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Abstract

This dissertation addresses some of the pertaining issues in the field of intercultural competence, namely, the negative aspect of Ethnocentrism, the missing adherence to the cultural context, the lack of cross-disciplinary dialog, and lastly, its limited usefulness, due to its missing connection with performance. Most of the intercultural competence research has its origin in Western countries, which thereby defines what is deemed to be intercultural behavior. This is arguably problematic in today's constantly changing interconnected business world, in which organizations are comprised of employees from different corners of the world. It is deemed to be important for managers and leaders to gain insight into the beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes of culturally diverse employees. Both in terms for the organization to stay viable and gain a competitive advantage, but also in terms of developing the intercultural competence in organizations and create an inclusive environment, where different employees can contribute with their unique knowledge.

My aim in the dissertation has been to answer the stated research question: *How does creativity as a tool influence intercultural competence in an organization from a pragmatism framework?* The chosen approach provides a cross-disciplinary perspective, in which the intercultural competence perspective is integrated with a creativity perspective and organizational culture perspective. The pragmatism framework is sought to convey a practical dimension, in terms of usefulness, as in how creativity can be implemented in practice and influence intercultural competence among employees in practical everyday situations in the organizational setting. There is thereby both a theoretical and practical aim in the dissertation. Theoretical in terms of reconceptualizing intercultural competence and develop a model that integrates the field of intercultural competence, creativity, and organizational culture. The practical aim relates to my ambition to provide practical creative tools that managers and other staff members can implement and use in their organization to develop intercultural competence in their organization. The results showcase that the creative platform and its principles *no judgment* and *parallel thinking* facilitates the development of intercultural competence, by providing a non-judging learning process. When engaged in 3D cases, the participants are encouraged to share diverse ideas, without limitations from cultural or social patterns and thus contribute to the mutual development of intercultural competence among them throughout the collaboration process.

The results furthermore showcased how self-awareness, mindfulness, and open-mindedness can be implemented as creative tools through different practices to facilitate and influence intercultural competence in an organization.

It is argued that the developed theoretical perspective is significant in a number of ways. Firstly, competence is united with performance in the perspective, as it provides practical useful examples of how intercultural competence can be developed in practice through a number of collaborative exercises in an organization. Secondly, due to the developed cross-disciplinary perspective that includes the cultural context and broadens how competence ought to be perceived, namely, through a dialog with multiple voices, which is deemed to address the issue of Ethnocentrism.

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Introduction

“The citizens of the twenty-first century must learn to see through the eyes, hearts, and minds from people other than their own. Several important trends of the late twentieth century have transformed the world into a global village: technology development, globalization of the economy...the development of multiculturalism...In order to live meaningfully and productively in this world, individuals must develop their intercultural communication competence.”

(Chen & Starosta, 2008, p. 215)

In today's business world many organizations are comprised of employees from different corners of the world, who are speaking different languages. The new interconnected world has radically changed the workplace and given rise to managerial challenges in terms of collaboration between employees from different cultural backgrounds and avoiding misunderstandings. This means that there is an increasing need for intercultural competence, in terms of insights in the knowledge, values, and behaviors of employees from different parts of the world. But several researchers have stated that idea and knowledge sharing in organizations involve inefficient processes, due to employees' tendency to focus on what they have in common rather than sharing their own personal expertise (Paulus & Yang). These factors have created an emerging interest in creativity as a mean to solve pertaining challenges that organizations are faced with. Especially the field of organizational creativity, which include the often times neglected aspects of social and creative collaboration process are deemed to be essential for organizations in the future (Csikszentmihalyi & Sawyer, 1995).

In this dissertation, I henceforth journey into the three fields of intercultural competence, organizational creativity and organizational culture, in order to examine how these approaches can be combined to solve pertaining issues that organizations face today. My aim in the dissertation is to develop a cross-disciplinary dialogue between the chosen perspectives and examine can how they can contribute to each other and consequently answer the stated research question: *How does creativity as a tool influence intercultural competence in an organization from a pragmatism framework?*

The aim and purpose of my dissertation are deemed important, since I strive to contribute to with a cross-disciplinary dialogue, which largely has been missing in the field of intercultural competence.

Thus strive to solve some of its pertaining challenges, such as ethnocentrism and its limited usefulness in practice. It additionally is deemed to be important on a practical level, both in order for organizations to stay viable in today's competitive work environment and to develop a culturally inclusive workspace, in which employees and other members can share and contribute with their individual knowledge and competencies.

Thesis outline

The next section outlines the assumptions I had writing the dissertation. Then follows the literature review, in which I frame the thesis and elaborate on the existing literature in intercultural competence, creativity and organizational culture. After that is the chosen pragmatism perspective and research design outlined in the methodology section, in which I elaborate on the chosen philosophical assumptions and showcase how the chosen approach can answer the stated research question. After the methodology section, the conceptual framework is outlined, which is used as a toolkit in the analysis (inquiry) to answer the stated research question. Then follows the inquiry section, which starts with a re-conceptualization of intercultural competence (ICC) to enable elaborating how creativity influences ICC. I then start discussing how creativity influence ICC and following that I elaborate on how organizational culture serve as a context and influence both creativity and ICC. The last part of the inquiry section showcases the developed theoretical model. In the last section, which is the conclusion, I outline the findings and answer the state research question.

