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fakulta
Faculty
of Economics

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Master thesis

Multilingualism and interculturality in an international work environment or interregional projects and work environment

The Challenges of international project management in a chosen company

Author: Bc. Natálie Škábová

Tutor of Master thesis: Prof. Dr. phil. Doris Fetscher

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Objective:

The aim of this thesis is to analyse and evaluate the daily practice and strategies of dealing with multilingual and intercultural interactions with international/interregional projects. In particular, the use of a project-internal lingua franca and/or translation practices and accommodations of various contributing cultures will be analysed.

Methodological approach:

Data triangulation through document analysis, interviews, and/or recordings of specific interactional data should be used to demonstrate the structural and individual strategies of managing multilingualism within an international/interregional team.

Framework structure:

1. Introduction. Objectives.
2. Review of literature.
3. Methods.
4. Results, potentially discussion.
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- Angouri, J. (2014). Multilingualism in the workplace: Language practices in multilingual contexts. *Multilingua*, 33(1-2), 1-9.
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Kotthoff, H.; Spencer-Oatey, H., (eds). (2009). *Handbook of Intercultural Communication*. Berlin, New York.
Kuster, J. et al. (Ed.). (2006). *Handbuch Projektmanagement*. Berlin, Heidelberg.

Matveev, V. A. & Nelson, P.E. (2004). *Cross cultural communication competence and multicultural team performance*. GUNY and North Dakota State University.
Thije, Jan D. ten & Maier, R., (eds), (2012). *Managing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Multiple Organisational Settings: editorial. Special issue of Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 33(7), 629-641.

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Department of Regional Management and Law

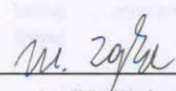
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doc. Dr. Ing. Dagmar Škodová Parmová
Dean

L.S.



doc. PhDr. Miloslav Lapka, CSc.
Head of Department

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.....
Bc. Škábová Natálie

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this master thesis is to analyze challenges of international project management in a selected corporation. To clarify the research subject, the following question was developed: *How do the various factors that emerge from the international project management exert influence on the overall success and outcomes of a project?*”

Therefore, the first part of the study introduces topics such as project management, organizational culture, and multilingualism. Subsequently, the company, the specific project and the interviewees are presented. The methodological part describes the data collection procedure, and finally, the empirical part shows interview questions together with the answers of the interviewees. The last chapter Discussion presents the author's critical evaluation of the results supported by existing research studies.

The collected results show that cultural and linguistic diversity does not significantly affect the progress of the project, as long as the team has the right structure with clearly defined roles and tasks. This is also true for teleworking, which according to the interviewees does not significantly affect the progress of the project. Nevertheless, the results also revealed different attitudes towards various issues that are currently weaknesses of the Company and on which it could focus more in the future.

Keywords: project management, interculturality, multilingualism, communication, team culture, leadership, challenges, diversity, virtuality

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1. Introduction

Globalization, or the process of accelerating the movement of people, goods, capital, ideas, and knowledge across continents, is linking the world into one big society. Despite its quasi-unified nature, this society maintains distinct features such as diverse cultures, languages, mentalities, and ways of life. Globalization has enabled multinational companies to operate worldwide, but they must always be mindful of respecting unique customs of their foreign partners and clients during international cooperation. However, it's not just about clients, globalization also brings with it the collaboration of people with different language skills and different cultural values within the company itself, especially in international teams.

These multinational corporations create an environment where different sections of society come together, whether they are highly educated, elite professionals and managers, trainees, or so-called blue-collar workers, and they have to work together so that the company they work for can thrive. Employees are expected to achieve their job on time or solve problems efficiently and promptly, and none of this can be done without interaction between each other. However, interaction between employees can be impaired if they do not share the same mother tongue and are obliged to solve problems in a foreign language. These international companies have become aware of the presence of linguistic diversity in the workplace and the problems associated with it. Interculturality and multilingualism in the workplace has thus become a target for many researchers who have come up with different theories to streamline this phenomenon.

Most international companies today have teams made up of people who come from different parts of the world. Thanks to advances in technology and the Covid- 19 pandemic that has taught people to use remote communication, it is increasingly common that these people no longer even need to meet in person and all work is conducted online. However, even in this case, the members of the international team will not avoid the complexities arising from cultural differences and language barriers, which will be the focus of this thesis.

The topic of this thesis is Multilingualism and interculturality in international or interregional projects and work environments, and the main focus will be on *The challenges of international project management in a selected corporation*.

For this purpose, the first part is devoted to theoretical concepts capturing the issues of the assigned thesis. First of all, the concept of project management will be introduced. Within this chapter, subjects such as Stakeholders, Project Team and Virtuality are introduced. Attention is then turned to organizational culture. Within this chapter I mainly focus on the issues of Interculture and managing the intercultural team. The theoretical part concludes with the chapter Multilingualism, which presents the definition of the term, the challenges that multilingualism brings for international teams and the multilingual tools that are applied in various companies.

The practical part is then opened by the introduction of the selected organization and chosen project. This is followed by a methodological chapter in which the research question and the purpose of this thesis are clearly defined. Subsequently, the data collection procedure is described in detail. After the methodological chapter, the thesis shifts to the empirical part, which is based on the analysis of the results from the interviews. Last but not least, any suggestions, reflections, possible recommendations for the team that emerge from the acquired theoretical experiences and insights into the functioning of the intercultural team will be summarized in the last part of this thesis entitled as Discussion.

2. THEORETICAL PART

2.1. Project management

Project management is a job that is unique and time limited. It is needed on projects that have a beginning and an end and thus does not represent typical, traditional, routine work. In the book PMBOKGuide (2013, p.5) project management is defined as „the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements.“ Basically, it’s an activity consisting of managing resources such as budget, people, time while applying the systematic approach of five main process groups, namely Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring & Controlling and Closing, to achieve the desired outcomes. (PMBOKGuide, 2013)

In this regard, project management is a highly complex job that requires, above all strong leadership, critical thinking skills, communication, and problem-solving skills. As several variables enter the process during the course of a project, the project manager is exposed to various challenges that he or she must be able to face and resolve in order to complete the project with the least possible delay and within the financial limits and quality requirements. The problem requires a solution, the solution requires time, and time is money, thus project managers try to avoid mistakes as much as possible by, for example, clearly defining project goals, scope, schedule, quality, budget, resources, risks and by applying the progressive elaboration. The latter, according to PMBOKGuide book (2013) clarifies the project plan on the basis of progressively available information and more specific estimates, through which project managers can improve and refine further project procedures.

The tools and techniques that project managers use are mainly the SWOT analysis, SMART goal setting, triple-imperative principle, methods of evaluating the financial effectiveness of a project, risk management, Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), scheduling methods and methods of checking the state of work on a project. Due to the complexity of project management, an organization does not need to immediately form its own project management teams, although this also brings significant benefits, but can use external agencies offering project services or freelance project managers. However, as this is a separate discipline requiring professional competence, the project manager should provide a certification enabling him or her to lead projects.

The most widely used project management standards for international certification project manager are issued by:

- **PMI (Project Management Institute)**, a leading not-for-profit association for the project management profession. The organization that, among other things, maintains the PMBOK, which is the standard focused on the exact form of the defined processes and their specific application. PMBOK also aligns with ISO 21500, which divides project management into two dimensions. The first dimension represents individual processes *1) Initiating 2) Planning 3) Implementing 4) Controlling 5) Closing* and the second dimension represents thematic groups such as *Integration, Stakeholders, Resources, Cost, Risk, Time, Quality, Communication and Procurement*. (Bočková, 2016, p. 33)
- **IPMA (Internation Project Management Association)**, that publishes the basis of the four-tier certification system, the ICB International Competence Baseline.
- **OGC (Office of Government Commerce)** publishing the British standard PRINCE2. The project management method used for small and big project. It addresses the basic principles of project management, covers the basic themes of the project, defines 8 basic processes, it is specified through three techniques and eight components. (Bočková, 2016, p. 33)
- **SIX SIGMA** - Six Sigma is a management strategy. The basis of the method is a flexible system for achieving, maintaining, and maximizing business success. The method is based on two fundamental pillars, understanding customer expectations and the proper use of data, facts, and thorough statistical analysis. To manage projects according to Six Sigma, the project manager must have a special certificate. Six Sigma awards 4 types of certificates based on professional skills. The basic certificate is the so-called White Belt, while the highest certificate is the Black Belt. Project managers with this certificate have complete knowledge of Six Sigma methodology, the improvement process, can lead complex projects and can lead teams with people who have lower level Six Sigma certificates. (Westland, 2022)

2.1.1. Project Stakeholders

The project cannot work without people. People are the basic driving force of the project and are arranged in a suitable temporary organizational structure, depending on the form of the project. The basic component of this structure is the team. However, the project is

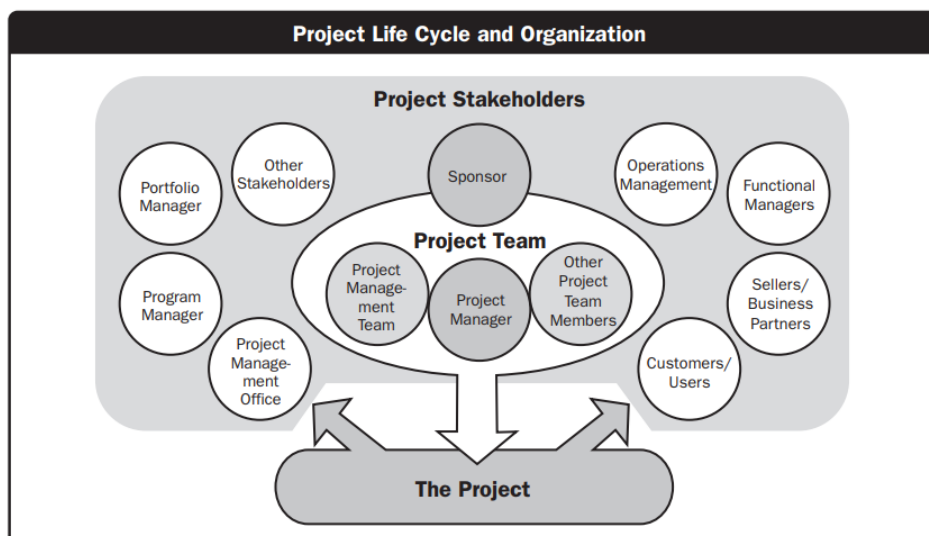
not only created by people from the project team itself. The project touches many other people outside of the organization, who may not be obvious at first glance. These are, for example suppliers, customers, or users. Organizations or individuals who oversee the project or are actively involved in the project and those who are affected in some way by the implementation of the project are referred to as stakeholders. According to Doležal in his book *Project Management* (2016), these stakeholders can form a so-called strategic team, where three main groups of people are represented. The project submitter, i.e. the person implementing the project, then the project user, i.e. the people who will use the project outputs, and last but not least the project owner, or also the project sponsor, a person who is characterized by sufficient authority and power to make decisions on crucial aspects of the project. In addition, the author draws attention to the so-called affected parties, people who are directly but also indirectly affected by the project, i.e., people such as staff in other departments or competitors.

The relationship between the project manager and the stakeholders is very important. The project manager, as we already know, is responsible for communicating the progress of the project to the stakeholders, who then decide on the project's next steps. The level of stakeholder involvement in the project life cycle can vary. Some contribute to the project on a one-off basis, others actively support the project throughout its course, either financially or by lobbying for it in political spheres.

The following figure shows the relationship between the project and the stakeholders.

Figure 1: Project Life Cycle and Organization

(PMBOKGuide, 2016, p.31)



“Identifying stakeholders, understanding their relative degree of influence on a project, and balancing their demands, needs, and expectations are critical to the success of the project. Failure to do so can lead to delays, cost increases, unexpected issues, and other negative consequences including project cancellation.” (PMBOKGuide,2013, p.57)

2.1.2. Project team

An old, but still very accurate, definition of a project team is described by Eric Sundstrom et al. in their article from American Psychologist as follows: “an interdependent collection of individuals working together towards a common goal and sharing responsibility for specific outcomes of their organizations”. (Sundstrom, DeMeuse, & Futrell, 1990, p.120)

The people in the team work individually on given tasks, but together they work towards achieving the set goals. The project management team consists of the project manager, assistants of the project manager, subject matter experts, guarantors of individual inputs, and other staff. The main task of the project management team is to organize, lead and manage the project. To do this, the project manager needs to assemble the right team. The authors of a Project Management for Development Organizations (2016) show three of the most used structures that organizations employ. These are programmatic, matrix, and project-based structures. Setting organization structures, however, depends on project requirements. Each structure offers advantages such as team familiarity, flexible resource allocation, and swift decision-making, but also poses challenges related to specialization, responsibility distribution, and continuity of employment.

Designing the organizational structure is crucial to ensure that all parties involved are aware of their positions, along with the associated essentials, as the team structure can vary based on organizational culture, environment, location, or scope. This is the only way to ensure effective communication and interaction among project members and facilitate the project to be carried to a successful conclusion.

2.1.3. Virtual Teams

Virtual teams represent a group of people working together on projects, even though the team members do not physically share the same workspace, do not meet in person at meetings, and may work from different parts of the world and even at different times (Nydegger et al, 2010). Thanks to technology, fast internet coverage almost all over the

world, and most importantly the organization's desire to remain innovative, modern, and competitive, enables us to implement such a style of teamwork nowadays.

The authors of the article *Challenges In Managing Virtual Teams* (Nydegger et al, 2010) describe that virtual teams can be formed either by normal members of a conventional work team, or it can be an executive team, or this team can be composed exclusively of managers from different disciplines working together on one project. They also add that companies already commonly apply the so-called "community of practice teams", which are teams consisting of people from different external companies. Thus, the team structures introduced in the previous chapter can be obviously applied to virtual environments as well.

However, this brings us to the issue of advantages vs disadvantages of virtual teams. For example, a clearly defined and stated structure creates a certain identity for the team. The identity of teams is in turn important for more effective collaboration between team members, also by defining their individual roles and thus influencing their relationship with each other. This relationship between members can often be missing. Virtual teams cannot offer the interpersonal contact that fosters member interaction. As team identity is unclear, the team performance could decline.

Another major threat to the virtual team is communication. As such, communication within the work environment has been the target of much scientific research as it is very complicated but essential for an organization to achieve its goals.

As mentioned above, team identity based on the relationships between team members contributes to effective team functioning. And the quality of relationships is determined by the communication between members. Unlike traditional teams, where relationships are also affected during non-work occasions (lunches, breaks, and other occasions, but still within the company), virtual teams face a lack of interaction between members, poor communication, and so its associated problems. But it's not only about the interaction between team members. According to Bjørn and Ngwenyama "the risk of communication breakdowns increases due to cultural and organizational differences grounded in the geographical distribution of the participants." (Bjørn and Ngwenyama, 2009, p.19)

Different cultural habits or language barriers are another aspect that organizations must consider when assessing the implementation of virtual teams. A company will therefore

need to think about setting up a language policy to help its employees avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.

Although virtual teams are very popular nowadays, every company should be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of such virtual communication before implementing it in their teams. Often mentioned positive reasons such as easier access to global markets, increased productivity, reduced real estate expense, higher profits, improved customer service, or environmental benefits (Casco, 2000), sound very appealing, however the shift to this style can be very challenging for companies, given the disadvantages mentioned above. (Nydegger et al., 2010). A lot depends on the organization and the working environment, whether it's implementing a new way of communicating into a traditional team or building a completely new team that is more flexible in overcoming such obstacles.

2.2. Organizational culture

The concept of culture has many definitions. According to the Cambridge dictionary, culture is defined as „The way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time. “(Cambridge Dictionary).

Moreover, Cross T. (1988) in a document Intercultural Management – Trend of Contemporary Globalized World (Caganova et al., 2010) emphasizes human behavior in culture, which are thoughts, communications, the already mentioned habits and beliefs, as well as values and actions. All of these influence people in some way. Therefore, it can be said that culture also influences HR managerial practices, as employees together create a certain organizational culture.

Organizational culture is defined similarly. Angelo Kinicki (2020) defines it as „the set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments. “

The way we live is reflected in our working behavior. The cultural background thus influences the relationship to the environment, but also the relationship to colleagues. Despite a globalizing world, it is unlikely that a unification of culture will occur. Managers will still have to deal with conflicts and misunderstandings arising from different cultures. It is important to remember that all cultures are equally important, and we must respect each other. For this reason, it is necessary for employees of companies, and especially international ones, to understand cultural differences and be able to work together

effectively. Mutual awareness is important. And this can take place already at the interview, where job applicants should ask about the organizational culture to see if it matches the values, they themselves hold. In this case, applicants may be interested in aspects such as founders' values, business environment, organization's vision and strategy or behavior of leader. (Kinicki, 2020)

2.2.1. Interculturality

Morphologically, the concept of interculturality is formed by the term *culture* and the preposition *inter*, which can be translated as between, i.e. occurring between two and more cultures.

According to the official web of UNESCO, the interculturality refers to: “the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect.” (UNESCO)

UNESCO, according to Benessaieh (2019), uses this term to open dialogues between culturally diverse communities and states in order to promote the protection of their right to difference. Interculturality is thus a tool to express the right to difference, especially in the relationship between minority and more dominant societies (Benessaieh, 2019). This is supported by Gunther Dietz (2018), who says that “interculturality refers to the relations that exist within society between diverse majority and minority constellations defined in terms not only of culture but also of ethnicity, language, religious denomination, and/or nationality.” (Dietz, 2018, p.2)

From a business perspective, intercultural awareness can help a company set the right management strategies to avoid misunderstandings arising from different cultures not only between employees but also between the mother company and subsidiaries based in different parts of the world.

