhutaan mutta että sulla on sen verran aikaa että ei ole niin kiireinen että vastaa vaan ok. Täytyy antaa myös itestään. </p>	
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	<p>me ollaan kerran oltu pitämässä tiimipalaveria että kaikki oli samassa paikassa kiinassa ja kerran täällä helsingissä, mentäis chileen tämän vuoden aikana jos se onnistuu järjestelyt. Kyllähän semmoset tapaamiset on hirvu tärkeitä jos se olis vaan kerran 2 vuodessa mutta että ihmiset näkee toisensa kasvokkain ja voi puhua niistä työasioista ja vähän henkilökohtaisemmista asioista kasvotusten ja oppii sitä tuntemaan sitä tapaa että miten toiset puhuu ja reagoi, se on hirvu iso juttu. Iso juttu kustannuksellisestikin mutta voiko sitä mitenkään korvata sitä hyötyä mitä siitä tulee. Nään sen tärkeänä ja motivoivana koko tiimin toiminnalle. Uskoisin että Tosi positiivinen kokemus kaikille.</p>	
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Appendix B

Interview Transcript – Chinese Employee

Pseudonym - Interviewee #5

Language - English

Subject	Transcript	Code
Background	I joined ABB 2010, over 4 years now and I started my work as the assistant for the training center. I transferred to DriveHelp in the beginning of this year it's been half a year now. It's challenging but you can always find something interesting from the work.	WORKPER
Organizational Support		ORGSUP
Tools	I think ABB fulfills my basic requirements.	ORGTOO
Communication tools	Partsonline, Yammer, Microsoft Lync. Some of them are used for some statistics or data collecting in our work, some are used for our communication.	ORGCOMMS
Communication tools	We just moved into Microsoft one week ago, so we have not been used to the new tool yet, as for the previous tools I think it is very useful. It is very simple and uses it simple and nothing difficult when you use it.	ORGTOOLS
Knowledge of tools Able to trust the reporting and usage	We use it almost all the time because DriveHelp, our basic job is to contact local ABB's with these tools.	WORK CRE
Culture/Language issues	Most of the time yes, I can trust the people when I use this tool. For some countries or persons I cannot say 100%.	CRE
Examples of differences	I don't think there is any language issue because we all use English. It's enough for us to	CRE

<p>How to handle these kinds of communication situations?</p>	<p>communicate; maybe it is more like cultural issues. Some people in specific countries. We are just not like their culture and we cannot communicate on the same level.</p>	<p>CRERES ORGTRA</p>
<p>Communication within organization</p>	<p>I take India as an example, I always feel very difficult to talk to them. I'm not sure if other team members have mentioned this. I think it is more the cultural issue, they think they act in a different way from ours.</p>	<p>ORGCOMMS TRUSTCOMMS</p>
	<p>Not yet, I haven't been trained for communicating with different cultures. But I know that there is a training course that we can apply for.</p>	
<p>How are urgencies classified with these tools?</p>	<p>In China no problem, same language and you share the same culture and share the same background. As for global part, with an ABB person I don't think there are big problems but sometimes you cannot avoid problems. The biggest problems to me is when I try to talk to them with these communications tools, I sometimes cannot get the answer asap. Or I cannot get their reply immediately. Sometimes they ignore your message and won't reply and that is the biggest problem to me.</p>	<p>ORGCOMMS ORGTOOLS</p>
<p>Trustworthiness of tools?</p>		<p>TRUST</p>
<p>Role of trust in China at the workplace</p>		<p>TRUST TRUSTFORM TRUSTIMP</p>
<p>Role of trust in your own team</p>	<p>In our team we call the person immediately if we think this is really urgent. And if not that urgent, we will send emails. And if we don't get reply by email we will try talk to them with these communications tools.</p>	<p>TRUST TRUSTIMP TRUSTVIRT TRUSTCOMMS</p>
<p>Trust building</p>	<p>I can trust.</p>	<p>TRUSTCONT TRUSTVIRT TRUSTIMP TRUSTFORM</p>

<p>Role of trust and communication in relationship building</p> <p>Trust and colleagues</p> <p>Differences between Finland and China</p> <p>Global teams compared to China</p>	<p>Trust is not the most important thing in the same company. When you do business with other companies or corporations trust is the most important. In the same company we share the same goal and everything is for the one goal of the company.</p> <p>For team members in DriveHelp I can totally trust them. We have a colleague in Chile that we cannot talk to directly because of the time difference, I can only leave a message and he will help me after.</p> <p>In our team we have videoconference every month, I think it is necessary. In daily work we use only words, not face to face, not even hearing others voice, it is different than talking to them directly. In video conference we can see them even if not talk face to face, brings more value to the relationship.</p> <p>To me it doesn't matter, trust is trust and it doesn't matter how you communicate with them.</p> <p>If you reach someone and he or she ignores or don't take action immediately it will affect the trust relationship.</p> <p>No specific example, I don't know if you understand Chinese culture. Chinese people are very conservative they are not that active in our actions. When I'm working with other people from different countries, they are more outgoing and active.</p>	<p>TRUSTCOMMS</p> <p>TRUST TRUSTIMP TRUSTCOMMS</p> <p>TRUSTCOMMS TRUSTFORM TRUSTCONT</p> <p>TRUSTCULT</p> <p>TRUSTCULT TRUSTCOMMS TRUSTCONT</p>
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	<p>It's different. I cannot say I prefer either one I like both. There are different challenges, experiences and you meet different people every day. In my previous job I communicated with customers and now I communicate with ABB people.</p>	
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Appendix C

Codes for Interview Transcripts

Work environment – WORK

Title, tasks, history, role, load, time, type - personal	WORKPER
Work relationships in general - relationships	WORKREL

Organizational Support - ORG

Tools	ORGTOO
Support	ORGSUP
Training	ORGTRA
Communication	ORGCOMMS

Trust

Forming – how, what affects, experience	TRUSTFORM
Contents - sharing	TRUSTCONT
Importance	TRUSTIMP
Virtual element	TRUSTVIRT
Culture affecting	TRUSTCULT

Conflicts – CON

Causes and elements	CONREA
How resolved	CONRES
Effects of culture, personal expectations and beliefs, work mentality	CONAFF

Culture – CRE

Finnish cultural elements

CREFIN

Company restrictions

CRERES

Culture within company

CRECOMP