Assumptions

I started out my study from a place of knowledge and experience based on previous academic projects about computer-mediated communication, leadership and management and lastly using the creative platform to solve communication misunderstandings. Therefore this study is influenced by my previous 8th-semester project, where we investigated: *How leaders in online organizations can achieve motivation and commitment among their employees across cultures and timezones?* From knowledge and observations gathered through interviews, I noticed inherent communication issues among intercultural employees in the game company Gamecan when they interacted via electronic channels missing out on the face-to-face interactions.

The intended message from one employee was sometimes misinterpreted or misunderstood, and collaboration was furthermore difficult due to time differences. These experiences turned my attention towards intercultural communication, due to its focus on the face-to-face interactions between people with different backgrounds.

Asante, Miike and Yin state that the faster and more effective means of information transmission in today's society can undermine the art of listening and having face-to-face communication for deep interpersonal connections and long-lasting social relationship with other people (2014: 7). During my 9th semester and enrollment in the Creative Genius course, I continued pursuing how people can become better at communicating and understanding each other across cultures. During enrollment, I learned about Byrge and Hansen's use of creativity as the *unlimited application of knowledge* in providing solutions to problems through the facilitation process called the creative platform. The theory conceptualizes how to attain diversity of knowledge in an intercultural communication- and collaboration setting, without cultural factors pertaining to an issue.

During the semester I got first-hand knowledge of the potentials, as I explored how creativity can be applied in an intercultural working environment in order to solve communication misunderstandings across cultures. My time with the Creative Genius was an inspiring and enriching experience and in many ways, I perceive this study as a continuation of that project. From a more personal note, I have been growing up in two different cultures throughout my childhood and adolescence, whereby I am bilingual by birth (Danish & Swedish). During the first 16 years of my life, I traveled to India numerous times with my parents and for long periods, where I often was part of intercultural gatherings where the participants interacted in several different languages. In that way, I also have personal experience of intercultural communication and in the future, I aspire to work with issues concerning creativity, intercultural communication and organizational culture.

Literature Review

In the following section I will outline the existing literature in the field of intercultural competence (IC) and give a brief account of its historical origin to begin with. Then I will explore and outline the existing literature within organizational creativity and creativity relating to learning and collaboration. In the final section I outline the existing literature in the field of organizational culture, including different perspectives. This literature review ought not to be perceived as exhaustive on the included different perspectives. Rather the purpose is to contextualize the chosen focus, outlining different approaches and viewpoints in the relevant literature and thereby creating a framework for the thesis, moreover framing and positioning the present study in the research literature.

Intercultural competence

The early development of intercultural competence (ICC) occurred after World War II, when western countries sought to expand their investments and business abroad. The Cold War increased the need to develop international business relationships and cooperation. This also led to the expansion of foreign aid programs such as the Peace Corps, where people were recruited and trained to work in cultures that were different from their initial cultural upbringing (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Matveev, 2017). This growing demand to develop new training approaches stimulated the government and social scientific community to research the concept ICC. Although there is no single leading theory of ICC, the *Uncertainty Reduction Theory* and *Anxiety Uncertainty Management theory* (AUM) is worth mentioning, in terms of the theoretical foundations for ICC (Arasaratnam, 2016; Matveev, 2017). The former theory originates from a post-positivist tradition and provides an explanation of human communication during initial interactions – by focusing on how people’s perception of contextual factors of communication determines the uncertainty level of a given situation. A higher level of uncertainty during an interaction causes lower levels of liking and bonding among the participants in the interaction (Matveev, 2017). The AUM theory further develops on the assumptions of the *Uncertainty Reduction Theory* and proposes that the ability to be mindful and effectively manage anxiety, which is caused by uncertainty in intercultural interactions, is two key factors in achieving ICC (Arasaratnam, 2016).

The field of ICC is furthermore deeply rooted in theoretical and historical traditions of intercultural communication (IC). Intercultural communication was initially developed in alliance with the fields of international and development communication (Rogers & Hart, 2002). IC gradually separated itself by emphasizing on the face-to-face aspects of interpersonal and intergroup communication between people from different cultures and stressing social categories other than nationality and ethnicity (Asante, Miike & Yin, 2014). Young Yun Kim, which is one of the influential researchers in the field's development, defines IC as: *“direct face-to-face communication encounters between or among individuals with different cultural backgrounds”* (1988, p. 12). I thereby argue that one could perceive IC as the enactment of ICC in face-to-face interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds. In other words ICC is the prerequisite learned abilities, adopted skills and knowledge that people use and co-create in encounters with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Spitzberg and Changnon state that the increasing multinational interest of organizations, both private and public, profit and non-profit, might have directed managers attention towards training employees in skills and competencies that facilitate productive and profitable interactions (2009). According to Matveev, intercultural competence has become a central focus in multicultural organizations and it has become essential for managers to understand how to manage a global workforce and collaborate with employees with various cultural backgrounds (2017).

The concept of ICC has been perceived and used in a number of different disciplines, such as communication, anthropology, psychology, linguistics and education; consequently there are numerous different perceptions of how to understand ICC. The disagreements in the scientific community about how to understand ICC have subsequently developed a plethora of different definitions in diverse disciplines. Mažeikienė and Virgailaitė-Mečkauskaitė (2007, p. 71) define IC as: *“ability acquired on the basis of the certain knowledge and attitudes that enables individuals to work effectively in the context of different cultures”*, as referred to Matveev (2017, p. 8). Scholars and researchers have often times used a wide range of similar terms to IC, such as intercultural communication competence, intercultural sensitivity or cross-cultural adaptive ability. Although, in the communication literature the two terms intercultural communication competence and intercultural competence are used interchangeably, according to Arasaratnam (2016).