Barmeyer C. et al. further define intercultural in their book *Constructive Intercultural Management* as “a reciprocal and dialogical, if possible symmetrical, process of negotiation, communication, and cooperation between actors in which adaptation, learning and development take place. It includes processes of exchange, interaction, understanding interpretation and construction, but also of surprise and irritation, which can lead to transformation and change in social systems.” (Barmeyer et al., 2021, p.71)

2.2.2. Intercultural Management

With increasing international mobility, it is becoming common practice for managers to work with people from completely different cultures. Such a multicultural environment can bring personal enrichment, but on the other hand it requires a higher level of soft skills, openness, and the ability not to be influenced by the often-untrue stereotypes of a country. Intercultural management is the ability to adapt one's communication, negotiation, and leadership to the different cultural context of a country to avoid misunderstanding and mistakes. Managers have to perform tasks in a foreign environment where they have to overcome not only language barriers but also obstacles such as different diets and social behavior as part of cultural adaptation. For example, such personal space is respected differently in each country.

2.2.3. Intercultural Leadership

„Leadership refers to the ability of a person to guide and influence the behavior of other individuals to meet organizational goals.” (Barmeyer et al, 2021, p. 88)

In today's rapidly changing times, when we don't know what will hit us, as a society, first, whether a pandemic, an energy crisis, a war, or something else entirely, managers are exposed to constant changes to which they must adapt quickly. This does not only apply to crisis situations. Leaders must also be prepared for changes arising from global issues such as economic, social and environmental sustainability, ethical and moral uncertainties in artificial intelligence, justice and others. Therefore, good leaders should be progressively agile to face the external pressure for change. (Barmeyer et al., 2021) As Zamykalová (2005) says, the challenge for today's manager is to abandon traditional management models and become an agent of change.

In the case of multicultural teams, it is important to set the right communication and management strategy. This is because team members coming from different cultural backgrounds have different ideas about leading and communicating tasks, about the division of roles, or about the scale of involvement in the project. Some employees expect clearly defined tasks that they can work on independently, while others prefer more freedom in decision-making and require more involvement of other members. To avoid such confusion, Robert Gibson recommends in his book *Intercultural Business Communication* (2002) that managers make what he calls a cultural checklist.

Cultural Checklist: Managing people (Gibson, 2002, p.60)

- How do staff see the role of the manager?
- How much are managers expected to know about the details of the job?
- What is the educational background of managers in the cultures you are dealing with?
- How can the manager motivate staff?
- How can conflicts be dealt with?
- How strong are hierarchies?

Effective leadership requires several years of experience and constant learning, especially when dealing with a multicultural team. Furthermore, the experience in one multicultural team will not be the same as in another. People are different, even if they come from the same country. Thus, leaders must keep in mind that there are different levels of cultures and that a one-size-fits-all approach may definitely not work. Leaders need to learn to take cultural differences into account and not automatically transfer them from one team to another.

Erin Meyer, in her article *When Culture Doesn't Translate from Hardwar Business Review 2015*, addresses the issue of internationalizing companies and the breakdown of corporate cultures associated with it. In the article, she presents 5 principles that she believes managers should do in order to avoid disintegration. To recognize the varying aspects that distinguish corporate culture from local culture, to ensure that every cultural group is given the opportunity to express their opinions, to train everyone in key norms and to ensure diversity.

Ensuring a culture diversity can be done through training as Mary Glowacka, on her blog *Preply business (2022)* claims. According to her, companies can introduce training that focus specifically on diversity, whether cultural, religious, linguistic or sexual. In addition, companies should not be afraid to celebrate cross-cultural differences and should spread a so-called global mindset among employees, which creates cross-cultural empathy and helps employees integrate better. She concludes that “as a general rule, the overall strategy to prevent intercultural misunderstandings is being educated about different cultures, putting those ideas into practice, and continuing to learn through experience with diverse coworkers, clients, and associates.” (*Glowacka, 2022, p. 1*)

2.3. Multilingualism

One of the culture carriers is language. Language is a medium for expressing ideas and exchanging thoughts between actors through three main processes, *production, reception and interpretation* (Barmeyer et al, 2021, p.139). Culture then involves the communication style. However, globalization allows us to share our ideas, thoughts, lifestyles, across continents, and helps to unify different cultures. Nevertheless, it is not possible to eradicate differences in society and have only one style of culture. Subsequently, globalization leads to a kind of uniformity, on the other hand, people will always be confronted with differences. Thus, large international companies operating in several foreign markets need to collaborate with people from different cultural backgrounds and find ways to leverage these differences to promote the company's efficiency and strengthen its competitiveness. In the political transnational sphere, “multilingualism represents not only an expression of the EU countries' cultural identities, it also helps preserve democracy, transparency and accountability.” (Katsarova, 2022, p.1)

2.3.1. The definition of multilingualism

The definition of multilingualism may vary. In general, however, they agree on the ability to communicate in more than two languages. Here are a few examples. The Cambridge dictionary (2016) defines it as “speaking, written in, or using several different languages.” In Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (1995) John Sinclair defines it as “person able to speak more than two languages”. Guadelupe Valdes defines it in Linguistic Society of America as “multilingualism represents an individual that possesses a multitude of different languages in different proficiencies and is able to communicate with these languages with other people in varying degrees of comprehension and or speaking/writing skills” (Valdés, n.d.), and last but not least, the European Parliament understands the multilingualism as “the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives.”(Katsarova, 2022, p.2)

Coming back to language, language is one of the most obvious problems encountered by international societies. The presence of diverse national languages in one place creates a multi-lingual working environment. The very notion of work environment is also important to clarify as it is not only a place where employees physically meet, a place where employees not only meet, but also makes a significant impact on their performance and productivity. Employees who feel comfortable, free, and secure in their work

environment are more likely to stay longer (Zainol, 2020). However, this can be complicated in the case of a multilingual environment, which poses a higher risk of misunderstanding and miscommunication. Besides, this issue is more complex than it may seem at first sight. It is not only the diversity of national languages in one company, but also “the dialects, regiolects and sociolects” (Piekkari et al, 2014, cited by Barmeyer, 2021, p. 142). Piekkari (2014) also mentions that besides different types of dialects, other kinds of languages are present such as professional languages, technical languages of different fields and special vocabulary.

2.3.2. Tools to deal with multilingualism in organizations

Barmeyer in his book (2021) presents 5 tools that companies can use to set the right language policy. On the following page, I'm going to introduce these tools individually.

2.3.2.1. *Lingua Franca*

It is not known of the existence of statistical documents on the percentage use of different strategies of setting language policy. However, it may seem that the most common strategy for setting language policy in an international organization, and therefore in a work team, is the use of English as the *Lingua franca*. (Modiano, 2023)

English is a very commonly used language in multicultural environments, but that does not necessarily mean that it must always be used as a *lingua franca*. On the contrary, any language can be a *lingua franca*. For now, let's see what a *lingua franca* entails.

One chosen language as a *lingua franca* evokes the unity of the company and gives employees the impression that they are all on the same level. However, this can be misleading as not all employees may have the same level of the chosen language. Paradoxically, the *lingua franca* thus contributes to low comfort levels of employees, the inability of employees to identify with the company and the reluctance to express themselves. (Barmeyer, 2021)

However, the Multilingual *franca* can constitute an effective substitute in such a situation. This is the case when „organization move away from ‚on language only‘ to ‚all languages at all times‘ and aim to leverage the plurilingualism of a diverse workforce“ (Barmeyer, 2021, p. 149). The main advantage of this tactic is that it tries to meet the needs of all employees.

2.3.2.2. *Language training*

If the company sets English as the lingua franca, despite the risks mentioned above, it should strongly consider offering language training to its employees. The benefit of language courses offered by the company itself is, that it can be more targeted for employees, helping them to overcome speech problems more effectively and gain confidence in communicating with colleagues, customers, or partners. While the established lingua franca may imply that everyone is equal, which can cause the opposite problems, the language courses offered by the company represent the company's effort to find common paths to help them to get to the required level.

Investing in improving employees' language competences can bring many benefits to the company. Not only does it increase self-confidence and thus improve the overall performance of its employees, the ability of managers and executives to communicate at a higher language level contributes also to a professional image of the company that instills confidence in its clients and partners. Besides as Barmeyer mentions: "Language skills provide opportunities for career development since language proficiency allows leading employees in a constructive way." (Barmeyer, 2021, p.152)

2.3.2.3. *Intercomprehension*

„Intercomprehension as a way of promoting equality, respect for otherness (their languages and cultures) and collective responsibility, contributing to build more cohesive, welcoming, and democratic societies. (Simões et al, 2019, p.6)

„Intercomprehension is a communication technique that allows all people to speak in their own mother tongue." (Pinho 2015, cited by Barmeyer, 2021)

This type of communication is only suitable for language environments sharing the same language families. Employees may not understand each other completely but based on the same or similar words coming from the same language family, they are able to understand the content of the sentence.

2.3.2.4. *Interpreting*

Interpreting can be done in two ways. One is simultaneous and the second one is consecutive. However, in every case, the interpreting requires high linguistic and cultural competences, active listening, understanding a reflection (Barmeyer, 2021). Therefore, the interpreting takes more time and may be very expensive for the company as it must be done by professionals. On the other hand, the interpreting could be a great solution for

face-to-face events as it enables the speaker to actively communicate with the listener (Merle&Sheppard, 2020).

2.3.2.5. Supporting Multilingual Individuals

Last but not least, the company relies on multilingual employees and supports their multilingual skills. This kind of language policy facilitates the transfer of knowledge across the company and ensures constructive communication between employees (Barmeyer, 2021). On the other hand, it is not automatic that an employee with multilingual skills is able to switch and express himself perfectly in another language. It is quite common for multilingual people to mix up learned languages or have a sudden drop out of words in both languages. In such case, the firm should consider whether its employees have some sort of language mechanism to mitigate unnecessary issues (Chang, 2022).

3. PRACTICAL PART

This section is finally devoted to qualitative research. Therefore, firstly, the selected organization and project are presented. This is followed by another large chapter Methodology, which details how the research was conducted. This is followed by the empirical section, which provides insights into conducting the interviews and already slowly shows the results. The whole practical part is concluded with the Discussion chapter with its findings from the interviews.

3.1. Organization

The company where the project took place did not wish to be mentioned in this thesis. It will therefore not be mentioned by name in the following chapters but will be referred to as the Company. However, I was allowed to at least describe its characteristics. The Company specializes in heavy engineering, especially in the production of earthmoving machines (bulldozers, excavators) and machines for the mining industry. The manufacture of diesel and gas engines and gas turbines for various applications is also an important part of its production. The Company is headquartered in the US, but its broad network of international offices together with dealer locations, making it a world leader. It provides its services in three main segments, Construction Industries, Resource Industries and Energy & Transportation, along with Financial Products segment. The latter is where the chosen project took place. In terms of project management, nowadays the Company follows the Lean Management model, however during the implementation of the chosen project, they used Six Sigma Management which structure is described in the theoretical section.

3.2. The Project – Implementation of GDPR in EU countries

In 2018, the unified legal framework for the protection of personal data, i.e. GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), came into force. This is a regulation of the European Union, which unifies the terminology, obligations, and rights of personal data processors in all member states.

In this thesis, I will not discuss the GDPR in more detail as it is not so important to know the detailed legislation and different terminology. However, I will focus on the fact that this was a new regulation that not only entrepreneurs, but also non-business persons and legal entities had to immediately adapt to. As the Company operates in 10 EU countries

and manages such a huge amount of personal data of individuals, it had to effectively face this challenge in order not to be penalized for non-compliance with the regulation. Hence, it deployed its project team with a clear objective; to implement the GDPR regulation in all the EU countries where it operates. Normally, each country manages its own projects, however in this case the Risk Committee of the Company assessed the situation as a very specific one, requiring a single project. It was a very extensive project that lasted up to 16 months.

3.3. Roles and Responsibilities

The structure of all project actors according to the Six Sigma project model is clearly defined. This was also the case in our project. During the kick-off meeting, everyone involved got familiar with the different roles so that everything was clear and understandable, and everyone knew what their responsibilities were.

The following table shows the different roles and their responsibilities.

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities

Project Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion the project to ensure the project is progressing to meet stated objectives. • Act as the final point of escalation for key issues or business decisions that cannot be resolved by the project team based on the level of authority granted to the team. • Monitor the project's status on a regular basis • Secure resources for the project.
Business Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the project • Monitor the project's status on a regular basis. • Review the final proposal
SME Subject Matter Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform tasks assigned by due date • Actively participate in working sessions • Provide advice and expertise • Be a change agent
Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and coordinate day-to-day project activities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update and maintain the project plan, including management of the project schedule and team meetings. • Provide periodic status updates to the project leadership team highlighting progress against defined milestones, issues that need resolution, and outlining planned next steps for the project. • Track issues and drive the issue resolution process.
Project Team Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform tasks and create deliverables as assigned by due date • Actively participate in working sessions • Provide advice and expertise • Provide a quality assurance role for the project, working with the Project Manager to identify and mitigate project risks. • Provide alternatives and recommendations related to key project, process, and technical decisions. • Be a change agent

Source: Internal documentation

I had the opportunity to interview three people involved in the project, each with a different role. The interviewees were a former project team member, an SME and a project manager.

4. METHODOLOGY

We now move on to the Methodology chapter, which describes the methodology of my research. First of all, I will recall here the aim of this thesis. Having a clearly stated aim made it easier to structure the research question and determine the contribution of this thesis. Subsequently, the instruments and methods of conducting the interviews are discussed. Last but not least, the way of evaluating each interview is presented.

4.1. Research question

Project management is a specific discipline of the modern corporate environment that makes it possible to conduct projects in a systematic and structured way. With the increasing complexity of business and technical advancements, it is desirable for companies to have employees with experience in project management. Such employees are also well-compensated. Naturally, salaries vary based on various factors such as the role of the manager, level of experience, location of the company and its size or industry. However, according to sources such as Project Management Institut (PMI), Glassdoor, or Payscale, the average annual salary for a project manager can range from around \$70,000 to over \$120,000 or even higher for senior or highly experience project manager.

Thus, I am interested in this field. Besides, I already have experience with project management in a corporation and there is a high probability that I will anticipate continuing my employment as a corporate professional for an extended duration. Therefore, I have decided that the topic of this thesis will be applied to the corporate environment. In addition, my chosen company regularly uses project teams made up of people from different parts of the world, who face cross-cultural and linguistic challenges on a daily basis, either within their team or across the company. Hence, I consider this company together with the selected team as a perfect fit for the topic of my thesis.

As we already know from the previous chapters, nowadays it is especially important for companies to have a project team that works quickly, efficiently and without conflicts. However, ensuring such qualities is a challenge, and especially so when the team is international. Hence, the aim was to open up an issue that may be commonly neglected in such a global company yet plays an important role in the implementation of the project. After an in-depth conversation with an employee of the selected company and a member of the

project team with whom an interview is also conducted, I have developed the following research question: *“How do the various factors that emerge from the international project management exert influence on the overall success and outcomes of a project?”*

4.2. Purpose of the research

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

(Benjamin Franklin)

There are many manuals and textbooks on how to run a project, but the opportunity to hear other people's personal experiences provides readers with valuable insights, new perspectives, and opportunities to learn from the best practices or mistakes of others. Furthermore, this thesis is also beneficial for the project team itself, as it allows them to realize whether the set method of project implementation is adequate, or what shortcomings need to be given more attention. Moreover, the knowledge gained from the interviews may give rise to new issues suitable for further study. I consider this thesis to be very beneficial.

4.3. Qualitative Interview Method

My research is based on a qualitative method that allows me to study and interpret human behaviour and social phenomena through non-numerical data. It is considered as *„naturalistic approach to the study of people, cases, phenomena, social situations, and processes in their natural settings in order to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world.“* (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 311-325). In terms of how to obtain data in qualitative research, first of all, the data comes in the form of words, texts sounds, images (Bhandari, 2020), and there are many ways to obtain them. From observing the environment, interviews, to experiments. However, for this thesis it is important to let the interviewees do the talking. Allowing them to talk, but at the same time not letting them slip into other, irrelevant topics. For this purpose, I opted for an interview, specifically semi-structured interview as it *“employs a blend of closed- and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions.”* (Adams, 2015, p.493) This allowed me to create a dialog with the interviewees by letting them tell their stories while being guided by prepared questions. This, however, required preparation, which

consisted primarily of laying out the topics and questions. Hence, I created a questionnaire that includes an introductory section followed by 3 categories dealing with different topics. It addresses the aspects that need to be discussed and non-mandatory questions that could be explored later once the interviewee becomes more at ease.

4.3.1. Questionnaire

As for the questionnaire itself, it comes in two language versions, English and French¹. Although this adds to the work of transcription, and all the interviewees have a high level of English and do not find it difficult to speak in this language about various issues, I opted for this more challenging method, as I wanted to use my linguistic competence to establish sympathy with the interviewee and let him speak in his mother tongue.

All interviewees also had the opportunity to review the questions prior to the interview. This gave them time to think about their answers or to recall various situations that they might not have remembered during the interview. Although the questionnaire contained main and supplementary questions that interviewees could see in advance, thanks to the semi-structured questionnaire, ad-hoc supplementary questions were also asked during the interview if it related to an interesting topic.

To answer the research question, it was necessary to divide the matter into several categories. First, the questionnaire is divided into three broad categories. These categories serve as an overarching framework for themes, each of which is developed through various subcategories. These subcategories are tailored to address specific aspects of the theme and provide a more detailed understanding. By breaking down the content into these manageable categories and subcategories, it then helps me to analyze the text and come up with results more easily.

4.3.2. Interviewees

As for the interviewees, I had the opportunity to interview three people. The important thing for me was that they were people from the same company, coming from different countries, but connected by a work on at least one international project. Due to the size of the Company, its complicated management structure, and because I am not an employee of the Company, it was difficult at first to find people who matched my expectations. Furthermore, it took more than 3 months for the Company's management to approve the opportunity for its employees to be interviewed by me, for legal reasons. Hence, all

¹ You can consult English and French version of the interviews in annexes p. 69-72

interviewees are anonymous and identified by number. However, all these problems were solved in time thanks to the help of one of the important people from the selected company, so it did not affect the progress of the thesis writing.