Other authors such as Matveev perceive the two terms differently, where the former term refers to a person's communication skills in intercultural encounters and the later term refers to the skills necessary to be culturally competent (2017). In this dissertation the two terms are perceived interchangeably until later re-conceptualization of ICC in the methodology section.

According to Arasaratnam, IC often times describes a person's effective and appropriate engagement with cultural differences and has been perceived to on one hand reside within humans (cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills) - and on the other hand as being a product of a context, in terms of being co-created by the people and other contextual aspects in the specific situation (2016).

Another perspective towards ICC is the perceptual approach that builds upon Spitzberg's (1998) notion of competent communication that is perceived as "*effective in achieving certain objectives in an appropriate way to the context of the interaction*" as referred to Matveev (2017, p. 9). Effectiveness relates to an individual's ability to create intended outcomes through an interaction via learning and socializing processes. Appropriate relates to the ability to understand the contextual requirements in a situation by recognizing the contextual constraints in communication, according to Trenholm and Rose (1981), as referred to Matveev, (2017). The perceptual perspective to ICC emphasizes the context, interactions and interpersonal relationships in the specific context; whereby competence is determined and judged during the interaction by the involved people - on the merit of effectiveness and appropriateness, according to Spitzberg (1988), as referred to Matveev (2017).

Chen and Starosta (1996) perceive ICC as: *the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and execute appropriate effective communication behaviors that recognize the interactants' multiple identities in a specific environment*", as referred to Matveev (2017, p. 10). People's willingness to engage in other cultures is due to their flexibility and open-mindedness. Chen and Starosta furthermore emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity in relation to ICC, where sensitivity relates to people's ability to experience and respond to cultural differences. When people have greater cultural sensitivity they also have a greater potential for exercising ICC, according to Chen and Starosta (1996), as referred to Matveev (2017).

The most helpful definition of intercultural competence, according to Arasaratnam (2016), is provided by Spitzberg and Changnon, who define ICC as:

“the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world” (2009, p. 7).

Consequently this is the chosen working definition of ICC in the dissertation until later re-conceptualization of the term in the methodology section. Arasaratnam states that the notion of effectiveness and appropriateness has for a long time been associated with ICC (2016). Effectiveness is notably individualistic in its orientation and has prevalently been characterized as the successful achievement of one’s goals in a social interaction; whereas appropriateness perceives communication from the other person’s point of view, in terms of whether the person has communicated in a contextually accepted and expected way, according to Arasaratnam (2016). In general ICC is perceived as a combination of a person’s abilities¹, as well as contextual factors, such as shared goals, incentives and perception of agency; although most theories and models of ICC begin with the individual as the unit for analysis, according to Spitzberg and Changnon² (2009). Spitzberg and Cupach have later sought to include contextual elements, including situation, environment and culture, and outcomes, such as perceived appropriateness- and effectiveness, satisfaction, understanding, attraction and assimilation, as referred to Spitzberg and Changnon (2009, p. 7).

As showcased in the previous section, there are a number of factors and variables that arguably contribute to ICC. This has led researchers and scholars to develop instruments that can measure ICC and furthermore develop numerous theoretical models that conceptualize ICC in different ways. The association with effectiveness and appropriateness is furthermore illustrated in several of the models, according to Arasaratnam (2016).

¹ Such as flexibility, empathy, open-mindedness, self-awareness, adaptability, language skills, cultural knowledge, according to Arasaratnam (2016, p. 2)

² According to Bloom and Havighurst has models and theories of competence since the 1950s been influenced by a Kantian conative approach, which consist of the following essential components: motivation (affective, emotion), knowledge (cognitive) and skills, which include behavioral and actional skills, as referred to Spitzberg and Changnon (2009, p. 7).

The following section briefly outlines five theoretical models of ICC, which are categorized by Spitzberg and Changnon (2009).

1. *Compositional models* identify the components of ICC, without clarifying the connection between the components. These models entail lists of useful traits, skills and characteristics that are deemed to be productive in competent interactions.
2. *Co-orientational models* focus on conceptualizing the interactional achievements of intercultural understanding, such as empathy, perceptual accuracy, clarity or overlap of meaning. These models may share several characteristics of other types of models, but the focus is on the particular outcome of intercultural interactions.
3. *Developmental models* emphasize the development of competence over time, in terms of specifying different stages of intercultural interaction through which competence is perceived to evolve.
4. *Adaptational models* emphasize the adaption process itself as a criterion of competence. The criteria of competence is demonstrated by the movement from an “ethnocentric” perspective in which adaptation to the other is neglected - towards a “ethnorelative” perspective where adaptation is perceived as an inevitable part of intercultural interaction.
5. *Causal process models* focus on specifying the interrelationship between components that are deemed critical to developing competence. These models tend to specify multiple variables that influence and/or are influenced by mediating variables, which in turn influence other types of variables in a causal path (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Matveev, 2017).

While many of the above mentioned models and perspectives focus on the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in appropriate and effective intercultural interactions, others emphasize the performance part of the interaction or the outcome as an indicator of intercultural competence (McCroskey, 1982; Spitzberg, 1983; Wiseman, 2002). McCroskey distinguishes competence from skills, performance and effectiveness, where skill refers to a person’s ability to perform appropriate behavior, while competence refers to an individual’s ability to demonstrate their knowledge of appropriate behavior. Consequently, the skill to perform competent behavior is different than the actual performance of that same behavior or a person can be skilled but not competent and vice versa.

This connection between competence and performance is furthermore related to the pragmatist perception of ICC. As Holmes states, the perception of ICC is one-sided and very limited in its usefulness, since competence is missing its other half, which is performance. Both competence and performance is necessary factors when someone attempts to master a situation in a changing environment (2016).

There seems to be a lack of research on ICC, according to Arasaratnam (2015). This is argued to be problematic, as ICC focus on the ability to accomplish one's goals and to be able to exhibit expected and accepted behavior in intercultural situations (Arasaratnam, 2015). Aspects that arguably is important to study in the setting of multicultural organizations, which are constituted of employees from diverse cultural background, where the ability to collaborate in different cultural setting seems essential for the organizations ability to excel and utilize the employees different resources.

In an inductive study, Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) researched ICC from the perspective of the "other" and identified five variables that contribute to ICC, regardless of cultural perspective. The relationship between the variables was later tested to arrive at one of the few models that incorporated multiple cultural perspectives (Arasaratnam, 2006). The model identified the following variables as contributing to ICC: experience, listening skills, positive attitudes towards people from other cultures, motivation to interact with them, and the ability to emphasize. The model furthermore showed that positive attitudes towards people from other cultures – lead to becoming motivated to communicate with them, which in turn results in more experience in IC and contributing to ICC (Arasaratnam, 2006). One of the variables that hindered the development of IC was ethnocentrism. The negative aspect of ethnocentrism for ICC, and IC in general has furthermore been raised by several other scholars (Asante, Miike & Yin, 2014; Applegate & Sypher, 1988; Arasaratnam & Banerjee, 2011). Neuliep (2002, p. 201) defines ethnocentrism as:

"an individual psychological disposition where the values, attitudes, and behaviors of one's ingroup are used as standard for judging and evaluating another group's values, attitudes, and behaviors" (Arasaratnam, 2016, p. 5).

Ethnocentrism seems to be a negative factor, both as a variable for developing ICC in practice – and as an inherent aspect of the ICC literature in general. As Arasaratnam states, our understanding of ICC is greatly influenced by research emerging from the economically developed part of the world and it is therefore arguable that the culture perspective (western) from which the topic is approached influence the assumptions and outcomes of the research (2016). Asante, Miike and Yin have in recent years raised the question whether the field of IC, including ICC, is truly “intercultural” claiming that there is a western bias or ethnocentrism in most of the research and methodology of IC (2014). It is therefore argued that it is deemed necessary to incorporate a broader culture perspective in future research of ICC. One such attempt is pursued by Yep, in terms of re-conceptualizing ICC through a dialogue with multiple and often marginalized voices and thereby incorporate multiple cultural perspectives in a new approach to ICC. This perspective will be integrated in the chosen approach towards ICC in this dissertation.

Another critic raised towards ICC is that most of the current models and conceptualizations of ICC focus on the individual and neglect the cultural context of ICC (Arasaratnam, 2016). This is deemed to be problematic firstly because the context arguably has influence on ICC and secondly because individual culture identities arguably are becoming more intertwined in multicultural societies or more local environments such as multicultural organizations (Arasaratnam, 2016). There furthermore seems to be little cross-disciplinary dialogue when it comes to ICC research, even though researcher from multiple disciplines show an interest in ICC does the findings seldom find its way into other disciplines, according to Arasaratnam, 2016).

The field of ICC is at a crossroad today and there is a need to think differently and more creatively in the future to encapsulate future obstacles. It is furthermore argued to be necessary to combine ICC with other disciplines; to adhere to the cross-disciplinary dialogue needed in future research directions according to Arasaratnam (2016). The faster and easier communication- and information technologies used today on one hand makes communication more convenient and user friendly, but on the other hand it challenges the skills and competences of professionals in organizations. Today’s employees and managers need training in intercultural competence in order to be able to navigate in the global business environment, in which people from different cultures collaborate on a daily basis (Matveev, 2017).

The new ways of communication- and information transmission can furthermore undermine face-to-face interactions for deep connections. Numerous communication researches indicate that the intercultural implications when using technology for building global communities are complex and the outcome unexpected for better or worse (Asante, Miike & Yin, 2014). Finally, it is deemed necessary to redefine ICC to encapsulate the cultural context, which has been neglected in large parts of the ICC research and literature. The included literature ought to be perceived as exhaustive of ICC, but I have included numerous of the most influential perspectives in the field, including different definitions, theoretical models and the historical background of the field. The perceived context of ICC will be outlined in terms of organizational culture after the following section, which outlines the field of organizational creativity and briefly creativity in general.

Organizational creativity

The study of creativity is often times associated with mystical and spiritual beliefs. In some of the earliest accounts of creativity the creative person was perceived as an empty vessel that some divine being induced with inspiration. During the 1950s, researcher began to show an increasing interest in creativity, although it remained as a relatively marginal topic in the field of psychology (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

In the *Handbook of Creativity* Sternberg and Lubart outlines six approaches that have been used to understand creativity. These are: mystical, psychoanalytical, pragmatic, psychometric, cognitive and the social-personality. The mystical approach has already been mentioned in the beginning of this section, therefore will the other views briefly be outlined. The pragmatic approach focus on practice in relation to creativity and developing it; and some of its proponents are De Bono (1971) and Osborn (1953), as referred to Sternberg and Lubart (1999). Whereas the psychodynamic view on creativity builds on Sigmund Freud's ideas about the tension between our conscious reality and unconscious drives, the psychometric approach propose that creativity should be studied in everyday subjects (Guilford, 1950) and could be measured by giving paper-and pencil tasks to ordinary people. One of these tasks that Guilford developed was the Unusual Uses Test, where the participant should come up with as many uses as possible for a common object, such as a brick or pencil (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