4.4. Interview process

As already mentioned, the interviews are semi-structured. This allowed the interviewees to talk but not to stray from the topic unnecessarily. Conversations took place with two interviewees online via Teams and I met with one interviewee in person. This person also acted as a mediator between me and the other colleagues, whom I did not know personally but were kind enough to conduct the interview with me. Overall, the interviews were successful and without any severe problems.

In terms of interview execution, first of all, the research question and the interview questions needed to be defined. In the meantime, I was waiting for the approval of the Company so that the selected interviewees could conduct the interview with me. Once everything was approved, the interviewees received the questions from me so that they knew what to prepare for and interview dates were arranged.

The first interview was conducted on 20 April 2023 with the project manager via Teams. This was followed by another online interview with the SME and the last interview was conducted in person with a member of the project team on 20 May 2023.

As the interviewer, I was the one who initiated the interviews. I briefly introduced myself, the aim of my thesis and whether the interviewee agreed to be recorded. I then asked the first question and let the interviewee talk. While the interviewee was talking, I tried to listen to as much as possible and not to miss any point of interviewee's speech (Taherdoost, 2022). I was only active when asking new questions. Otherwise, I mainly nodded to show my attention and interest, and eventually reacted with neutral responses to stay unbiased. Throughout the interview, I tried to follow the advice of Hamed Taherdoost "Interviewers need to remember their task is to listen and understand the viewpoint of the participants while staying unbiased." (Taherdoost, 2022, p. 47)

At the end of each interview, I added notes on the interview process and wrote down my observations and moments that might be useful for my text analysis or next interviews.

4.5. Transcription

Transcribing interviews enables me to precisely quote the interviewee and accurately represent their viewpoints. Through transcription, I can more easily highlight specific opinions and emphasize key points or provide crucial contextual information to support my research findings. Moreover, it helps “adhere to the standard protocol that qualitative research requires, including credibility, context, and transferability.” (Jacobs, 2019)

Prior to conducting the interviews, each interviewee was informed about the recording of the conversation via telephone and the subsequent transcription. Written consent for transcription of the interviews was provided to each interviewee in order to establish legal evidence of their approval. It is important to note that none of the interviewees expressed any objection to this protocol.

Concerning transcription, the program Folker was used. The first time I used this program was during my studies in Regional and European Project Management. Since it is free and I already have experience with it, I did not look for any other program. To ensure the accuracy of the text, GAT 2 Convention was used, which contains specific symbols to describe breathing, pauses, non-phonological words like coughing, laughing, and to handle uncertain or incomprehensible passages. (Schmidt and Schütte, 2011, p.2092) For better understanding, see the following figure 2.

While transcribing the interviews in the Folker system, I did not transcribe any punctuation in the text, even for the French language, as it requires the program itself. Concerning the GAT 2 transcription conventions, I mostly used symbols to indicate pauses, voice intonations, breaths, and exhalations, as well as indications for laughter, whether it was a resounding laughter like “*hahaha*” or the so-called smile voice. On the other hand, in some cases I omitted expressions like “*ehh*”, “*hmm*”, or coughing unless they added no meaningful value to the sentence. Likewise, I left out some passages that were repetitive. Most of it was stuttering, or the same question being asked twice. However, a full transcript of the interviews can be found in the appendix, including punctuation and GAT2 symbols to ensure the most accurate presentation of the interviews.²

² You can consult the transcriptions in annexes p. 87-101

Figure 2 : Summary of GAT 2 transcription conventions

6. Summary of the most important GAT 2 transcription conventions

Minimal transcript

Sequential structure

[] overlap and simultaneous talk
 []

In- and outbreaths

°h / h° in- / outbreaths of appr. 0.2-0.5 sec. duration
 °hh / hh° in- / outbreaths of appr. 0.5-0.8 sec. duration
 °hhh / hhh° in- / outbreaths of appr. 0.8-1.0 sec. duration

Pauses

(.) micro pause, estimated, up to 0.2 sec. duration appr.
 (-) short estimated pause of appr. 0.2-0.5 sec. duration
 (--) intermediary estimated pause of appr. 0.5-0.8 sec. duration
 (---) longer estimated pause of appr. 0.8-1.0 sec. duration
 (0.5) / (2.0) measured pause of appr. 0.5 / 2.0 sec. duration
 (to tenth of a second)

Other segmental conventions

and_uh cliticizations within units
 uh, uhm, etc. hesitation markers, so-called "filled pauses"

Laughter and crying

haha } syllabic laughter
 hehe }
 hihi }
 ((laughs)) } description of laughter and crying
 ((cries)) }
 <<laughing> > laughter particles accompanying speech with
 indication of scope
 <<:-)> so> smile voice

Continuers

hm, yes, no, yeah monosyllabic tokens
 hm_hm, ye_es, bi-syllabic tokens
 no_o
 ?hm?hm with glottal closure, often negating

(Schmidt and Schütte, 2011)

5. EMPIRICAL PART

The aim of the empirical part is to examine in detail the data collected from the interviews to test or support the research question. For this purpose, the chapter Content Analysis of the Interviews describes the process of categorizing the collected data into distinct and well-defined categories. Subsequently, for each category, an overall summary is first written, supported by specific opinions, comments, and experiences of the respondents.

5.1. Content Analysis of the Interviews

Content, or sequential analysis will provide me with a unified framework for interpreting the gathered information, allowing me to evaluate the data and form conclusions.

Therefore, the content analysis begins by first transcribing all the interviews and then reading the individual texts several times. Due to the large amount of data, the interviews are not transcribed in their entirety, although I have tried to preserve the text as much as possible. However, passages with long pauses or irrelevant topics, of which there were not many, have been omitted. Still, the amount of text is enormous, so it was necessary to highlight important passages for easy orientation when analyzing them.

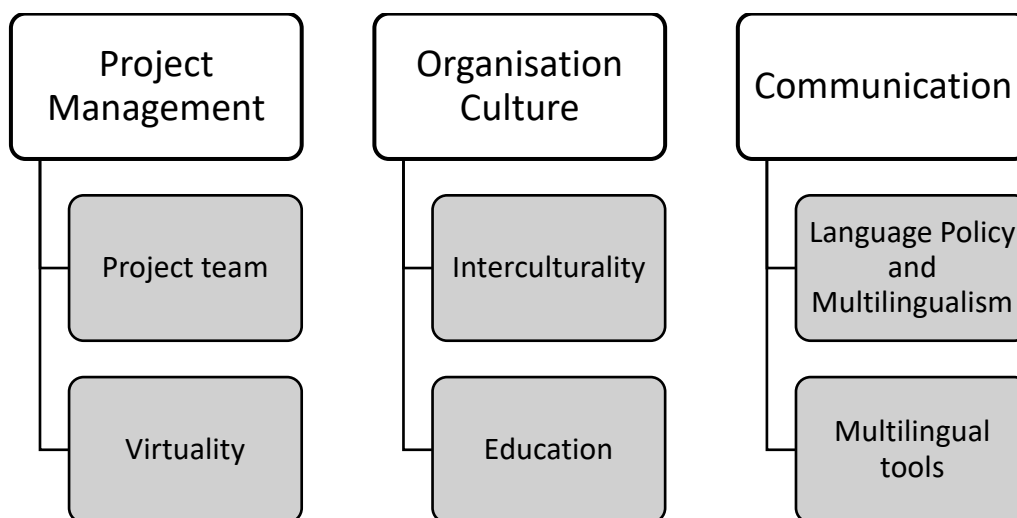
After reading the texts and underlining the important passages, it was necessary to create a table of six columns. This table is made for each interviewee and contains the individual sequences, sub-sequences, time spent on one sub-sequence, content, relevant comments and last but not least interesting comments³. For clarification, sequences and sub-sequences denote categories and subcategories. These, as already mentioned, serve as a framework for themes to address specific aspects and provide a more detailed understanding. This table thus allows the reader to get a deep glimpse into the flow of the interviews without having to read or listen to them in their entirety.

As far as the categories are concerned, they were not created by random selection. The process of category formation began with the research question itself. In the first place, consultation with the key person of the Company on the research question took place. Once we had established the objective, I got down to literature research which inspired me on many points and enabled me to put together the first categories and interview questions. However, this needed to be re-consulted to avoid unnecessary repetition of certain

³ You can consult the tables in annexes p.78-84

themes. After we had agreed on the questions together, I conducted interviews, from which did not emerge completely new categories, but confirmed the correct selection of those already created. It can be said that the selected categories were created based on personal experience combined with literature research. Furthermore, the three main categories are then divided into six subcategories. The following diagram shows the categories' scheme.

Figure 3 Categories



5.2. Project Management

In this category, I was interested in the organizational structure in the company when working on an international project, and whether all respondents see it in the same way. There was a clear answer to this question, they all know Lean Management, because having knowledge of Lean Management is one of the main requirements to participate in a project.

S1 {05:59} Tout le monde a suivi la formation lean management.

Lean Management is given by the company itself. This led me to the next subchapter, which is discussed below.

5.2.1. Project Team

Here I focused on the specific project team working on GDPR project and first of all I was very interested in other conditions for participation in such team.

Conditions

As S1 points out, everyone must have a basic understanding of Lean Management.

S1 {06:03} Tout le monde est à peu près au même niveau de compréhension du Lean process.

Subsequently he mentions that the other team members must be approved by the board, i.e. by him, the head of the service, the department manager and other employees.

S1 {06:29} La plupart de temps c'est entre moi, le chef de service, le département manager, et les employés, pour savoir qui va travailler sur tel ou tel projet. Voilà. C'est très simple.

I really liked that S1 added one last condition for participation in the project. *S1{06:14} la condition principale pour participer au projet, c'est d'avoir envie.*

On the other hand, S2 further adds that all project team members have to master a good level of English as this was the main language of communication. *S2 {00:26} Everyone needed to have a good base line level of English because that was the communication language for the project.*

S3 also added that it was good to have some knowledge of GDPR, otherwise it was more or less reliant on the project leader to supply all the relevant information.

S3 {01:38} Well in terms of jobs skills ... to have some knowledge about GDPR, to be able to see what is needed. {02:04} ...in terms of the project as such, S1 was fully leading the project, so whatever was needed he was directing it so he was sending out materials if he needed some background information, he would send it out. {02:19} He would send out, summarize up to each meeting to make sure that we know what was discussed and what's needed for next weeks. So meetings were weekly and by sending out the communication he was ensured that people are prepared.

Pros and cons of Six Sigma Structure

Within the category Project Team, I was also interested in what advantages and disadvantages of such a team structure are seen by the individual respondents. And I got some interesting answers.

First and foremost, all respondents unanimously agreed that a major advantage of Six Sigma management is its clearly defined structure. It also brings clarity to the division of roles and tasks; *S1{07:31} l'avantage c'est que ça donne la structure ... ça permet de présenter mon travail, voilà. Ça permet de structurer chaque projet*

S2 {02:57} I guess the advantage is having clear structure, clearly defined objectives. {03:21} I mean it's really critical to have a project management approach to that specific project, without it I think we just would have been completely lost. {03:33} So having Six Sigma methodology makes it kind of we could really keep it somewhere under control.

S3 {03:00} So for the complex project like GDPR where you have multiple countries involved, trying to implement one solution, I think, Six Sigma is rightly suited to do this. {03:16} It's a complicated task so you need to, you need to be able use the tools which Six Sigma offers. So, the structures, so we start with project charter always and the project charter is actually the starting point. {03:30} You summarize what are the business requirements, what are the benefits, who are the team members, what are their roles, who are the sponsors. {03:41} It would not be possible to do it only as a Lean project. I believe. So, it did require the tools of which Six Sigma enables to members finish their tasks.

In terms of disadvantages, S1, as the project team leader, had a problem with the lax structuring of tasks and the irregular recording of activities by his teammates.

On the one hand, he understood that it is difficult to give things a structure when it is a completely new and complex project, on the other hand, he stressed that at least a minimum methodological process must be followed in order not to get lost in it. *S1{08:41} C'est parfois difficile de faire comprendre aux gens qu'il y a quand même un minimum de méthodologie à avoir pour ne pas être perdu. Ce sont les choses très simples. Après chaque réunion notée même simplement ce qui a été fait, ce qui a été décidé. {08:52} Ce à la base d'un profit de projet. Et la plupart des gens n'aiment pas faire ça. Donc c'est moi qui le fais.*

Furthermore, S1 stressed that it is not good to spend too much time on making nice presentations due to time constraints. One should concentrate on the content not on the form. Anyway, he admitted that a presentation should not be boring at the same time, which can then be very difficult to balance. *S1{09:47} Il faut faire attention de ne pas aussi trop vouloir formaliser des belles présentations PowerPoint parce que sur les petits projets on arrive facilement plus de temps sur la forme que sur le fond. S1 {11:12} That's*

balanced world between following the methodology and not being boring with the management team and employees.

S2 did not recall any specific disadvantages of this type of management. However, when asked whether positions and tasks were clearly defined at the beginning of the project, she acknowledged that the beginning of the project was quite unclear. Not because of poor communication, but simply because this was the first pan-European project that no one had experience with. There were lot of tasks assigned at once and no one really knew what things to prioritize. S2 {01:15} *I think it was unclear at the beginning how we should tackle it really ... what we should focus on, and I think it became more defined over time. {01:55} We didn't have anyone who would have real specific expertise in this area and just because it was such a huge topic as well like no one really knew how to prioritize and maybe there was such a lot to get done with so few people. Hahaha, that was a huge challenge.*

However, here we come to an interesting point, where S1 made it clear that all activities had to be written down, so that everyone knew what to do. Everything that had happened and everything that was planned had to be recorded at the meetings. S1{16:45} *For every meeting, we have to make a scenery what has been discussed, what has been decided, what will be next steps – that is for summarizing the meeting. We have to write this even when it's simple. S1{17:10} We have to write it, so tasks have to be clear for everyone.*

On the other hand, he also added that it was difficult to understand the sponsors' requirements at the beginning and then to understand so many new aspects in which he is not an expert. This required mainly communication with colleagues, meaning a lot of intellectual work, communicating in English with different accents, different perspectives, sorting out opinions. Thus, it was not an easy task at the beginning, although S1 tried to always have at least a minimal methodological approach. S1{16:08} *Pour mettre dans la main j'ai dû lire beaucoup de réglementation, tout simplement. Discuter beaucoup avec la responsable donc c'est beaucoup de travail intellectuel et ensuite d'essayer d'avoir la conversation avec tout le monde. C'est difficile d'avoir des conversations avec tout le monde. {16:23} Beaucoup de point vues. {18:00} La communication donc c'est difficile` et ensuite comprendre ce que veulent les sponsors. »*

5.2.2. Virtuality

At the same time, communication was hindered by the virtual environment. Team members were not able to meet in person and meetings were held only online. Virtuality can have a negative effect on such a complex project. I was therefore interested in how the team members coped with it.

Eventually, only two respondents agreed that working online is a bit harder on such large projects. *S1 {19:21} Effectivement, il a fallu en temps pour nous en adapter.* Not only is there a lack of that face-to-face meeting, but things can also get lost in translation more easily, as S2 says. *S2{04:37} Yeah, I mean that was clear. You know, things can get lost in translation, especially in virtual environment. S2{05:04} ...with no native speaker although their English is excellent, but something can always get lost.*

According to respondent S3, virtuality is not an issue at all. The interviewee did not feel that it had negatively affected the team's performance. Certainly not nowadays, when they are using Teams with the possibility of translation. But it was not a problem even during the GDPR project when they only had Skype for business.

S3 {04:26} It enabled us to be able to join the meetings from our phones for example, so that made it much easier because most of the meetings were in the afternoon because of the main legal lead who was based in the US. {04:41} So we needed to take the meetings at time which was suitable for her as well and there were seven hours difference.

S3 {04:52} I think we are used to it. We always work like this, so I would say there is no issue with working virtually on project like this. Not in our organisation.

The big advantage for S1 was that he already knew most of his colleagues before working remotely.

S1 {19:51} Ce qui me facilite les choses, c'est que je suis dans l'entreprise depuis longtemps. Je connais les gens, je connaissais la plupart des gens avant de télétravail. Ça aide beaucoup.

5.3. Organizational Culture

We are now moving to the Organizational Culture category, where I am focusing mainly on the subcategories Interculturality and Education.

5.3.1. Interculturality

First of all, I was interested in what interculturality means for respondents and how it is reflected in project management. At the beginning it was difficult for respondents to answer immediately, and they had to think about the question. Most of the time it was accompanied by a laugh. In the end, respondent S1's answer was clear, straightforward, and worthy of a project team leader. According to him, when working on a project, cross-culture does not play a role. Diversity is obvious, but it is not something that should affect the progress of the project, rather people's different opinions must be worked well with. He was also surprised a few times by interesting habits of people, such as ice biting. However, this has nothing to do with culture. He did not see any cross-cultural problem when working on the GDPR project and on the contrary, he perceived that, for example, Americans were able to adapt to the needs of others when visiting Paris. However, he takes this approach for granted.

S1 {21:47} Ah ça. C'est une question difficile. Ce n'est pas si nous avons des cultures différentes, nous avons certainement des opinions différentes tous mais quand je travaille sur Lean projet, ça n'est pas le sujet. Chacun ses opinions, mais on est là pour travailler. {22:33} Le travail avec les Américains... Est-ce que ça a posé les difficultés ? Bah non, je ne vois pas pourquoi ? Je me souviens que certain mes collègues américains quand ils sont venus à Paris, ils adaptaient aux besoins de chacun. {23:03} Mais ça n'a rien extraordinaire.

S1 added another interesting comment which I found amusing; however, I was corrected that it was meant seriously. *S1 {22:03} On n'est pas influencé par "Moi je fais ramadan, moi je fais ça", non la seule choses qui doit influencer l'emploi de temps, c'est "quand est-ce que tu prends des vacances?" Voilà*

Interviewer ((laughing)) {22:07}

S1 {22:08} Nah mais bien sûr ! Si on commence avec s y entrer d'autres considérations, la ça devient vraiment compliqué. {22:10} Et puis d'ailleurs ça n'a pas d'intérêt pour le projet.

Respondent 2 was mutually complementary with respondent 3. Their response to this question was more of a general view of the issue. Firstly, S2 mentioned that there is still room for improvement on this issue. *S2 {06:23} Honestly, I think we could do it a lot better.* She further adds that the Company is quite US centric, so it is quite easy to forget

that not all employees are native English speakers and as for cultural diversity, it was also rather neglected before. S2 {06:23} *I think our country, in our particular company, English is overseen as the main language and there can sometimes be lack of consideration for this. Also, I think we are very US-centric sometimes <<haha>> You know, we are in very American company, and I think we do talk about diversity but I'm not sure that it was always.*” {07:03}

Both S2 and S3 agree that at the time of the GDPR project this topic was not addressed as much, but this was greatly facilitated by the development of technology and the emergence of the Teams communication channel, which allows nearly simultaneous translation. Listeners of video calls could turn on subtitles and thus reduce the risk of misunderstanding. S3 {07:40} *So in Teams you can put the subtitles on, you know, when somebody speaks you can get the caption, so for people who has trouble to understand, they can read it, which makes the experience one hundred percent better.*

Furthermore, S3 recalled typical cross-cultural differences such as the precision of the Germans and the relaxed attitude of the British, for example. S3{08:29} *In terms of multiculturalism, I think, we have slightly different approaches, I would say Germans are very structured and they do it as it should be, UK is much more relaxed. Let's do it somehow <<-:->> It's gonna work out somehow.*

However, she does not consider these as anything risky, but rather as subtle differences in attitudes. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that this can disrupt the progress of the project if not addressed primarily by the project manager, whose task is to coach his team members and guide them to a successful completion. For the project manager, it is then important to find a common way so that everyone gets everything done within the deadline. S2 elaborates that each office has its own way of management, but with such a large and complex project, it was necessary to find one common approach.

S3 {08:46} *I think that the biggest challenge was for S1, the Project Manager who had to manage this and make sure that people do the stuff which they have to do. And that's why we met weekly, so it was kind of embarrassing if you didn't really have the stuff done. Everyone was on the call, so people did tend to do it.* {08:59}

S2 {09:34} *You are reminding me now, if they, the different offices, had managed it independently, would have taken, I think, a great different approach. So, trying to kind of*

combine you know all of these different approaches into one standard approach was very challenging. {09:44}

5.3.2. Education

After learning about the views on interculturality, I was further interested in whether interculturality is addressed at all by the Company, whether there is any training to prevent conflict, or whether it is at least discussed within the team.

S1 focused on the theme of interculturality within the team. As mentioned at the beginning, for him, interculturality is a topic that should not affect the project in any way and his approach is purely professional. For a project manager it is important to have so-called soft skills, i.e. to be able to communicate with people so that they establish good relationships, but at the same time to keep everything on a professional level.

S1 {24:54} On reste professionnel. Si on parle des sujets non professionnels, pendant les pauses, ça aide à établir les liens. Mais il faut faire attention que ça ne crée pas désillusion. Si on sent qu'ils ont des discussions qui commencent à dérapier sur un sujet – on va dire politique ou religieux, c'est un stop. Alert. On n'est pas là pour ça. »

S3 gave a nice commentary on this issue. Previously, it was not discussed as much and there was no structured definition of appropriate behavior. But now that has changed, and it has become a big topic within the company. Compliance people in particular are dealing with it and today's leaders are specifically trained on this topic as well. However, the employees in the Company are naturally nice and respectful to each other and she has not encountered any conflicts while working on the GDPR project or in her overall career.

S2 comments on this issue in much the same way, saying that there is an atmosphere of respect in society. *S2 {12:25} Yeah, I would say it's just very respectful atmosphere and there is no conflict so even when people have differences in opinion, there is no, you know, problem.*

Imagining that it works like that, easily and naturally, I wondered whether there is a need to do awareness raising on this issue within the company. Isn't it then more likely to create artificial problems? However, I was immediately told that diversity training is needed. But it's not just about culture, diversity reaches into other areas such as the LGBT community or people with disabilities. Although the Company is very progressive, there is still

a lot of work to be done on these issues. S2 states that the problem is that unfortunately few people are able to talk openly about these issues.

S2 {13:53} Yes, particularly in some areas, including also lgbt topics. It just became very clear to me how few people can bring eccentric selves to work. So many people have thinks kind of "no that's not gonna work" and feeling like they can't just be themselves. {14:58} You have many people who don't feel able to bring those topics at the work so, I think definitely in that space is a long way though. There is still work we need to do.

S3 {15:10} I think compared to Czech companies we are well advanced. It is something that the Company must speak about. It doesn't come naturally to people. {15:20} And it's not just to accommodate people with disabilities but also people with different religions, you know, we have Muslims, we have Christians, and we all have to work together, somehow. {15:25} In project management is important. You have to know who you are working with, you need to adapt your style, you need to know "yes here I need put some pressure but here I need to take this team off it. {16:22}

5.4. Communication

Proper team communication is essential. This topic has already been touched upon in previous categories, but in this category, I tried to find out more information, especially what their language policy is and how they perceive multilingualism.

5.4.1. Language policy and Multilingualism

Every respondent clearly stated that English is set as the lingua franca within the company. As the team members were each based in their own country at the time of the GDPR project, they were also logically working in their native language. However, English was always used in meetings, emails, training, and documents. Therefore, it was necessary for everyone to have a sufficient level of English to be able to understand the assignment as stated by S1 {26:18} *Je parle français. Quand j'ai des collègues américains qui ne parlent pas français, il faut parle anglais. Après, c'est pour ça la composition de l'équipe est importante. Il y a des gens qui ne peuvent pas travailler sur le projet s il leur niveau l'anglais n'est pas suffisant. Il faut s'adapter, voilà. Mais la lingua franca est l'anglais, bien entendu. {27:21}*

S2 talked a bit more about multilingualism. First and foremost, she was grateful for the fact that she is British, and her native language is English, which makes communication easier. For her, this is an advantage. On the other hand, for people with English as a

second language it is worse, as also mentioned by S1 {13:59} *I am not always comfort about with the English and currently the most difficulties I had are with these English people. ((laugh)) British. I've been used to most American accents and I like to discuss with Spanish people then German people because like me they also have strong accents.*

However, S2 lives in Germany so she can see the differences in expressing between native language and a foreign one. S2{17:46} *I do live in Germany, and I speak german and I can see the differences between the people that have to communicate in English vs when they communicate in their native language. I mean there is a huge difference. They feel so much more comfortable articulating their ideas when it's in their native language. It always kind of holds them back little bit.*

5.4.2. Multilingual tools

Based on this, she mentions that it is important that English is not enforced as the dominant language, but that employees are allowed to speak in their native language. Using the example of training, she shows that it must be very difficult to concentrate for several hours in a foreign language and the training could be actually conducted in different languages, thus improving the transfer of information and the overall effectiveness of the training. Perhaps unknowingly, she is referring to one of the multilingual techniques discussed in the theoretical part, namely the Supporting Multilingual Individuals.

S2 {18:27} *Also when we are doing training, when we train people in English, I think it's very very difficult to sit back and focus in a language that is not your own. If we could deliver the training in the local language – I think the messages get across much better.* {18:44}

Respondent S3 also agrees with the others that the main language of the company is English, but then clarifies that it is not a problem if two people quickly explain information in their native language during a meeting. Most of the time it is not a problem for anyone.

S3 {05:38} *Let's say the main language is English. It's the company language, if you are in a meeting where there are two people from Germany for example and they quickly need to explain something to each other so if everybody is okay with it, it's perfectly fine if they have few sentences in German or French or whatever like which they need to use just to make sure that everybody's up to speed.*

Regarding the language tools used by the Company to improve communication in such an international environment, S3 can't get enough of new technologies such as Teams enabling simultaneous translations. It makes the work a lot easier, and people prefer to have meetings online. Therefore, I asked whether it is still worthwhile for the company to support language courses?

However, I was immediately told that it was. The company still supports language courses and not only that. It also supports individuals who decide to go to university and learn skills that they can then use in the company. It still makes sense for the company to invest in its employees this way.

S3 {06:06} Now with Teams it's much easier. It's much simpler because Teams is able to translate spoken language. Basically, simultaneously at the same time. So, if you are in a meeting, you can always turn on captions which are translated into your language so now I would say it's extremely easy. {06:36} It's even preferred for many people if they are not confident in the language that much which does happen from time to time. {07:04} So they preferred the virtual meeting."

S3 {07:57} They still get some English classes. I don't think that they are free now but the Company pays towards the costs of the English class. {08:10} Yeah people are encouraged to take English classes. They are provided to them with the contribution of the company.

S3 {08:20} It is not just the English classes. I mean the company does also contribute if you wanna go to university and you want to study something which you believe will enhance your working skills. {08:33} If you qualify, there are a few rules but not many, then the company is paying half of your tuition fees. {08:42} So there is a support in terms of learning from the company.

5.5. Bonus Category

I have added a bonus category to the main 3 categories. Not only for a nice end to the conversation, but also to provide readers of this thesis with interesting advice and tips for successful project management from experienced professionals.

S1 lists the following tips, which are mainly of a technical nature:

- Know at least your subject.
- Really know at least the team, the people who are going to be involved.
- Set yourself deadlines.
- Taking notes and knowing the tools.
- To have a classification system.
- File your documents.
- To get as close as possible to what we've done, what's the next step.

S1{27:44} Connaitre au minimum son sujet, connaitre vraiment au minimum l'équipe, les personnes qui vont intervenir. C'est très simple, parfois c'est au moins savoir comment les personnes se placent dans l'organigramme. {28:30} Et pour un chef de projet (.) se donner des échéances. {29:04} Prendre des notes et connaître les outils. {29:18} Essayer d'avoir un system de classement. Aussi classer ses documents (.) c'est fondamental. {29:53} de se rapprocher le plus possible de ce qu'on a fait, quelle est la prochaine étape.

S2 gives advice mainly of a personal nature.

- *{19:27} Understand what you are trying to achieve.*
- *{19:42} Be confident.*
- *{19:42} Raise your opinions.*
- *{20:03} Just speak up.*
- *{20:03} The most important thing for me is that everyone feels comfortable.*

S3 offers advice of both a technical and personal nature:

- *{08:58} have knowledge of the tools. start with the proper project charter, meaning have a proper governance, know who is on the project.*
- *{09:13} know what's the goal of the project.*
- *{09:13} be firm. Nice but firm*

- *{09:38} lots of coaching skills I would also say because you have to coach people along the way in cooperation with the sponsors many times. So, people very often don't really understand, you know, why they should be working on the project, what's the goal.*
- *{10:01} just good communication skills: making sure that everybody understands what their role and task is.*

6. DISCUSSION

The Discussion chapter is an important conclusion to the practical section as it interprets and analyses the results of the study in relation to the research question. First, this section summarizes the main findings of the study. Subsequently, I will provide an in-depth analysis of and interpretation of the results and compare them with existing literature and previous studies. Naturally, the limitations of the study are also described in this section, as it is important to maintain a balanced and honest assessment of the study. Last but not least, the possibilities of broader application of the results and their potential for further research will be offered.

As an employee of an international corporation and a student of project management, I decided to use my practical knowledge with theoretical ones to write this master thesis, which aims to reveal and analyze the challenges of international project management in a chosen company. The selected company is of an international nature, operating across the globe. It has a wide network of subsidiaries in Europe that can occasionally collaborate on large projects, such as the GDPR implementation that I chose as the main project for my research. This is because it was a large project that involved people from different parts of the world, and the people who worked on it were willing to share their experiences and opinions with me.

My research involved three people who are identified in this study as S1, S2 and S3. These are people who represented different roles in the project. I had the opportunity to interview the main team leader (S1), then the Subject Matter Expert (S2), a person who was highly specialized in Compliance, and the last interviewee was the PTM (S3), a project team member. Such a wide representation of different roles enables me to examine my research question, *how do the various factors that emerge from the international project management exert influence on the overall success and outcomes of a project?*” from various perspectives.

The interviewees underwent interviews of 10-30 minutes with around 15 semi-structured questions which I sent them in advance to give them a chance to prepare. During the interview, a few ad hoc questions were then asked based on their answers and the situation. Furthermore, respondents' statements are sorted into 3 main categories, Project management, Organization culture and Communication and for better understanding, the

individual statements are further divided into 6 subcategories: Project team, Virtuality, Interculturality, Education, Language Policy & Multilingualism and Multilingual tools.

The interviewees were very proactive and provided me with a lot of interesting information, which I will discuss in detail in the following pages and compare with the literature.

Within the Project Management category, all respondents indicated that the structure of the project team was based on the Six Sigma Management given by the Company. The fact that they all agree on this one structure is evidence that such management is set up correctly and brings clarity to project management. This corresponds to the statement in PMBOKGuide (2013) where authors say that a clear structure, namely an overview of who takes what role and who reports to whom, is an essential element of successful project management as it can fundamentally influence the way of the overall project process. However, respondents also cited some negatives, not resulting directly from the structure itself, but more so from the fear of the unknown when facing tasks that appear complex and uncertain. (S2, 01:15). These ambiguities may have been too much for team members, which in turn may have resulted in irregular recording of activities (S1, 08:52), poor prioritization of tasks (S2, 01:55) or too much focus on the design of the presentation rather than its content as S1 complained (09:47). Nevertheless, this approach is a common practice of people who have fallen into the trap of trying to be efficient and productive at any cost as it is addressed by author Oliver Burkeman in his book *Four Thousand Weeks - Time Management for Mortals* (2021). He states in his book that the fear of not knowing how to tackle tasks properly, but feeling that one must do some work, is then reflected in the poorly spent productivity of employees who spend hours doing less important tasks. And as I write in the theoretical part, time is money, and therefore it is important for the project manager to avoid as much as possible these ambiguities, at least by surrounding himself with the right people who have adequate qualities or specific certifications. Therefore, the common conditions for team members to participate in GDPR project, were having a sufficient level of English, basic knowledge of Lean Management (S1, 6:14) and to have some professional knowledge, mainly legal and then as much as possible about GDPR (S3, 01:38). Another important factors for making the project process more transparent are regular meetings, projects charters and reports. Since these factors are based on the very essence of Six Sigma Management, my interviewees are clearly in line with the authors of the article *Success factors in managing six sigma projects*, who

precisely describe that Six Sigma projects require to be “monitored and controlled using basic project planning and control tools, including Gantt charts, milestone charts, project reporting, project closeout, and post project evaluation methods. Other tools include effective communications and team development methods.” (Anbari, F. T. & Kwak, Y. H., 2004, p.5).

Another factor that also greatly affects team performance is the environment in which the team operates. In the case of the GDPR project, it was basically just a virtual environment. Each team member was based in a different country, and they only met online via Skype. As I write in the theoretical part, working remotely brings many benefits to employees in the form of flexible work schedules, increased productivity, cost saving and so on. But at the same time, there are many disadvantages. Two main disadvantages highlighted by the authors Nydegger et al in the article *Challenges In Managing Virtual Teams* (2010) are unclear team identity arising from poor relationship between team members and risk of poor communication. However, based on the interviewees' statements, it does not appear that teleworking poses a high risk to them. All of them were aware of the risks of working virtually but on the other hand, they were able to work with these risks and thus managed to avoid problems. S3 even mentions that the team's performance remains unaffected due to employees' proficiency, accustomedness, and the assistance provided by contemporary technologies like Teams with translation features (04:52).

My next main chapter focuses on the issue of organizational culture and as this is an international team, made up of people from different cultural backgrounds, I have focused on interculturality and the ways it is perceived within the team. As noted in the sequential analysis, for respondent S1, interculturality is not something that should affect the progress of the project in any way. For him, what is important is mutual respect based on proper communication and the ability to adapt, as he gives the example of the Americans (22:33). However, it is essential for him to remain professional and over-analyzing different cultures would not be beneficial for the project itself, according to him. This statement more or less contradicts most of the literature that focuses on interculturality. In most of the available literature, the authors just emphasize the fact that the project manager should be concerned about cultural differences within his/her team. For example, Robert Gibson in *Managing People* (2002) even recommends making a cultural checklist. Respondent S1 at least shares the same view as the authors of *Constructive Intercultural Management* (Barmeyer et al, 2021), who claim that interacting in a multicultural

environment necessitates the skill to adapt communication, negotiation, and leadership approaches to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding. Personally, I am very close to the approach of respondent S1 when he stresses the importance of soft-skills, proper communication, mutual respect, and a professional approach. Having an awareness of cultural diversity is important, but over-analysis gets you nowhere (S1, 22:10). The statements of respondents S2 and S3 on this topic were more of a general nature and they applied it rather to the issues of the Company. First of all, they both said that diversity had not been addressed much within the Company during the GDPR project. S3 stated that she did perceive cross-cultural differences such as different attitudes to work. Typically, she described Germans as precise and structured, while the British were more relaxed. Such cases are also highlighted by the authors Barmeyer et al (2021), who exemplify this with personal distance, which is perceived differently in each country. However, S3 sees nothing risky in this, as long as the project manager knows how to handle it. S2, on the other hand, emphasizes more the fact that the challenge for the project manager is not so much the cross-cultural differences as the fact that each country has different approaches to project management. Thus, to successfully manage complex projects such as the GDPR, it is important to have one common way that everyone follows, which ensures that everyone does their tasks on time (S2, 09:44).