The cognitive- and social-personality approach developed in parallel, in which the former sought to understand the mental representations and processes that underlie creative thoughts; and the later emphasized personal- and motivational variables and the sociocultural environment as sources for creativity (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). In recent studies on creativity numerous researchers have argued for including and uniting multiple factors in order for creativity to occur, such as, Amabile (1983); Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyer (1995) and Lubart (1994), as referred to Sternberg and Lubart (1999). Many researchers has perceived creativity as an individual trait and underestimated social and organizational factors, according to Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyer (1995). Instead of an individual focus on creativity, the scholars argue that an organizational creativity approach, which focuses on social and creative group processes, will be essential in the future in order for organizations to function in today's complex and changing business environment (Csikszentmihalyi & Sawyer, 1995).

The competitiveness and constantly changing work environment that organizations has to deal with in today's society, has forced organizations to reexamine the assumptions made by traditional organizational research and theories, according to Williams and Yang (1999). These shortcomings often times stems from older theories failure to incorporate the adaptability and flexibility needed today, which have created an emerging interest in creativity to problem-solving and decision making in organizations (William & Yang, 1999).

Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin define organizational creativity as “*the creation of valuable, useful new products, services, idea, procedure, or process by individuals working together in a complex system*” (1993, p. 293). There are numerous journal articles addressing the topic of organizational creativity. The main aim in the journal *Creativity and Innovation Management* is to bridge the gap between theory and practice of organizing imagination and innovation. Puccio and Cabra points out two trends that have fostered the growth of organizational creativity, one being organizations need to adapt to change and the other reflects the increasing concern for innovation in organizations (2010). As Hitt (1975) points out, organizations need to be able to adapt and come up with solutions to the current needs and problems in society in order to stay viable, as referred to Puccio and Cabra (2010). The problems organizations are faced with require the utilization of all available resources, especially creative and human ones. By taking a system approach towards organizational creativity, Puccio and Cabra set out to explore the underlying factors that influence the manifestation of creativity in an organization.

A system approach, in terms of seeking to understand the complex whole, as it is formed and influenced components. They concluded that an organization that is richer in ideas and more imaginative has the highest possibility to be more efficient at coping with society's demands and be more agile at adapting to changing circumstances (2010).

In another study, Bahardwaj and Menon (2002) explored the specific kinds of creativity found in organizations and their impact on innovation. They found that creativity could be broken down into two specific areas, namely "individual creativity mechanisms" and "organizational creativity mechanisms", as referred to Puccio & Cabra (2010). Individual creativity mechanisms are defined as "*activities individual employees pursued in their own to develop personal creativity*" and organizational creativity mechanisms are defined: as "*the formal procedures that the organization adopts to promote creative behavior*" (2010, p. 148). The findings showed that the highest levels of innovation were found in the organizations that had high levels of both individual- and organizational creativity mechanisms (Puccio & Cabra, 2010).

Knowledge- and idea sharing is an important element in organizations, in various contexts such as meetings teamwork or other kinds of groups interactions. But, research has suggested that idea sharing in groups involve rather inefficient processes, according to Paulus and Yang (2000).

Staser (1999) states that one problem is the tendency that group members focus on the information they have in common, rather than sharing their own unique expertise in the interaction, as referred to Paulus & Yang (2000). Byrge and Hansen have developed the Creative Platform as a didactic approach to enable groups to share their knowledge without limitations from professional, social or cultural patterns of thinking and doing (2009). An essential part in developing the creative platform as a learning environment in organization is the use of 3D cases. These entail three fundamental principles: parallel thinking, task focus and no judgment, according to Byrge and Hansen (2009). These principles establish a collaboration process that enacts the creation of diversified knowledge between individuals and the avoidance of being judged and misunderstood.

Byrge and Hansen define creativity as: “*unlimited application of knowledge*” (2009, p. 236), in which knowledge includes: information, expertise, know-how or whatever sources our thought and action has. When employees think or do something in an organization they apply knowledge in that process and their ideas are the applied building blocks of their knowledge, according to Byrge and Hansen (2009).

There seems to be numerous similarities between the previously mentioned pragmatic approach towards creativity, including the Creative Platform - and the notion of creativity from a pragmatist perspective. From a pragmatist perspective, creative practice is perceived as a dynamic social process and a human condition that exists as a potential in actions of social practice, according to Arjaliés, Lorino and Simpson (2013). And since the previously mentioned pragmatic approach, with proponents such as De Bono and Osborn, also focus on practice, there are arguably some commonalities between them and the pragmatism perception. Byrge and Hansen’s definition of creativity as “unlimited application of knowledge” furthermore arguably suggest that creativity is an innate quality in everybody that can be developed or utilized under certain conditions.

The final section outlines the criticism that has been raised towards the field of creativity and what a future direction of creativity might entail. Firstly it is arguably important to reflect on how creativity is perceived from other cultures than Western, since the dissertation have an intercultural scope. When creativity has been analyzed in diverse cultures it becomes evident that creativity is context dependent, according to Lubart (1999). There is in other words a different perception of creativity in Western cultures compared to Eastern cultures generally speaking. The Western definition of creativity as a product-oriented and originality-based phenomenon can be contrasted with an Eastern view on creativity as related to inner growth and as a phenomenon of expressing inner truth in new ways, according to Lubart (1999, p. 347). Culture thereby acts as channeling creativity, in terms of promoting creativity in different forms to diverse groups of people.