As far as the subcategory Education is concerned, providing employees with education on interculturality and diversity is essential. It helps to foster a respectful and globally minded workforce which contributes to the success of international projects. In the case of the selected company, the respondents stated that although there is a good, pleasant, and mutually respectful atmosphere in the Company, which seems to exist naturally, diversity training will continue to be an important part of employee education. This is because diversity does not only involve people with different cultural backgrounds working together, but also with different religions. As respondent S3 gave the example of her colleague fasting during Ramadan. Nor did she realize that the presence of coffee in the room could be very upsetting to him. According to her, greater knowledge about a person you are working with leads to better collaboration, which is particularly important in project management. (S3, 16:22). On the contrary S1, as a project manager, has a more radical approach to this and according to him, whether someone keeps Ramadan or not should not affect the project at all. (S1, 22:03). These two completely different attitudes make me wonder where to find a balance in this regard. As we already know from the

theoretical part, authors like Zamykalová (2005) or Robert Gibson (2022) place emphasis on the ability of managers to adapt in order to avoid unnecessary inconvenience. Yet my question remains, to what extent should a project manager adapt to the habits of his colleagues so that he himself is not constrained in his work? I honestly don't think there is a simple one-step answer to this question, but either way, neither of the parties should feel constrained in the workplace. The team should be set up in an atmosphere where employees respect each other and are thus not afraid to articulate their opinions out loud. This opinion of mine is also based on an article by Campbell et al (2020) who in their research paper Lack of Communication between Management and Employees deal with effective communication and among other things they stress that to have an effective collaboration between the team member and the manager it is important to have a set code of communication, plus that expectations must be clearly stated and that there should be an open relationship between the manager and the team member. Last but not least, they also stress the necessity of separation personal life from professional one.

However, let's still stay with diversity, though, as S2 pointed out other problems related to it, which, according to her, are still a weakness of the Company. As the respondent S2 shows, diversity extends to other areas such as the integrity of LGBT people or people with disabilities. Although respondent S2 describes the Company as progressive, she herself states that there is still evident prejudice among employees and a fear of these minority people showing their true selves (S2, 14:58). This is also shown by the results of a Europe-wide survey by The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), which conducts regular comparative research of the legal and social aspects of the fundamental rights situation of LGBT persons (FRA, 2012). The authors of the survey state that “Despite EU legislation protecting LGBT persons from discrimination in employment and occupation, one in five respondents who had been employed in the year preceding the survey had felt discriminated against at work or when looking for a job. The figure was significantly higher for transgender persons.” (FRA, 2012, p.11). The reason for choosing such an older survey is its availability. The survey from 2019 is not available online and for 2023 it is currently in the making. However, this does not change the fact that the problem persists in the 21st century. Talking about diversity within the Company is important. This is not only stated by employees themselves but is also pointed out in professional publications such as Diversity in Practice, where the authors Hana Maříková, and others describe how diversity helps us to understand the challenges and problems of

a globalized and conflicted society or to be able to respond to the accelerating processes caused by social, international, economic, cultural, demographic and migration changes. Or simply that we do not discriminate against anyone. (Maříková et al., 2015)

As mentioned several times, communication is one of the basic elements of a successful project. That's why I decided to give this element one separate category and focus on it in detail. The first subcategory concerns the Company's Language Policy and respondent's view on multilingualism. The aim was to find out whether all respondents know and follow the same Company policy, even though they live in a different country. However, this question was very simple for the respondents, and they all agreed that there is English language set as the lingua franca in the Company. Meaning, that all documentation, messages, meetings, and trainings are in English. Therefore, we continued with multilingualism. As I refer to in the theoretical part, international teams and their wide range of languages, dialects, accents, as well as professional language, increase the risk of misunderstandings and thus can complicate the smooth progress of the project. (Piekkari et al., 2014) Even my respondents agree with this statement. For example, respondent S2 states how she can notice the differences in expressing when her colleagues are speaking in their native language and in a foreign one. The native language doesn't hold them back as much as the second one (S2, 17:46). Respondent S1 also reported how an accent influences him a lot at work. S1 found it quite challenging to keep a conversation with British people because of their British accent. S1 has a high level of English, but still admitted that he prefers to speak with either Americans or colleagues who have a native language other than English, as they all have similar accents, and so they can understand each other much easier (S1, 13:59).

Regarding the subcategory language tools, in the theoretical part I have shown 5 recommended tools from Barmeyer and Co (2021) that companies can apply. When talking to my respondents, I did not highlight these tools in any way and just let my respondents talk about the issue of multilingualism in the Company. Nevertheless, I received many interesting opinions related to this topic. First of all, respondent S2 acknowledges that it must be quite challenging for colleagues to concentrate in English for several hours if it is not their main language, adding that the Company could be more linguistically diversified in certain situations. For example, employee training could be conducted in the native language for better information transfer. Respondent S3 also states that although English is the main Company language, it is not a problem for international team members

to let people speak their native language if they need to clarify some information quickly. This approach could therefore be described as supporting multilingual individuals as it reflects exactly what is already written in the theoretical section. It facilitates the transfer of knowledge across the Company and ensures constructive communication between employees (Barmeyer, 2021). Furthermore, respondent S3 say that an indispensable tool for international meetings is the ability to turn on subtitles during video calls. This feature is now possible thanks to the communication channel Teams, which offers simultaneous translations (S3, 06:36). Thus, what was previously seen as a very expensive multilingual tool is now available almost for free thanks to new technology and is bringing great success. In general, the Company's language tools are the Lingua franca, the support of language individuals, which could be even broader, simultaneous translations and last but not least the language courses offered by the Company. The Company puts great value on the training of its employees, believing that they will continue to use the knowledge they have acquired in the Company (S3, 08:42).

For me, as the author of this thesis, I can say that all the interviews were very entertaining, enriching, and motivational. The strength of this thesis is built on semi-structured interviews that allow the interviewees to talk and tell their opinions. In the case of simple questionnaires, there would be a high risk of ambiguity and missing information. Another strong aspect of this study is that the interviewees know each other, as they all worked on the same project. Moreover, the fact that they held different positions during the GDR project, I consider it as a big bonus. Hence, I had the opportunity to interview a team member, a compliance expert, and a project manager. In the Sequence analyses chapter, it is possible to see how the interviewees differ in their attitudes towards different issues, especially the intercultural one, where S1 takes almost pragmatic, but professional approach, while the others are more open and supportive of increasing awareness of different religions and cultures. In many cases, however, they share the same views. A great contribution is therefore their actual statements, which are rich in information and diverse. Nevertheless, this thesis also faces weaknesses. The main weakness of this thesis I see is that I could not be part of the implementation of the project, not even part of the team. I think that such an experience would have helped me to better analyze the issues, construct more specific questions and thus achieve richer results. Time constraints also had a slight effect on the interviews. In some cases, the 30-minute limit had to be met and therefore there was no time for some ad hoc questions. However, all the main questions were

answered. Furthermore, the number of respondents may seem too low, on the other hand, one must consider the fact that this project took place 2 years ago, so the structure of the team has fundamentally changed. Anyway, due to the already mentioned advantages that the respondents possessed, I can claim that this weakness is marginal.

To conclude, I dare say that completion of this thesis brings great benefit not only to the Company itself, which thus has direct feedback from its employees, but the results have also revealed some completely new topics worthy of further research. Firstly, it seems to me from the results that it might be interesting for the Company to look more at the issues of communication, delegation of work and time management when carrying out highly demanding projects so that employees do not overspend time doing less important activities just because they feel lost at the beginning. Secondly, a topic that is very potential and has been identified as a weakness of the Company is the integration of LGBT people and people with disabilities. And thirdly, I can think of a question worth exploring in a few years, whether it is still worthwhile for companies to invest in the education of their employees when they can use AI. Whether there will even be any interest on the part of employees in taking any courses at all. How can AI affect employee education?

7. CONCLUSION

This master thesis, which addresses the challenges of international project management in a selected corporation, is composed of 6 main parts, which are as follows: theoretical, practical, methodological, empirical, results and discussion. These different parts gradually guide the reader through the thesis to the actual results, which answer the question *“How do the various factors that emerge from the international project management exert influence on the overall success and outcomes of a project?”*

The method of data collection is conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews, which allow me to obtain more comprehensive and richer answers full of valuable and detailed information. The research itself, however, was preceded by first reading existing literature that dealt with the same or similar issues, and most importantly, talking to a key person who introduced me to the team members. Thanks to her, I got to know not only the team members but also the functioning of the team as a whole from the inside and outside. That is, towards the colleagues, but also towards the sponsors. Such insight allowed me to feel like a team member at least for a while and to better structure my research question, interview questions and the following categories.

Based on this preparation phase and after minor adjustments according to the results from the interviews, the theoretical part is divided into 3 main themes namely Project Management, Organization Culture and Multilingualism. These themes reflect the challenges of international teams, which is evident not only from the available literature, but also according to the interviewees themselves. Subsequently, I conducted 3 interviews with people who held different positions at the time of the project, one was a project manager, one was a compliance specialist and the third was a team member. Their answers were recorded on a recording device and then transcribed in the Folker system. The analysis of the obtained information is presented in the empirical part, together with the results. Last but not least, I discuss my overall methodology and results in the Discussion section, where I develop a critical review of my findings in comparison with existing studies addressing similar topics.

As far as the results are concerned, they showed that a proper team structure, clarity in roles and who reports to whom is crucial for proper and easier project management. Regular meetings and written reports are essential not only because it is required by Six Sigma management, but moreover, it motivates employees to meet deadlines. The results also

showed that a complex project and the associated unclear tasks that employees do not have previous experience with greatly affects team performance, and it happens that team members pay attention to other tasks than the high priority ones. According to the respondents, basic knowledge of Six Sigma management, professional skills, language skills and proper communication are key to ensuring the effective execution of the project. On the other hand, what is not identified as having as much impact on the progress of the project is the virtual environment. Respondents stated that this of course comes with some disadvantages, such as the risk of lost information, however this method has become such a common practice that everyone has gotten used to it. Moreover, thanks to new technologies that allow automatic simultaneous translations, the aforementioned risk is also significantly reduced.

As far as the results from the chapter Organization culture are concerned, intercultural is another element that influences the progress of the project. An international team, such as the one I selected, overcomes not only the technical obstacles associated with each task, but also the obstacles resulting from the international collective. Different nationalities, different customs, different points of view, different approaches. All of this has to be dealt with by the team members, and then especially by the project manager who manages the whole team. That is why S1 mentioned that it is important for him to know the people he works with. The ability to adapt was mentioned by two respondents, yet both perceived the influence of cross-culture on the project slightly differently. While S1 stresses that interculturality should not affect the progress of the project, that it has nothing to do with the project, and that each team member should maintain a professional attitude, S3, on the other hand, encourages greater awareness of cultural differences. In any case, for all three respondents the cultural atmosphere during the GDPR project is described as pleasant, friendly, and respectful. The latter is the most emphasized by all three. However, for the successful management of any project, it is important that team members feel relaxed and above all themselves. Unfortunately, according to respondents, this is still not ensured especially for minority groups such as the LGBT community or people with disabilities. Thus, educating employees on diversity is important and still needed.

Lastly, communication plays a crucial role in project management and has a major impact on project success. Many times, communication causes problems even for a team composed of people of the same nationality and with the same mother tongue. Therefore, it is

even more complicated in an international team. However, we know from the results of this category that the GDPR team dealt with this issue successfully. First of all, it helped that the team members had to have a certain level of English, otherwise they could not participate in the project. Plus, it was not a problem for the team members to possibly let people exchange information in their native language. This at least ensured an accurate transfer of information. Although the team members coped with multilingualism successfully, some team members, nevertheless, did not avoid the problem associated with British accents. While S1 preferred to speak with Germans or Spaniards as they have the same learned accent, S2, as a British person, saw how people's expression in their native language other than English is a little different. Although it was not considered a serious problem in this team, S2 mentioned that in general the Company could let people speak more in their native language, such as different training sessions, as concentrating for several hours in a foreign language can be very exhausting. In any case, multilingualism was not identified by any respondent as problematic and affecting the progress of the project. Especially nowadays, when it is possible to turn on subtitles in online meetings which simultaneously translate the speaker.

In summary, this master thesis has provided insights into the factors influencing international project management and their impact on project success. The results emphasize the importance of a well-defined team structure, clarity in roles and reporting lines, regular communication, and respectful and inclusive organizational culture. While virtuality and multilingualism were not identified as major conflicts, the topic of diversity in the workplace still presents opportunities for improvement within the Company.

Overall, the employees of the Company expressed satisfaction with the organizational culture and did not encounter significant problems arising from cultural differences during the GDPR project. The implementation of Six Sigma management was positively perceived, as it provided clear guidelines, defined roles, tasks, and processes, and motivated team members to meet deadlines. However, it is crucial to address the challenge of attention dispersion at the beginning of complex projects, as team members may struggle to prioritize tasks that they are less familiar with. Effective communication, a respectful atmosphere, an open culture that encourages speaking up are valuable in preventing such issues. By understanding and addressing these factors, the Company can enhance its project management practices, improve team performance, and achieve successful project

outcomes. Further efforts can be made to foster inclusivity, educate employees on diversity and leverage technology to facilitate communication in multilingual environments.

Last but not least, I believe that the insights presented contribute to the field of international management and inspire further advancements in project management practices.

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Declaration of Consent

between

Škábová Natalie

Name of the Street and number

City, Zip Code

Czech Republic

and

Privacy policy for interview volunteers on the storage and use of anonymized data Natálie Škábová as well as Prof. Dr. phil. Doris Fescher.

Since the protection of personal data is very important to GIZ, I am informing you here which of your data will be stored and what it will be used for.

- Within the scope of the master thesis of Ms. Natálie Škábová, qualitative data in the form of interviews will be collected and used.
- Individual qualitative interviews will be conducted via Teams and recorded on private smartphone of Ms. Natálie Škábová.
- The audio recording via Teams/meeting in person as well as the created backup will be stored anonymously on the private laptop as well as on an external hard drive of Ms. Natálie Škábová for the period of the evaluation and will be deleted on all devices on 01. 10. 2023 at the latest, after the defense of the master thesis at the end of September.
- For the purpose of evaluating the work, the audio recording used for the evaluation will be sent anonymously to Prof. Dr. phil. Doris Fescher via private email.
- The audio recording will not be forwarded or published as part of the work.
- To facilitate the analysis of the interviews as well as the use of quotes in the main body of the thesis, Ms. Natálie Škábová will transcribe the anonymized audio recordings.
- For the transcription, the platform Folker is expected to be used, which secures the uploaded anonymized data according to the GDPR guidelines. Information about Folker can be found here: <https://exmaralda.org/en/folker-en/>
- Parts of the transcription will be used anonymously in the text of the master thesis and the transcript will be attached in its entirety to the annex of the master thesis. The master thesis will be published on the publicly accessible portal (IS/STAG) of the "University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice".

Declaration of consent

With my signature I agree that the data collected in the context of the master thesis "*Multilingualism and interculturality in an international work environment or interregional projects and work environment. The Challenges of international project management in a chosen company.*" (working title) by Ms. Natálie Škábová, on XX.CC.2023, may be used

as ticked:

Audio recording:

I consent to the audio recording, its storage, processing, use and forwarding to Prof. Dr. phil. Doris Fescher in anonymized form as explained in the upper part.

Transcription:

I consent to the preparation of an anonymized transcript of the audio recording, using the tool mentioned above.

I agree to the use of the anonymized transcript in the main part of the thesis, and I also agree to the publication of the transcript in the annex of the thesis.

I agree with the use of the anonymized transcript in the main part of the thesis but do not want the complete transcript to be published in the annex of the thesis but only to be used for the evaluation of the thesis.

Degree of anonymization:

The name of the interviewee will not be used in connection with the interview data! I agree that my following personal data will be used and published in connection with the interview data:

my position

the country package in which I work (place of work)

neither my position nor my place of work should be mentioned.

This consent may be withdrawn at any time. In addition, you have the right to request the restriction of processing or the deletion of the data.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Interview questions – French version

INTRODUCTION

1. Pourriez-vous vous présenter ?

(Nom, depuis combien de temps travaillez-vous pour The Company et dans quel segment)

2. Quelles sont vos compétences linguistiques ?
3. En quoi consistait votre rôle dans le projet GDPR ?

GESTION DE PROJET

Project team

1. Quelles conditions les membres de l'équipe devaient-ils remplir pour participer au projet ? (Niveau de langue, certificat...)
2. Vous utilisez Lean Six Sigma pour la gestion de projet, quels sont, selon vous, les avantages et les inconvénients de cette méthode de gestion de projet ?
3. Comment évaluez-vous la communication dans une telle structure avec les membres de l'équipe et les sponsors ?
4. Les positions et les tâches de chaque membre de l'équipe ont-elles été clairement définies au début du projet ?
5. Selon vous, les autres membres de l'équipe étaient-ils sûrs de leur tâche dès le début du projet ?
 - a. Ont-ils été plus activement ou passivement engagés ?
 - b. Ont-ils agi individuellement ou cherché à collaborer avec d'autres ?
 - c. Comment ont-ils réagi aux conflits ?

Virtualité

1. Comment évaluez-vous la performance générale de l'équipe pendant la mise en œuvre du projet ?
2. Comment pensez-vous que la virtualité a affecté les performances de l'équipe ?
 - a. Quels sont les aspects positifs du travail en équipe dans un environnement virtuel ?
 - b. Quels sont les points négatifs associés à la communication virtuelle

LA CULTURE D'ORGANISATION

Interculturalité

1. Veuillez décrire ce que l'interculturalité signifie pour vous.
 - a. Comment pensez-vous que l'interculturalité se reflète dans la gestion de projet ?
2. Comment l'interculturalité au sein de votre équipe a-t-elle influencé le processus du projet ?
 - a. Quelles différences interculturelles avez-vous rencontrées au sein de votre équipe ?
3. Quels sont les bénéfices que vous percevez en travaillant avec des personnes d'origines culturelles différentes ?

Education

4. Comment vous et votre équipe avez-vous géré ces différences interculturelles ?
 - a. Quelles différences interculturelles avez-vous rencontrées au sein de votre équipe ?
5. Votre entreprise propose-t-elle des cours sur la sensibilisation interculturelle et la prévention des conflits ? Par exemple sur LinkedIn Learning ?
 - a. Quels sont les avantages que vous percevez lorsque vous travaillez avec des personnes issues de milieux culturels différents ?