The importance of culture in relation to creativity is further emphasized by McLean, although not in terms of how different cultures might understand creativity in diverse ways, but in terms of taking the cultural context into account, when perceiving creativity (2005). As mentioned previously, has a major focus in creativity research been on the individual (Csikszentmihalyi & Sawyer 1995).

Williams and Lang state that: *“The major focus in creativity research has been on the individual creator and his or her personality, traits, abilities, experiences, and thought processes”* (1999, p. 378). But according to McLean, it is also important to study the context in which the creative person operates and the relationship between organizational culture and creativity is relatively limited in the existing literature (2005). Amabile (1996) furthermore states that there is a lack of research on creativity impediments, in terms of how environment factors might undermine creativity, as referred to McLean (2005). Taking the last points into account it is arguably important to include the contextual factors and organizational culture when making an endeavor into the field of creativity. The next section will consequently outline the field of organizational culture.

Organizational culture

The concept of culture has become increasingly linked with the study of organizations, as more people have emphasized the symbolic aspects of organizational life according to Smircich (1983). Organizational culture was introduced at the end of the 1970s and during the 1980s and 90s many perceived organizational culture to be the most important aspect in organizational success according to Alvesson (2002). Peters and Waterman (1978) ascribe corporate culture to be the reason for the success, growth and performance of successful companies in the US and Japan, as referred to Alvesson (2002).

This belief gradually diminished due to the decreased performance of the same companies' years later. A problem in the field is that the potential value of the concept of culture easily vanishes behind vague descriptions, or a notion of what it entails, according to Alvesson (2002). It is common for companies to express the importance of organizational culture by creating slogans such as 'sustainability' or 'customer centered'. Such slogans are often times used by the management to convey that organizational culture is an essential part of their value chain, but in reality it might just be shallow slogans with no actual implications for the company.

This does not mean however that organizational culture is not essential for companies, as it still remains central to topics such as: commitment, motivation, and competitive advantage within multicultural companies. It is furthermore perceived as one of the most important elements in organizational change, according to Alvesson (2002).

After this historical account of the development and interest in organizational culture the following section provides an outline of the theoretical origin of organizational culture and its early perception of culture.

Meek states that the perception of culture in organizational studies is mostly borrowed from anthropology although some sociologist has also been influential as well (1988). The understanding of culture has mostly been utilized as expressing on one hand, social cohesion and integration, and on the other hand organizational effectiveness. This is due to the transfer of culture to organizational studies from a particular anthropological and sociological tradition, which is the structural-functional paradigm (Meek, 1988). The structural-functionalist framework has had a notable influence on the concept of organizational culture, where many conceptualizations of culture has been influenced by Durkheim's notion of a collective consciousness and Radcliff-Brown's notion that cultural patterns are crystalized in social structure, according to Meek (1988).

Numerous researchers seem to assume that there exists this universal homogenous culture, which the researcher needs to discover, according to Meek (1988). After having outlined the historical and theoretical origins of organizational culture will I now outline the field of organizational culture, including how its defined, the different aspects that it entail and whether or not it is possible to change organizational culture. There is a vast amount of different definitions of the term organizational culture and there is no fixed broad agreed meaning. But according to Alvesson (2002) most of the definition on organizational culture relates to some form of shared meaning, interpretations, values and norms. Frost et al. defines organizational culture as:

“Talking about organizational culture seems to mean talking about the importance for people of symbolism – rituals, myths, stories and legends – and about the interpretation of events, ideas, and experiences that are influenced and shaped by the groups within which they live” (1985, p 17).

Organizational culture differs from traditional organizational research, as it emphasizes the lived experiences of individuals (Alvesson, 2002). It is furthermore deemed important to mention the relationship between the term organizational culture and corporate culture, since they often times are used interchangeably in the literature.

The term organizational culture and corporate culture does not represent different concepts, but organizational culture is often perceived wider in scope, since all companies are organizations but not all organizations are companies. Henceforth, non-governmental organizations, state and educational institutions are also defined as organizations.

Schein (1985) has developed a model of organizational culture that consists of three interrelated levels that influence each other, moving from abstract levels to concrete levels in the organization. It is a broad and inclusive model in terms of analysis according to Alvesson (2002). At the most abstract levels are the governing assumptions according to Schein (1985), which reflect the core of the organizational culture. They are the taken-for-granted beliefs that guide thinking and action in organizations. On more concrete levels are the norms and values, which act as principles, objectives and codes that are deemed important, and which prescribe how the organizations should work. Alvesson states that the norms and values over time can become part of the governing assumptions (2002). The most concrete levels reflect the expressions of the abstract governing assumptions in the organization. These are what Schein terms artifacts, in terms of physical, behavioral and verbal manifestations of the more abstract assumptions in the corporation, according to Alvesson (2002, p. 37).

Smircich has systematized the OC research in two different directions. The first direction is perceiving culture as an internal variable, where organizations are producing culture, although at the same time being embedded in a wider cultural context (1983). Culture entails the shared values, social ideas and beliefs among the employees and gets mediated as stories myth and rituals in the company. The focus is on the socio-cultural qualities developing within the organization, according to Smircich (1983, p. 344). In other words culture is something that the organization has. The second direction perceives culture as a root metaphor, which refers to something the organization is.