COMMUNICATION

Multilinguisme

1. Veuillez décrire ce que le multilinguisme signifie pour vous ?
 - a. Quels sont, selon vous, les avantages du multilinguisme ?
2. Quels sont, selon vous, les meilleurs outils pour une communication claire et efficace au sein d'une équipe internationale ? Vous avez le choix entre lingua franca, cours de langue, traduction ou d'autres...

Communication formelle et informelle

1. Au cours du projet GDPR, comment la stratégie linguistique a-t-elle été définie ? Y avait-il une différence claire entre le langage formel et informel ?
2. Comment évaluez-vous la communication au sein de l'équipe de projet ? Communication entre les autres membres de l'équipe, entre vous et le chef de projet, communication entre le chef de projet et les sponsors.

- a. Quels problèmes avez-vous rencontrés à cause du multilinguisme dans l'équipe ?

CONCLUSION

1. Quels conseils donneriez-vous à un futur manager de projet pour mener à bien un projet ?

Interview questions – English version

INTRODUCTION

1. Could you please introduce yourself?
 - What are your linguistic competences?
 - What was your role in the GDPR project?

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project team

1. Concerning the GDPR project, what requirements did the team members have to have to take part in the project? (Language level, certificates, special knowledge)
2. Were the positions and tasks for each team member clearly defined at the beginning of the project?
 - a. Were they more actively or passively involved ?
 - b. Did they act individually or seek collaboration with others ?
3. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of Lean Management method?

Virtuality

4. How would you rate the overall performance of the team during the project implementation?

Skype for business -

5. How do you think virtuality affected the team's performance?
 - a. What positives and negatives would you highlight when working as a team in a virtual environment?

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Interculturality

6. Please describe what interculturality means to you.
 - a. How do you think interculturality is reflected in project management?
7. How did interculturality within your team influence the project process?
 - a. What intercultural differences have you encountered within your team?

8. What bonuses do you perceive when working with people from different cultural backgrounds?

Education

9. How did you and your team deal with these intercultural differences?
 - a. What intercultural differences have you encountered within your team?
10. Does your company provide any courses on intercultural awareness and conflict prevention? For example on LinkedIn Learning?
 - a. What bonuses do you perceive when working with people from different cultural backgrounds?

COMMUNICATION

Language Policy

11. During the GDPR project, how was the language policy set? Was there a clear difference between formal and informal language ?
12. How do you rate the communication withing the project team? Communication between other team members, between you and project manager, communication between project manager and sponsors.

Multilingualism

13. Please describe what multilingualism means to you.
 - a. What are the bonuses of multilingualism in your opinion?
14. What tools do you find the most useful to deal with multilingulism? (Lingua Franca, code switching, simultaneous interpreting, translation on Teams, etc)

CONCLUSION

15. What advice would you give to future project manager to successfully bring a project to completion ?

Field note of the interview with S1

Interviewer	Natálie Škábová
Interviewee	Speaker 1
Date of interview	10.5. 2023
Time of interview	32minut
Language of interview	French – a bit of english (when mediator speaking mainly)
Location of the interview	Online Teams
Permission to audio-record:	Yes
<p>What worked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The whole interview went well, smoothly, without any technical problems. Only a bit of annoying background noises - The ambiance was professional but friendly. - Speaker was very kind and willing to tell his story 	
<p>Complication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once the Speaker suddenly switched to English in the middle of the sentence– it was a bit confusing- The mediator had to reassure him to continue in French. - Due to time constraints it was not possible to discuss in detail all prepared questions - no other problems occurred. 	
<p>Themes that emerged, general observations, anything that stood out:</p> <p>The interview was very interesting. For someone I didn't know personally, he was very open and patient in his explanations.</p> <p>During the conversation he mentioned several interesting points that stuck in my mind. For example I really liked his pragmatic approach in project management as he emphasized that we are there for the purpose of working not to deal with any cultural differences but still retains a human approach as he emphasized that one should want to do the job. Or how he personally seeks out new employees to get to know them, which he believes raises a greater success in project management.</p>	
<p>Areas for possible follow-up or further exploration:</p> <p>It raises the question, to what extent should the corporation be concerned with the intercultural environment so that it does not become an artificial problem ?</p> <p>Another question possible for further exploration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to motive team members to structure their work more responsibly ? 	

- How to get to know your team members when working online ?

Field note of the interview with S2

Interviewer	Natálie Škábová
Interviewee	Speaker 2
Date of interview	25.5. 2023
Time of interview	22 minut
Language of interview	English
Location of the interview	Online on Teams
Permission to audio-record :	Yes
What worked - The whole interview went well, smoothly, without any problems. - The ambiance was professional but very friendly. - Speaker was very kind and willing to tell her story	
Complication - When asked about Interculturality, she didn't know how to start at first, so the mediator (Speaker 3) took the floor and answered more or less for her. However, she was eventually inspired and so she also added her opinion on the issue. - Due to time constraints, it was not possible to discuss in detail all prepared questions - Otherwise, there were no other complications	
Themes that emerged, general observations, anything that stood out: Our conversation was otherwise very enriching. I really liked her comment about the company sometimes being too American-centric and forgetting that it employs people from different parts of the world. That's why I'm very pleased with her empathetic attitude towards employees with a mother tongue other than English and her emphasis on the fact that they should be allowed to speak in their native language not only in their free time, but perhaps in training.	
Areas for possible follow-up or further exploration: A new theme also emerged from the conversation, namely the integration of LGBT or disabled people into the company.	

Field note of the interview with S3

Interviewer	Natálie Škábová
Interviewee	Speaker 3
Date of interview	4.6. 2023
Time of interview	12minut
Language of interview	English
Location of the interview	In person
Permission to audio-record:	Yes
What worked	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The whole interview went well, smoothly, without any problems. - The ambiance was professional but very friendly. - Speaker was very kind and willing to tell her story 	
Complication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speaker 3 already said lots of useful information during the interview with Speaker 2, to not repeat herself, the interview was then very short. - The conversation got even more interesting after we officially ended the interview and turned off the microphone 	
Themes that emerged, general observations, anything that stood out:	
<p>Despite the short length of the interview, the Speaker provided me with lots of interesting opinions and stories. The speaker is very open-minded and her approach to work and colleagues is very friendly. In our conversation, I loved how she emphasized raising awareness about diversity that is across the company, about getting to know colleagues on teams and getting along with each other. The conversation gained momentum after the official end of the interview. After all questions were answered and the recorder was turned off, we further developed the conversation about project management. First of all, the difference between Lean Management and Six Sigma Management was clarified to me. Lean Management is based on Sigma, however, it is used for small projects that the offices run themselves. Six Sigma Management is used for large, complex projects like the GDPR one. However, it happens that colleagues in the UK, for example, run up to 30 Sigma projects at one time. Next, we discussed a very interesting issue, namely that many team members, as well as sponsors and other project participants, do not understand the role of the project manager and expect tasks unrelated to his/her role. A lot of people don't understand that the project manager is there to delegate tasks, oversee deadlines, communicate the process and results to stakeholders. But most of the time, they expect him/her to produce the results him/herself.</p>	

Areas for possible follow-up or further exploration:

Following this conversation, there are two themes that suggest for further research.

- First and foremost, it's about employee training and the increasing demand for artificial intelligence enabling easier communication
- The second topic also deals with education but regarding the roles and tasks of team members working together on one project. So that everyone knows clearly who does what and so that unnecessary unfulfillable demands are not made.

Sequence analysis S1

Sequence	Sub-sequence	Content	Speaker's comments	Interesting points	Time of the sequence
Introduction	Présentation	L'introduction du travail, de la formation et du segment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - chez the Company depuis deux milles - comme responsable de comptable, apres ca la formation Black Belt 	x	02:44 - 03:22
Project Management	Project Team	Les conditions pour participer dans un projet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoir la formation Lean Management - être autoriser par le chef 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tout le monde devrait avoir le meme niveau de comprehension de la formation Lean Management. - Avoir envie 	6:14
		Les avantages et les inconvenients de la formation Six Sigma Management	<p>Les avantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ca donne la structure - permet de presenter les roles - ca donne des outils soit informatiques soit des outils intellectuels. - Très simple a utiliser. - Ca permet a visualiser <p>L'inconvenient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - l'equipe ne voit pas toujours l'interet de structurer, de formaliser le travail - Beaucoup de gens passent trop de temps à faire de belles présentations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoir une méthode pour éviter de se perdre. Ce qui a été fait, décidé. = base d'un profit de projet - Les présentations doivent être claires et concises - plus de temps sur la forme que sur le fond - balanced world between following the methodology and not being boring with the management team and employees. 	9:47

Communication	<p>Communication formelle et informelle</p> <p>Multilingualism</p>	<p>Perception de la politique linguistique définie et du multilinguisme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The most difficultes - with British. - Spanish or Germans – easier as they also have strong accents - common law in Europe but many particularities in each country are not that clear - Pour mettre dans le main, besoin de lire beaucoup de réglementation, - Discuter beaucoup avec les responsables = beaucoup de travail intellectuel - essayer d’avoir la conversation avec tout le monde. - summarising the meeting- even when it’s simple - task has to be clear for everyone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - British accent- first difficulty on crossborder project {16:23} - beaucoup de points vus - La communication est difficile et comprendre ce que veulent les sponsors {18:00} 	<p>13:59</p> <p>-</p> <p>18:00</p>
	<p>Télétravail</p>	<p>L'impact de la virtualité</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Il faut de temps pour en adapter. - être dans l’entreprise et connaître les gens avant de télétravail, facilite des choses - quelqu’un qui arrive maintenant, la communication est plus difficile, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - essayer de passer au bureau et attraper les nouveaux pour les voir au moins. - télétravail, ça complique un peu les choses. {20:28} 	<p>19:08</p> <p>-</p> <p>20:28</p>
La culture d'une entreprise	<p>l'interculturalité</p>	<p>L'influence de l'interculturalité sur le déroulement du projet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - une question difficile, - Travailler avec les gens de bureau de Paris, c'est plus simple. C'est pas si nous avons des cultures différentes, nous avons certainement des opinions différents tous. - Sur Lean projet - Ce n'est pas le sujet. - Chacun ses opinions mais on est là pour travailler. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pas influencé par nos habitudes, traditions, devoirs fondés sur la religion. {21:47} - la seule chose qui peut influencer l’emploi de temps, c'est savoir QUAND est ce que tu prends des vacances ? - Si on commence y entrer d'autres considérations, la ça devient vraiment compliqué. - d'ailleurs ca n'a pas d'intérêt pour le projet.{22:10} 	<p>21:33</p>

		Les différences culturelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ca ne pose pas des difficultés. - Ils adaptaient aux besoins de chacun. - l'échange sur sa famille, sur ses hobbies, les gens qui n'ont pas envie d'échanger, de communiquer, on voit tout de suite, donc on reste professionnels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ce ne sont pas tant les différences culturelles que les habitudes humaines (croquer des glaçons) 	<p>23:06</p> <p>-</p> <p>23:53</p>
	Éducation sur l'interculturalité	L'éducation au sens de l'équipe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On reste professionnels - Si on parle des sujets non professionnels, pendant les pauses ca aide à établir les liens mais il faut faire attention que ca ne crée pas des illusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on discute pas sur les sujets politiques ou religieux. 	<p>24:54</p> <p>-</p> <p>25:27</p>
	Outils linguistiques	Quels sont les outils linguistiques utilisés au sein de l'entreprise ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Si des collègues américains qui parlent pas français, il faut parler anglais - la lingua franca est l'anglais, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - c'est pour ça la composition de l'équipe est importante. - Il y a des gens qui peuvent pas travailler sur le projet s'il leur niveau l'anglais n'est pas suffisant. - Il faut s'adapter voilà 	<p>26:18</p> <p>-</p> <p>26:18</p>
Conclusion	Conseil	Conseils pour une gestion de projet réussie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connaître au minimum son sujet - connaître vraiment au minimum l'équipe, les personnes qui vont intervenir - savoir comment les personnes se placent dans l'organigramme, qui fait quoi. - pour un chef de projet, se donner des échéances - Prendre des notes - Connaître les outils - Avoir un système de classement - classer les documents - de se rapprocher le plus possible de ce qu'on a fait et quelle est la prochaine étape 	x	<p>27:44</p> <p>-</p> <p>27:44</p>

Sequence analysis S2

Sequence	Sub-sequence	Content	Speaker's comments	Interesting points	Time of the sequence
Introduction	Presentation	Introduction of the work and department he/she is working in	I had expertise in compliance topics	x	00:26
Project Management	Project Team	Requirements to participate in a project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyone needed to have a good base line level of english because that was the communication language for the project. - it was very challenging because we had lot to achieve. - I think it was unclear at the beginning how we should tackle it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we needed to have people who were representing all of the different european offices - it became more defined over time - not because of poor communication but just because it was such a new topic for many people - no one really knew how to prioritize and maybe there was such a lot to get done with so few people. That was a huge challenge 	00:55 -
		Team member's position and tasks			01:55
	Advantages and Disadvantages of Lean Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the advantage is having clear structure, clearly defined objectives. - having Six Sigma methodology make it kind of we could really keep it somewhere under control - I dont really see any clear disadvantages for the Six Sigma project methodology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - without it I think we just would have been completely lost. 	03:33 -	
Virutality	The impact of virutality on team performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I think you can often lose communication - things can get lost in translation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - with no native speaker although their english is excellent but something can always get lost 	04:51 -	

Communication	Language Policy and Multilingualism	Perception of the set language policy and multilingualism	<p>- I think our country, in our particular company, english is overseen as the main language and there can sometimes be lack of consideration for this</p> <p>- I can see the differences between the people that have to communicate in english vs when they communicate in their native language</p> <p>- They feel so much more comfortable articulating their ideas when it's in their native language.</p>	- Speaking in different language always kind of holds them back little bit	06:49 17:46
	Multilingual tools	What language tools are used within the Company ?	- I think it's critical that we do not force english as a dominant language in all context and we give people the opportunity to speak in their own languages.	<p>- think it may be so much more effective (<i>letting people speak their own language</i>)</p> <p>- If we could deliver the training in the local language – i think the messages get across much better</p>	17:10 18:44
Organisation culture	Interculturality	The influence of interculturality on project flow	<p>- I think we could do it a lot better</p> <p>- I think we are very US-centric sometimes</p>	- we are in very american company and I think we do talk about diversity but I'm not sure that it was always	06:23 07:03
		Cultural differences	<p>- Trying to kind of combine you know all of these different approaches (S3 speaks about different approaches) into one standard approach was very challenging</p> <p>- I would say it's just very respectful atmosphere and there is no conflict so even when people have differences in opinion, there is no problem</p>	- if they had managed it independently, would have taken I think great different approach	09:44 12:25

	Education	Cultural Diversity Education within the Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity education is still needed - particularly in some areas including also lgbt topics - people still can't be themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for me it's the biggest indicator that there is still lot of work to do not just in that area but in many like a mental health challenge. - actually the problem that people are not able to discuss these topics in the workplace 	13:53 14:58
Conclusion	Advice	Advices to future PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understand what you are trying to achieve - be confident - Raise your opinions - make sure that everyone feel comfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I think some people feel quite ehm maybe nervous' especially when the meeting is headed by the US 	19:27 - 20:03

Sequence analysis S3

Sequence	Sub-sequence	Content	Speaker's comments	Interesting points	Time of the sequence
Introduction	Presentation	Introduction of the work and department he/she is working in	continuous approval manager for EME- Europe and the Middle East, and at that time the project was done I was a compliance representative for eastern europe area covering nine countries.	x	00:24
			role in the project - project team member. As compliance rep I was responsible for the GDPR implementation in all the eastern european countries		
Project Management	Project Team	Requirements to participate in a project	- some knowledge about GDPR - awareness of different approaches in different countries	- Reliance on the project leader	01:16 - 02:19
		Advantages and Disadvantages of Lean Management	Advantages - Six Sigma Management - ideal for complicated projects - its tools – charters, reports, structure Disadvantages - no comment	x	03:16
	Virutality	The impact of virtuality on team performance	- using Skype better than what they used to have but Teams are better - It enabled us to be able to join the meetings from our phones - I think we are used to it. We always work like this so I would say there is no issue with working virtually on project like this	- because most of the meetings were in the afternoon because of the main legal lead was based in the US - Not in our organization	04:26 - 04:52

Communication	Language Policy and Multilingualism	Perception of the set language policy and multilingualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the main language is english - It's the company language - at that time (during the GDPR roject) all the people who were on the project had no troubles with the english 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - letting people speak their own language - if you are in a meeting where there are two people from Germany and they quicky need to explain something to each other, so if everybody is okay with it, it's perfectly fine if they have few sentences in german 	05:38
	Multilingual tools	What language tools are used within the Company ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skype was okay we all had to speak in english. Now with Teams it's much more easier. It's much more simple because Teams is able to translate spoken language. - Basically simultaneously at the same time - the Company pays towards the costs of the english class - people are encouraged to take english classes - there is a support in terms of learning from the company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - you can always turn on captions which are translated into your language so now I would say it's extremely easy. - it's even preferred - it is not just the english classes. - The company does also contribute if you wanna go to university and you want to study something which you believe will enhance your working skills 	06:36 - 08:10
Organisation culture	Interculturality	The influence of interculturality on project flow	Time difference - we had K on the project, that was our colleague from US which meant it always had to be later in the afternoon. So it collided with the european time, it collided a lot with our schedules because it was around four pm usually every single week. - this also posed some challenge	x	07:58

		Cultural differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we have slightly different approaches - Germans are very structured and they do it as it should be, UK is much more relaxed - I would say the diversity inclusion is not a huge topic in this group. (<i>Compliance people</i>) because people tend to do it naturally. Although there are people from various backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I think that the biggest challenge was for S1, the Project Manager who had to manage this and make sure that people do the staff which they have to do - regular meetings helped to meet deadlines 	<p>07:58 - 08:59 11:47</p>
	Education	Cultural Diversity Education within the Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity inclusion is a huge topic - people, especially leaders are specifically trained - at that time there definitely was not such a huge definition of what the expected behavior is on the other hand compliance reps work on this and people in compliance are usually the first in line to train these kind of things - It is something that company MUST speak about. It doesn't come naturally to people and it's not just to accommodate people with disabilities but also people with different religions, you know, we have Muslims, we have Christians and we all have to work together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it's on of the priorities. We always speak about diversity inclusion - you don't actually feel like you have to think about it. It comes naturally, you just do it - if you can't do it then I would say you will not last very long in this company - In project management is important. You have to know who are you working with, you need to adapt your style 	<p>10:28 - 12:11 15:25 16:22</p>
Conclusion	Advice	Advices to future PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - know what's the goal of the project - be nice but firm - coaching skills - good communication skills 	X	<p>09:13 - 10:18</p>

Interview Transcript S1

{00:59} 001 Mediator

So Deni (.) thank you very much for taking your time (-) H^OW is gonna work out↑ Natalie is going to ask questions (.) she will take notes for her practical part↑ (0.6) ehm that's it (.) really. <<:-) >

{02:18} 002 Interviewer

On va commencer avec l'introduction (.) Ce sont les questions simples↑ et la première question est (.) pourriez-vous vous présenter ? Juste Depuis combien de temps (.) travailler vous dans le Company et dans quel segment ?

{02:44} 003 Speaker1

Je travaille chez the Company depuis deux milles (.) donc ça fait maintenant : plus de vingt-deux ans (0.6) ehm j'ai longtemps travaillé comme responsable de comptable (0.5) ehm (.) pendant plus de dix ans en fait ↓

{03:02} 004 (13.9)

{03:02} 005 et en deux milles dix (.) j'ai changé pour une fonction différente (.) j'ai retrouvé mon ancien travail que j'ai exercé avant the Company↓ c'est à dire (.) auditeur↓↓

{03:18} 006 (1.74)

{03:20} 007 après ca::

{03:21} 008 (1.38)

{03:22} 009 j'ai suivi la formation: B^Lack Belt (.) (.) en deux milles^treize (.) (.) et je suis donc devenu le responsable de projet↓

{3:37} 010 mon premier (.) projet ↓ a été travailler sur la conversion (3.5) sur les nouveaux outils sur the Company

{4:00} 011 I worked on this project with local team` US team´ during (eh) two years almost (.) before we: (eh) converted <xxx> on dit– we switched on new tools (.) on July 2015. <xxx> our national day <haha> So this was my first big project↓

{04:47} 012 Interviewer

Merci(.) alors on va continuer avec l'équipe de projet

{04:55} 013 Interviewer (1.64)

Je voudrais savoir↑ quelles sont les conditions que les membres d'une équipe devraient posséder pour participer dans le projet ? (.) (.) par exemple (.) le niveau de langue ou: le certificat↓

{05:16} 014 Speaker1

Alors (0.5) <xxx> Dans le bureau de Paris certains employées parlent assez peu l'anglais
(.) (.) sont mal à l'aise avec ça(.) °h mais cela ne les empêche pas, qu'ils peuvent participer
à des projets locaux (.) projets français↑ °h

{05:32} 015 C'est même nécessaire: hm' que tout le monde participe plus possible.
(0.5) Alors (.) tout le monde a eu les formations.

Ils sont suivi la formation six sigma. Ehm(.) six sigma c'était avant (0.4) et maintenant(.)
il y a deux trois ans(.) Tout le monde a suivi la formation lean management.

{05:59} 016 (4.04)

{06:03} 017 tout le monde est à peu près au même niveau de compréhension du lean
process↑ et::

{06:14} 018 la condition principale(.) pour participer au projet (.) °h il y a deux cond-
tions principales (.) c'est un d avoir envie↑

(0.4) et deux ehh: (.) d'être autorise par mon chef de servis.

{06:29} 019 La plupart de temps c'est une <xxx> entre moi, le chef de service, le dé-
partement manager, ET les employés ↑(.) pour savoir <xxx> qui va travailler sur tel ou
tel projet↓ Voila. C'est tres simples

{06:58} 020 Interviewer

Oui je vois, c'est tres simple (.) et parfait parceque ma deuxième question est (.) quels
avantages et les inconvénients trouvez-vous à ce type de management, formation ?

{07:31} 021 Alors(.) ehh ↑!: avantage c'est que ça donne la structure↓ Voila. Ça me
permet de présenter mon rôle (.) (.) ça donne des outils soit informatiques soit des outils
intellectuels↑

{07:48} 021 les outils informatique(.) (.) le lean, c'est très simple à gérer sur Microsoft
planner (0.6) c'est simple à utiliser↑ (.) ca permets de visualiser (.) °h et moi(.) ca m'aide
beaucoup↓

{08:02} 023 Et:: ça permet de présenter mon travail eh (.) voila (.) (.) CA permet de
structurer chaque projet lean au minimum.

{08:12} 024 L'inconvénient qu'on peut y voir (.) c'est que (.) (.) eh dans un projet lean,
dans un travail sur d'amélioration

{08:21} 025 (5.1) comment dire::

{08:27} 026 l'équipe ne voit pas toujours l'intérêt de structurer, de formaliser le travail
(.) qu'on fait. Donc c'est vraiment à MOI (.) une fois de rappeler (.) de faire des résumer:
et c'est à moi de structurer. °h

{08:41} 027 mais c'est parfois difficile de faire comprendre aux gens qu'il y a quand
même un minimum de méthodologie à avoir↑ pour ne pas être perdu(.

{08:52} 028 ce sont les choses très simple`(.) Apres chaque réunion même simplement ce qui a été fait, ce qui a été décidé— ce à la base d'un profit de projet et ehh (.) plupart des gens n'aiment pas faire ça. Donc c'est moi qui le fait << :-) >

{09:12} 029 l'autre inconvénient qu'il faut pas tomber (.) eh: quand (.) on a pas beaucoup de temps'

{09:21} 030 Je travaille sur beaucoup de projet différents, sur beaucoup choses différentes (.) je suis très souvent la sur support<xx> sujet. Non seulement lean mais un simple support. Par exemple actuellement je travaille sur les control TVA, ce n'est pas lean, c'est pan un projet. C'est un travail à faire.

{09:47} 031 Donc(.) ce que je voulais dire c'est que sur le projet lean (.) (.) il faut faire attention de ne pas aussi trop vouloir formaliser ... de belles présentations PowerPoint parce que sur les petits projets on arrive facilement plus de temps sur la forme que sur le fond << :-) >

{11:12} 032 That s balanced world between following the methodology and not being boring with the management team and employees.

{11:31} 033 *Interviewer*

(laughs) ah oui(.) et donc ` selon vous °hhh Comment évalueriez -vous la communication entre le sponsor et les membres d'équipe ?

{11:43} 034 *Speaker 1*

Alors↓↓ (eh) what do you mean by comment évaluez - vous?

{11:52} 035 *Interviewer*

Ehmm: (18.1)

{12:09} 036 *Interviewer*

I mean (ehm) (.) (.) How did you like (.) actually the communication between you and sponsors of the project vs you and team members?

{12:28} 037 *Interviewer*

Was it like more difficult to talk to sponsors because they had some idea of the project, and they didn't let you do something↓ (.) and with the team members was it simpler?

{12:46} 038 *Speaker 1*

yes (ehm) so: We must always communicate by emails' (.) but I do like cafeteria <<xxx>> because I learn a lot through (ehm) conversation in cafeteria << :-) > and we exchange many things during only five minutes with a coffee' That's crazy <haha> °hhh So we never communicate enough with everyone. So I try to speak to (.) I would say quite everyone↓ Team members (.) sponsors (.) stakeholders the most I can but that's not easy.

{13:41} 039 *Mediator*

Do you want Natalie to hear specifically about the GDPR project↑, how was it with this one or in general?

{13:49} 040 Interviewer

Specifically, about the GDPR (.) (.) yes please↓

{13:52} 041 Speaker1

SO (.) °h <xxx> GDPR project (.) that was the most difficult for me because it was an European project, you know h°

{13:59} 042 I am not always comfort about with the English and currently, the most difficulties I had are with these English people. ((laugh)) British (.) °hh I've been used to most American accents (.) and I like to discuss with Spanish people ((laugh)) then German people <<-)> because like me they also have strong accents'

{14:24} 043 For example(.) you know – sometimes is very difficult to listen to Lorain ((laugh)) really ((laugh)) She has very strong north accent hahaha.

{15:24} 044 That's the first difficulty on cross border project.

{15:32} 045 For cross border project like GDPR so we have common law in Europe, directive↑ but many particularities from each countries I not .. I are not that clear I am not a compliance officer (.) so it was very difficult for me↑

{15:49} 046 First I had to read lot of (.) (.) ehh (.) (.) comment dire. Pour mettre dans la main ↑ °hh j'ai dû lire beaucoup la réglementation, tout simplement' (.) Discuter beaucoup avec la responsable <xxx> donc c'est beaucoup de travail intellectuel↑ et ensuite d'essayer d'avoir la conversation avec tout le monde

{16:08} 047 donc c'est beaucoup de travail intellectuel↑ (4.16) oui (.) c'est difficile d'avoir des conversations avec tout le monde': (.) les états unis d'un part mais collègues d'autre part: –

{16:23} 048 beaucoup de point vues (.) Parfois différentes a rendre compte↑

{16:45} 049 For every meeting, we have to make a scenery what has been discussed↓ what has been decided↑ what will be next steps – that is for summarizing the meeting (1.2) We have to write this – even when it's Simple

{17:10} 050 we have to write it' (.) So tasks have to be clear for EVeryone.

{17:15} 051 (28:85) << background noise making the the passage unintelligible >>

{17:46} 052 Tout le monde est censé me dire mais non (.) là: ce n'est pas ce que nous avons dit, ça n'est pas ce qui a été décidé, ça n'est pas ce que j'ai voulu dire'.

{18:00} 053 la communication donc c'est difficile` ET ensuite COMprendre ce que veulent les sponsors:

{18:11} 054 Ca dépend des gens(.) (.) je sais q'un mec de Lawrence eh my MD (.) (.) it's quite simple (.) she goes straight to the point – sometimes it's a bit <xxx> ((lagh))

{18:33} 055 *Mediator*

Natalie. just for you to know, MD is a managing director↓ that the head of local area.

{19:08} 056 *Speaker1*

Right, thank you. Et est-ce que la communication était influencée par la virtualité ?

{19:21} 057 Effectivement (.) il a fallu en temps pour nous en adapter (.) (.) le bureau de Paris a été le premier à tester le teletravail.

{19:35} 058 (7.14)

{19:42} 059 nous étions premier chez the Company à utiliser un télétravail (2.7) Donc ça m'a permis adapter.

{19:51} 060 MAis (.) ce qui me facilite (.) les choses` (.) (.) c'est que je suis dans l'entreprise depuis longtemps' (.) je connais les gens ` (.) je connaissais la plupart des gens avant de télétravail` CA aide beaucoup

{20:04} 061 JE comprends pour quelqu'un qui arrive maintenant dans la société (.) eh: la communication est plus difficile, je pense au quotidien et AUssi pour des projets↑ parce que les gens ne le connaissent pas, je ne les connais pas↑

{20:20} 062 donc je dois essayer de passer au bureau` les attraper` pour les voir au moins

{20:28} 063 c'est vrai ca complique un peu les choses.

{20:31} 064 *Interviewer*

Ah ouais c'est vrai, hmm, merci beaucoup. Alors on va continuer avec la culture d'entreprise ou bien l'interculturalité

{21:24} 065 *Interviewer*

Tout au début je voudrais savoir (.) (.) selon vous, que signifie l interculturalité ?

{21:33} 066 *Speaker1*

Ah ça(.) c'est une question difficile↓ (.) eh parce que (.) (.) en faite quand je travaille avec les gens de bureau de Paris ` c'est plus simple' (.) c n'est pas si nous avons des cultures différentes↑, nous avons certainement des opinions différentes tous'

{21:47} 067 mais quand je travaille sur lean projet (.) Ca n'est pas le SUjet. Chacun ses opinions (.)mais on est la pour travailler (.) donc on a pas <xxx> influencer par moi je fais ramadan, moi je fais ça:

{22:03} 068 Non(.) la seule choses qui doit influencer l'emploi de temps (.) c'est QUand est-ce que tu prends des vacances ? Voila`

{22:07} 069 Interviewer

((laugh))

{22:08} 070 Speaker1

Nah mais Blen Sure↓

{22:10} 071 Si on commence avec s y entrer d'autres considérations (.) la

ça devient vraiment compliqué. Et puis d'ailleurs ça n'a pas d'intérêt pour le projet.

{22:33} 072 le travail avec les américains eh: (.) (.) est ce que ça a posé les difficultés ? (.) (.) Bah non(.) je ne vois pas pourquoi ? Chacun a ses petit <xmaniex> – je me souviens que certain mes collègues américains quand ils sont venus à Paris deux milles quinze (.) Ils adaptaient aux besoins de chacun. ↑↑

{23:03} 073 mais ça n'a rien extraordinaire'

{23:06} 074 j'avais une collègue américaine, elle travaillait pour nous, j'ai travaillé avec elle. J'étais très surpris de voir (.) (.) c'est quelque choses très très amusante ((laugh)) °hh

{23:18} 075 Elle avait besoin d'un verre des glaçons et elle croquait des glaçons, littéralement. (.) (.) Et la première fois, j'étais a cote d'elle (.) je n'avais pas (.) compris ce qu'elle faisait, juste entendu ((mastication)).

{23:37} 076 Est-ce que c'est un truc culturel ? NON (.) Ce n'est pas culturel` MAIS c'est quand même quelque chose surprenante <<:-) >

{23:53} 077 Sinon:: sur d autre sujet (3.5) encore une fois (.) quand nous sommes au présentiel comme j'ai plus <<xxx>>collègues américains ↑ l échange sur sa famille, sur ses hobbies– les gens qui n'ont pas envie d'échanger(.) de communiquer (.) on voit tout de suite↑. Donc on reste vraiment professionnels.

{24:29} 078 Interviewer

Haha, ouais et alors, dans l'équipe↑ discutez-vous des questions liées à l'interculturalité ? Est-ce un sujet qui est discuté dans votre équipe afin de prévenir les problèmes interculturels ?

{24:54} 079 Speaker1

On reste professionnel. Si on parle des sujets non professionnels (.) pendant les pauses(.) ça aide à établir les liens (.) MAis il faut faire attention que ça ne crée pas désillusions (4.5) si on sent qu'ils ont des discussions qui commencent à dérapier sur un sujet – on va dire eh politique ou religieux: c'est un STop. ALert. On n'est pas là pour ça.

{25:27} 080 Interviewer

Hmm, et en ce qui concerne le multilinguisme (.) (.) Comment cela se passe-t-il dans votre équipe multilingue ? Avez-vous une lingua franca, ou utilisez- vous switch code ?

{26:18} 081 *Speaker1*

Je parle français ou anglais : (.) bon (.) Quand j'ai des collègues américains qui ne parlent pas français` il faut parle anglais (2.1) après eh (.) c'est pour ça la composition de l'équipe est importante. Il y a des gens qui ne peuvent pas travailler sur le projet s il leur niveau l'anglais n'est pas suffisant`

{27:21} 082 Il faut s'adapter↑ voilà. Mais la lingua franca est l'anglais, bien entendu` << :-) >

{27:28} 083 *Interviewer*

Haha d'accord` Alors ma dernière question (.) Quels conseils donneriez-vous a un futur chef de projet ?

{27:44} 084 *Speaker1*

Alors (.) °hh Connaitre au minimum son sujet (.) bien <<xx> joie (6.1) connaitre vraiment au minimum l'équipe, les personnes qui vont intervenir. C'est très simple, parfois c'est au moins savoir comment les personnes se placent dans l'organigramme (4.3) qui fait quoi et::

{28:30} 085 et pour un:: chef de projet↑ (.) se donner des échéances (3.1) quand on est sur un projet il faut y penser tous les jours `évidemment` même si on travaille sur plusieurs choses à la fois (.) (.) bien entendu(.) sur un projet il faut au moins y penser cinq minutes par jours même si le travail augmente. Mais la mémoire est quelque chose de s'entretien.

{29:00} 086 Prendre des notes

{29:04} 087 Connaitre les outils qu'on a à sa disposition. Ca c'est outil. Pour moi (.) ça c'est plus difficile parce que Microsoft planneur, refaire des notes etc. (.) tout ça(.) ça prend du temps. Ca prends beaucoup de temps(.) et on a toujours d'autres choses à faire.

{29:18} 088 et puis (2.7) entrainer les réunions sur les différents (.) (.) on travaille sur le projet A dix heures et a une heure on doit passer sur projet B (.) à midi, on doit aller manger et puis il faut que je parle de ça. °h Boh (.) effectivement il faut (2.1) essayer d'avoir un system de classement. Aussi classer ses documents (.) c est fondamental.

{29:53} 089 et puis oui(.) de se rapprocher le plus possible de ce qu'on a fait (.) whats the next steps, quelle est la prochaine étape` (.) (.) c'est un peu tout ça (.) voila <<:-) >

{30:26} 090 *Interviewer*

Alright, thank you M and S for doing this interview with me. It's done for me, I have all the questions I need (.) so one more time(.) thank you S. Au revoir.

Interview Transcript 2

{00:04} 0001 *Speaker2*

I had expertise in compliance topics (.) (.) data privacy (-) in particular °hhh we needed to have people who were representing all of the different European offices↑↑(.)

{00:26} 0002 and everyone needed to have a good BAse line level of English (.) because that was the (.) communication language for the project.`

{00:39} 0003 *Interviewer*

When you worked together with other team members °h (ehm) do you remember if all tasks were clearly defined at the beginning of the project ` so everyone knew what they are working on ?