Metaphors have been shown increasing attention within organizational research, as a tool that can organize how we think and talk about organizations (Smircich, 1983; Alvesson, 2002). Alvesson states that: “*we never relate to objective reality ‘as such’ but always do so through forming metaphors or images of the phenomenon we address.*” (2002, p. 16).

The works of Gareth Morgan have been groundbreaking in terms of rethinking ways to understand organizations. In the book *Images of Organizations* he uses eight different metaphors,

which seek to encapsulate diverse approaches to understanding organizations (Alvesson, 2002; Morgan, 2006).

Pinder and Bourgeois (1982) state that researcher ought to be cautious not the use metaphors too broadly, by inspiration from other disciplines, because it can result in moving away from the domain they seek to investigate. Hereby not stating that metaphors is not a useful tool, but one ought to stay critical of the ways our conceptualization and thinking is shaped by using metaphors in research, according to Smircich (1983).

The notion of metaphors relates to the aspect of language, as it is how culture is expressed in the organizational setting. Stories is often times used and implemented in companies, as they can convey values, ideas and beliefs in tangible ways that employees understand better than abstract principles. But as with the use of metaphors, it is important to point out that the use of different types of vocabularies express and shape different forms of organizational culture (Alvesson, 2002).

Whereas the previous organizational literature to a large extent has perceived culture as something that provides meaning to people in an organization; it is also essential to take cultural variety, differentiation and fragmentation into account, according to Alvesson (2002). It is common among researchers to assume that the concept of culture refers to the top management beliefs of OC and that possible contrasting or opposing beliefs from other members of the organization become marginalized. It might be the case that the managers influence the culture more than other groups, but notion that there exist a similar set of unique values shared among the members is a rather fragile assumption. Different groups in the organization have different work task, work in different departments and usually express different values, according to Alvesson (2002). An employee at the hierarchical top level might have other values or beliefs, than someone on the ground floor. Organizations furthermore usually inhabit a broad variation of employees across, gender, generations, countries and cultures. Especially in the case of multicultural organizations that consist of employees from different places, with diverse life experiences, cultural backgrounds and languages (Alvesson, 2002).

It is important that the employees in a multicultural organization identify with the company in order for a distinct organizational culture to emerge. Ashforth and Mael (1989) identify four conditions that affect the degree to which employees identify with the organization:

1. How distinct the values of a particular group are.
2. The status that is connected to a particular group.
3. How salient other groups are.
4. The presence of social processes that sustain the creation of groups. (Alvesson, 2002, p. 39).

If the organizational identity is unclear, employees tend to look for alternative sources of identification, such as departments, work tasks or professional affiliation. This means that organizational identity is closely related to organizational culture. Hatch and Shultz state that culture ought to be perceived more as an implicit and emergent context, whereas identity is more language oriented, explicit and directly emphasized in relation to culture in an organization, as referred to Alvesson (2002).

As mentioned previously, one central focus in the organizational culture literature have been to address organizational change. The prospect to make the organization more effective, productive and change in relation to the context it operates in is an essential aim for most leaders and managers. According to Alvesson, some people seem to perceive organizational culture only in terms of its merit to change or manage the culture (2002).

Broadly one can identify three positions towards the question of managing organizational culture. The first position state that the organizational culture can be change by the top management, under certain conditions and with the right resources and skills. The second position states that it is difficult to change organizational culture, since a wide plethora of individual values, beliefs and expectations are manifest in the organization, as mentioned previously. Even so, change still happen in organizations and it is therefore assumable that the top management can influence change to a certain degree under the right circumstances, according to Alvesson (2002). The third perspective perceives culture to be beyond control of management, since employees create meaning that relates to local context, which are dependent on: affiliation, group belonging, educational background and interpersonal relationship.

This means that the top management's effort to influence culture have a limited effect, as each organizational member will reinterpret the intended meaning, so that the intended and received meaning does not correlate (Alvesson, 2002).

Whether or not it is possible to change organizational culture, one essential challenge in today's business environment is to promote knowledge sharing and knowledge creation within organizations – and if the inherent knowledge in a company is not shared, the cognitive resources in different departments remain underutilized (Lauring, Selmer, 2011). This aspect is particular challenging in multicultural organizations, where cultural and linguistic differences create barriers to communication and understanding among employees, according to Lauring and Selmer (2011). The authors researched the effects of managing language in culturally diverse settings by studying the relationship between language, knowledge sharing and performance in multicultural organizations. The findings showed that consistency in English management communication had a strong impact on knowledge sharing and performance in multicultural organizations (Lauring & Selmer, 2011).

It is deemed necessary to emphasize that the research context was multicultural academic organizations and the findings cannot be generalized to other multicultural organizations. However the notion of organizational culture is not restricted to for-profit organization, since the concept also encapsulate state- and educational institutions, as stated previously. The aspect of knowledge sharing and creation is furthermore deemed as relevant to reflect upon, both in terms of ICC and organizational culture, since language facilitates knowledge in an organization.

An advantage with the culture concept is that it seems to provide a conceptual bridge between micro- and macro levels of analysis, or between organizational behavior and strategic management, according to Smircich (1983, p. 346). This notion might be useful in the present study, as there seems to be a need to integrate the macro levels of analysis in the field of IC including ICC according to Asante, Miike and Yin (2014).

In the following section I will outline the problem development, starting by elaborating on the gradual process of the problem development from starting out to finally end with the chosen approach and research question in the thesis. In other words outline the progressive process and different steps towards the chosen purpose and aim with my thesis.