{00:55} 0004 *Speaker2*

I think (.) (.) it was very challenging↑ because (.) (.) we had lot to achieve(.) <xxx> you know↓ GDPR is such a huge huge topic and (.) I think it was unclear at the beginning how we should tackle it` really.

{01:15} 0005 what we should focus on´(.) and I think it became more defined over time °hh but yeah I think that at the beginning` (.) at least for me(.) that it was lack of clarity is what we wanted to achieve.

{01:27} 0006 *Interviewer*

And do you think it was because of bad communication? Poor communication between sponsors and team leader?

{01:41} 0007 *Speaker2*

I think↑ (.) It was partly just because it was such a new topic for many people on the project´(.) °hh (ehm) you know (.) (.) so (.) we didn't have anyone who would have real specific expertise in this area

{01:55} 0008 and just because it was such a huge topic as well like no one really knew how to prioritize´(.) and maybe there was such a lot to get done´(.) with so few people <<:-)>> that was a huge challenge`

{02:21} 0009 *Interviewer*

Alright, and about the Six Sigma approach, what are its advantages and disadvantages?

{02:57} 0010 *Speaker2*

I guess the advantage is having clear structure (.) (ehm) clearly defined objectives(.), the organisation aspect–

{03:11} 0011 (9.32)

{03:21} 0012 you know what↑ I mean it's really critical to have project management approach to that↓(.) (.) specific project (ehm) without it I think we just would have been completely lost.

{03:33} 0013 Because of so: many things we needed to achieve` we needed to have like a clear structure, with clear objectives. Like the scope was so easy to expand. So having Six Sigma methodology make it kind of we could really keep it somewhere under control << haha >>

{04:02} 0014 and I try to think what disadvantages would have been' (ehm) (.) I don't really see any clear disadvantages for the Six Sigma project methodology for that case

{04:20} 0015 Interviewer

But you worked with other team members online(.) right?

{04:27} 0016 Speaker2

yes

{04:31} 0017 Interviewer

So what about this? Didn't the virtuality affect team performance?

{04:37} 0018 Speaker2

Yeah (.) (.) I mean that was clear. I think you can often lose communication – you know` things can get lost in translation (.) especially in virtual environment.

{04:51} 0019 Interviewer

Do you remember any specific time when virtuality had very bad influence on the team performance?

{05:04} 0020 Speaker2

I try to think (0.6) we had to put together like data inventory which is why you met all of the data that you are processing ` °hh in the system called Arch << haha>> I think(.) (.) And I think there was lots of confusing from the team as around how we should using that ` and how we should assessing this data inventory'

{05:25} 0021 It may have been that something was in the communication, but I think it was really challenging to kind of roll out and use this system like that (.) online↑↑ (.) you know with people coming from lots of different backgrounds.

{05:39} 0022 (2.16)

{05:41} 0023 with no native speaker although their English is excellent but something can always get lost <<:-) >>

{05:51} 0024 Interviewer

Yeah(.) talking about different backgrounds (.) I would like to move to next subject ↓(.) and that is organizational culture and interculturality'

{06:09} 0025 *Interviewer*

So how do you think that interculturality is reflected in project management ?

{06:18} 0026 *Speaker2*

<< hahahaha>> THat's a great question << hahahaha>>

{06:23} 0027 Honestly(.) I think we could do it a lot BEtter' I think (.) I thinks we are trying focus on is ehm: (0.5) this is the new <<xxx>>but in terms of the language (.) speaking clearly and you know, trying to take into account that there are people online and maybe not native speakers °hhhh but that doesn't always work↑

{06:49} 0028 I think (.) our country, in our particular company, English is overseen as the main language and there can sometimes be lack of consideration for this.

{07:03} 0029 Also, I think we are very US-centric sometimes <<haha>> You know, we are in very American company, and I think we do talk about diversity but I'm not sure that it was always – I don't know(.) what do you think L?

{07:21} 0030 *Mediator*

Yeah, I think this was pre-Teams time↓ So even we do speak about diversity a lot↑(.) we used skype at that time which was much better then Webex <<haha>> but Skype had no functions as Teams does

{07:40} 0031 so in Teams you can put the subtitles on, you can, you know ehm:(.) when somebody speaks you can get the caption so for people who has trouble to understand(.) they can read it, which makes the experience one hundred percent better.

{07:58} 0032 and that time we had K on the project, which was our colleague from US' which meant it always had to be later in the afternoon as well' so it also collided with the European time(.) it collided a lot with our schedules because it was around four pm usually every single week.

{08:18} 0033 So this also posed some challenge – but in terms of multicultural, I think, you know, ehm (.) we have slightly different approaches' I would say.

{08:29} 0034 So Germans are very structured, and they do it as it should be, UK is much more relaxed:: Let's do it somehow <<:-)>> It's gonna work out somehow.

{08:46} 0035 But I think that the biggest challenge was for S1, the Project Manager(.) who had to manage this and make sure that people do the staff which they have to do

{08:59} 0036 And that's why we met weekly, so it was kind of embarrassing if you didn't really have the staff done↑ Everyone was on the call, so people did tend to do it`

{09:11} 0037 but as S2 says, it was really difficult topic and it was getting bigger and bigger so it was very difficult to keep the scope.

{09:20} 0038 *Speaker2*

Yes, that's true and:: (0.7)

{09:25} 0039 cause we were trying to kind of have a common approach and I think that was one of the biggest challenges.

{09:34} 0040 you are reminding me now(.) like °hh each office had (.) you know (.) if they had managed it independently, would have taken I think great different approach

{09:44} 0041 so trying to kind of combine you know all these different approaches into one standard approach was very challenging.

{09:54} 0042 *Interviewer*

I really like the point about discussing the different cultures, how you talked about the diversity. Did you discuss the diversity in team during your free time, or is it even set by company in order to acquire knowledge and avoid potential conflicts?

{10:21} 0043 *Mediator*

It was not defined that much in that time – It is NOW

{10:28} 0044 Diversity inclusion is a huge topic (.) it's one of the priorities.' (.) We always speak about diversity inclusion. Always, so people are(.) specially leaders are specifically trained'

{10:41} 0045 but at that time (.) °hh people knew <<hahah>> that this is something(.) but since this happened few years ago` (.) °hh there definitely was not such a huge definition of what the expected behavior is.

{10:60} 0046 but on the other hand (.) Compliance reps work on this (.) and people in compliance are usually the first in line to train this kind of things

{11:28} 0047 honestly, these people are extremely nice, everybody is helpful, they help each other out all the time °hh it's truly great group of people `so I would say the diversity inclusion is not a huge topic in this group.

{11:47} 0048 because people tend to do it naturally. Although there are people from various backgrounds` (.) A. is located in Dubai, he is from Lebanon, but he is just a nice guy ever. It's just a pleasure to speak with him so you don't actually feel like you have to think about it. It comes naturally, you just do it.

{12:11} 0049 if you can't do it then I would say you will not last very long in this company. It's just not possible (.) Depending on what you do but ehm It's just not really possible to last here. << hahaha>>

{12:25} 0050 *Speaker2*

Yeah, I would say it's just very respectful atmosphere and there is no conflict so even when people have differences in opinion, there is no, you know, problem.

{12:35} 0051 Mediator

I think there were some disagreements, but you know, there were challenges (.) °hh because it was just a new topic, the disagreements were` (.) there were too many so far as I remember because people didn't really know what to expect <<haha>>

{12:54} 0052 I was there ↑ I remember as I was so happy that somebody guides me through it. Somebody tells me what to do↑ it gives me the standard work. It gives me` you know " this is how the paper should look like, this is what you do now" so I appreciate this` so I didn't have any issues`

{13:15} 0053 but there were some discussions~ I wouldn't even say arguments↓↓ discussing. But they are always very respectful in this group(.) on any project.

{13:27} 0054 I have never really been on a project where I would become uncomfortable` There are leaders who can make it uncomfortable <<:-)>> luckily, they are not located here <<hahaha>>

{13:43} 0055 Interviewer

So, when you mention that it comes naturally, do you think that is still needed for the company to talk about diversity?

{13:53} 0056 Speaker2

yes

{14:02} 0057 particularly in some areas, including also LGBT topics. And we had really interesting presentation at the end of the day

{14:23} 0058 It just (.) became very clear to me – how few people can bring eccentric selves to work↑ so many people have thinks kind of "no that's not gonna work" and feeling like they can't just be themselves.

{14:38} 0059 for me it's the biggest indicator that there is still lot of work to do` not just in that area but in many.

{14:58} 0060 it could be like a mental health challenge. you have many people who don't feel able to bring those topics at the work, so I think (.) in that space is a long way though↓ there is still work we need to do.

{15:10} 0061 Mediator

I think compared to Czech companies (.) we are well advanced`

{15:20} 0062 It is something that the company MUST speak about. It doesn't come naturally to people.

{15:25} 0063 and it's not just to accommodate people with disabilities but

also, people with different religions, you know, we have Muslims, we have Christians and we all have to work together`(.) somehow

{15:41} 0064 and even with the Muslims I spoke to one recently and he was trainee in Germany and he said "you know it was great, but I really struggling because it was Ramadan" and he couldn't even have a sip of water and smell of coffee that was in the room` he sais "It was killing me" I could only think about having the coffee.

{16:06} 0065 and honestly(.) nobody thought about him↓ Like you know – and it wouldn't even cross my mind. It wouldn't↓ Be honest, I would not think about that.

{16:18} 0066 so it is something that we do have to speak about

{16:22} 0067 In project management is important. You have to know who you are working with; you need to adapt your style, you need to know "yes here I need put some pressure but here I need to take this team off it.

{16:57} 0068 *Interviewer*

Yes true. Well let's move to another topic, which is multilingualism. And my question to you is what are the bonuses of multilingualism according to you?

{17:10} 0069 *Speaker2*

<<hahah>> yeah I mean I am really fortunate that I am English native speaker↑. I'm very privileged in all respects. It makes lots of things easier for me, but I do live in Germany, and I speak german and I can see the differences between the people that have to communicate in English vs when they communicate in their native language↑

{17:46} 0070 I mean there is a huge difference. They feel so much more comfortable articulating their ideas when it's in their native language. It always kind of holds them back a little bit.

{17:55} 0071 not in every case but I think confidence comes with time.

{18:09} 0072 And I think it's critically that we do not force English as a dominant language in all contexts and we give people the opportunity to speak in their own languages. I think it may be so much more effective.

{18:27} 0073 also when we are doing training, when we train people in English,

I think it's very very difficult to sit back and focus in a language that is not your own.

{18:44} 0074 If we could deliver the training in the local language – I think the messages get across much better

{18:56} 0075 so I think is critical to kind of maintain that↑

{19:01} 0076 *Interviewer*

A very interesting point. Lovely. So, my last question is what advice would you give to future team member to work successfully on the project ?

{19:27} 0077 *Speaker2*

First of all, understand what you are trying to achieve, making sure that you have clear understanding of the <<xxwhyx>>

{19:42} 0078 be confident. Raise your opinions↑ I think some people feel quite ehm maybe nervous' especially when the meeting is headed by the US'

{20:03} 0079 just speak UP (.) Raise your ideas (.) so that would be the most important thing for me that everyone feels comfortable`

{20:30} 0080 Interviewer

Alright, that would be all from me (.) Thank you very much for taking your time, It was such a pleasure to do the interview with you. Thank you.

Interview Transcript S3

{00:15} 001 Interviewer

Hello and welcome to this interview. My first question is (.) if you could (.) shortly introduce yourself and tell me what was your role in the GDPR project ?

{00:24} 002 Speaker3

My name is XXX and I'm currently a continuous approval manager for EME↑ (.) Europe and the Middle East (.) and at that time the project was done (.) I was a compliance representative for eastern Europe area` (.) covering nine countries at that time.

{00:48} 003 my role in the project was (ehm) I was a project team member↑ (.) (ehm) as compliance rep I was responsible for the GDPR` implementation in all the eastern European countries.

{01:03} 004 Interviewer

Concerning the GDPR project' (.) according to you, what requirements did the team members should have to take part in the project?

{01:16} 005 Speaker3

Well, (.) most of the team members consisted of compliance reps from all the different areas' (.) (eh) so (eh) I mean (.) some knowledge↑ the team was vary 'so we had a project leader that was S1 from France (.) and then the project team members were compliance reps and legal representatives`.

{01:38} 006 and their requirements were (.) (ehm) (.) well in terms of jobs skills: (.) to have some knowledge about GDPR' to be able to see what is needed to be implemented from the core perspective but then also each country there were slight differences↑ in each country implementation rules' (.) so knowledge of this.

{02:04} 007 in terms of the (.) project as such S1 was fully leading the project, so whatever was needed (.) he was directing it` so he was sending out materials` if he needed some background information, he would send it out.

{02:19} 008 He would send out (ehm) summarize' up to each meeting to make sure that we know what was discussed and what's needed for next weeks. `So meetings were weekly↑ (ehm) and: by sending out the communication he was ensured that people are prepared.

{02:37} 009 Interviewer

So, everybody knew their task and role? Was it clear?

{02:42} 010 Speaker3

Yeah yeah yeah `(.) yes

{02:46} 011 (4.88)

{02:51} 012 Interviewer

For the GDPR you used Six Sigma management' So according to you (.) what are its advantages and disadvantages?

{03:00} 013 Speaker3

Ehmm~ So for the: complex project like GDPR where you have multiple countries: involved~ – trying to implement one solution` (.) i think (.) Six Sigma is rightly suited to do this ↑

{03:16} 014 It's a complicated tasks so you need to °hh (ehm) you need to be able use the tools which Six Sigma offers` (.) So the structures, so we star with project charter `(.) always` (.) and the project charter is actually the starting point.

{03:30} 015 You summarize what are the business requirements' what are the benefits' who are the team members' what are their roles:' who are the sponsors'

{03:41} 016 IT WOULD NOT be possible to do it only as a Lean project` I believe (.) So: it did require the tools of which Six Sigma to enable to members finish their tasks.

{03:54} 017 Interviewer

and you worked only virtually?

{03:57} 018 Speaker3

yes

{03:59} 019 Interviewer

so: how would you (.) rate the overall performance of the team ↑ (.) like in this environment'

{04:06} 020 Speaker3

AT THAT time whe the GDPR project was done~ (ehh) we were not utilizing teams' at that time (.) so we: used skype for business↑ °h which was already a big improvement from the solution that we had before~

{04:20} 021 but still (ehh) skype for business didn't really have the capabilities that Teams has now↓

{04:26} 022 (0.85)

{04:26} 023 It enabled us (.) to be able to join the meetings from our phones' (.) for example so that made it much easier because most of the meetings were in the afternoon because of the main legal lead was based in the US~

{04:41} 024 so we needed to take the meetings at a time which was suitable for her as well and there were seven hours difference. '

{04:52} 025 I: (.) (.) think we are used to it↑(.) we always: work like this´ so I would say there is no issue with working virtually on project like this` Not in our organization↓

{05:34} 026 *Interviewer*

Yeah´(.) and about the communication (.) use already said that the communication was fine˘

{05:38} 027 *Speaker3*

Yeah, the communication↑ Let's say the main language is English↑ It's the company language (ehm) if you are in a meeting where there are two people from Germany for example: and they quickly need to explain something to each other´ °hh so if everybody is okay with it – it's perfectly fine if they have few sentences in German or French(.)

{05:58} 028 or whatever like which they need to use just to make sure (eh) that everybody's up to speed.

{06:06} 029 again (.) SKype was okay we all had to speak in English´ Now with Teams it's much easier (.) it's much simpler´ because Teams is able to translate spoken language´

{06:21} 030 basically simultaneously at the same time ↑

{06:23} 031 °hh so if you are in a meeting (.) you can always turn on captions which are translated into your language` so Now (.) I would say (.) it's extremely easy˘.

{06:36} 032 it's even preferred (.) for many people: if they are °hh not confident in the language that much↑ which does happen from time to time´

{07:04} 033 so they preferred the virtual meeting.

{07:07} 034 but at that time if you speak specifically about the GDPR (.) all the people who were on the project had no troubles with the English.

{07:29} 035 *Interviewer*

Now I have a question about tools and how to support the English` Well if the English is set as lingua franca in your company and you use team with translation, does your company still provide any kind of English classes?

{07:49} 036 *Speaker3*

Yeah yeah yeah

{07:50} 037 *Interviewer*

Is it still worthy´ even though people prefer to use virtual calls with captions?

{07:57} 038 *Speaker3*

yeah yeah yeah (.) they still get some English classes – I don't think that they are free now (.) but the Company pays towards the costs of the English class

{08:10} 039 yeah people are encouraged to take English classes (.) they are °hh provided to them (.) with the contribution of the company.

{08:20} 040 it is not just the English classes↑ I mean the company does also contribute if you wanna go to: university and you want to study: something which you believe will enhance your working skills ↑

{08:33} 041 if you qualify – there are a few rules but not many` then the company is paying half of your tuition fees.

{08:42} 042 so there is a support in terms of learning from the company.

{08:49} 043 *Interviewer*

So, my last question is what advice would you give to future project managers or team members to successfully lead a project?

{08:58} 044 *Speaker3*

<<:-)>> °hhh I would say (ehm) have knowledge of the tools` start with the proper project charter` meaning have a proper governance` know who is on the project.

{09:13} 045 know what's the goal of the project` (.) be firm <<:-)>> nice but firm (ehm)

{09:23} 046 Projects are something that they do on sides (eh) with their daily jobs so there is often a lot of persuading people that they need to finish something by some time` there is some timeline.

{09:38} 047 lots of coaching skills (.) I would also say (.) because you have to coach people along the way in cooperation with the sponsors many times so people very often don't really understand – you know (.) why they should be working on the project` what's the goal`

{09:54} 048 so coaching in this regard teaching them how to use tools for example that we use during the project.

{10:01} 049 °hh (ehm) and just good communication skills

{10:05} 050 so timely updates been sent to teams` making sure that everybody understands` what their role and task is` what is it needed for

{10:18} 051 yeah (.) (.) Those are the main ones <<hahaha>>