Problem development, aim and pursued research question

Starting out with the thesis process I had a rather broad aim, where I wanted to construct an interdisciplinary framework for communication by examining diverse perspectives, strategies and tools for how one can improve communication between people from different cultures in a multicultural organization. In other words pursuing intercultural understanding and limit misunderstanding between employees and furthermore examine differences and similarities in terms of communication. I wanted to focus on both culture and communication because of their close connection in the field intercultural communication - and seemingly mutual influence on each other, where on one hand culture is expressed in communication, but on the other hand communication is interpreted and organized through culture (Hall, 2014).

Hansen and Jørgensen furthermore state that: “*culture is an essential aspect to take into account, when working with communication in an organizational setting*” (2010, p. 122).

I therefore decided to perceive culture from an organizational perspective, in terms of organizational culture.

When I became more familiar with the intercultural communication literature, I realized that there where a lack of research on ICC (Arasaratnam, 2015). This is arguably problematic, since ICC focus on the acquired abilities, knowledge and attitudes that enable individuals to work effectively in an intercultural business context and being able to exhibit expected and accepted behavior in different intercultural situations (Arasaratnam, 2015; Matveev, 2017). In other words, ICC can be perceived as a prerequisite of IC, in terms of being acquired specific knowledge, abilities and behavior that an employee conveys in an intercultural interaction.

Bernett (1993) and Hammer 1998) states that many researchers perceive ICC as the most important factor in increasing understanding across cultures, as referred to Matveev (2017). In order for employees and managers to be able to function in a culturally diverse and international business environment it is necessary for them to adapt to the complexities of other cultures so that they can understand and respond to cultural differences. These competencies require a high level of intercultural competence (Matveev, 2017, p. 5). I henceforth shifted my focus from IC to ICC. Early on in the thesis process I wanted to include a creativity perspective in the dissertation, since I earlier on had positive experiences using it in relation to communication and culture misunderstandings (see assumptions section).

While examining the existing ICC literature I found that there were several pertaining problems related to ICC, such as an ethnocentric bias and that there where a lack of cross-disciplinary dialogue when it comes to ICC research; where the findings from one discipline has limited external reach (Arasaratnam, 2016). It is furthermore stated in the existing literature that there is an emerging interest in the field of organizational creativity, since the traditional organizational research and theories have proven to have difficulties encapsulating the new constantly changing business environment that organizations has to deal with in today's society (William & Yang, 1999).

I therefore decided to combine the creativity perspective with ICC to adhere to the need for cross-disciplinary research and the constantly changing business environment that organizations are part of, with an assumption that creativity could pertain some of the inherent ICC problem in the context of a multicultural organization. I perceive the organizational culture perspective as the contextual framework of the organization in the thesis. An advantage with the culture concept is that it seemingly is able to bridge the gap between micro- and macro levels of analysis, or between organizational behavior and strategic management, according to Smircich (1983). It is additionally perceived as one of the most important elements in organizational change according to Alvesson, a factor that arguably is important to take into account, when seeking to influence ICC in an organization (2002). In the final section I will outline the process of deciding the ontological and epistemological underpinnings, which leads up to the present aim and purpose in the thesis.

I had trouble deciding the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of my thesis in the starting phase of the writing process. One on hand there where a social constructivist aspect in terms of the social interactions and construction of meaning among the members of the organization - but on the other hand I could not neglect that there arguably where external, objective factors outside the immediate interaction that one ought to take into account. Factors which made me aspire to take a realist position. I gradually found that this divide or debate, to whether the study should be grounded in a realist or constructivist position, have been a central topic in organizational studies and leading to discussion about combining paradigms (Antoft & Salomonsen, 2007).

I then discovered that pragmatism offered a third way, in terms of being able to account for both the constructivist- and realist aspect of my considerations, or as Kelemen & Rumens state:

“epistemological response to ontological divides has been to embrace an objective and evolutionary perspective on organizations while at the same time acknowledging the role played by inter-subjective factors” (2013, p. 16).

I also realized that communication was a central element in pragmatism and that there was a focus on practice, as Schultz (2010) states: *“the virtue of the pragmatist tradition has been to address issues in organizations that matter to people and point to different ways of organizing”*, as referred to Kelemen and Rumens (2013, p. 17). The focus on practice appealed to me, since I had both a theoretical and practical aim with the thesis, although it should be noted that such a distinction does not make sense from a pragmatism position, as theory is perceived as practice. I will further elaborate on pragmatism and its relationship to the different perspectives in the Methodology section.

My aim in the thesis is henceforth to examine how creativity can facilitate and influence intercultural competence in an organization, with an organizational culture perspective as a contextual framework for the inquiry. With the purpose to develop a theoretical model that comprise of the three previously mentioned perspectives - which encapsulate the pressing issues that multicultural organizations are faced with today, in terms of knowledge sharing, intercultural competence, new tools for management, and collaboration among groups of culturally diverse employees. This leads up to the following research question:

❖ *How does creativity as a tool influence intercultural competence in an organization from a pragmatism framework?*

Operationalization

In the following section I will briefly explain and operationalize the pursued research question. A more in-depth operationalization is outlined in the Methodology section. There is a focus on the management and leadership level in an organization, due to my study stream focus on leadership. I furthermore have an assumption that the managers has the most influence on changing the organizational culture and in relation managing resources for pertaining ICC issues (Alvesson, 2002). I perceive creativity (variable A) as a tool that I apply to intercultural competence (B) in an organizational context (C), with the aim to examine how creativity influence intercultural competence in a multicultural organization. The aim in the analysis is to develop a theoretical model that illustrates how a theoretical creativity perspective influences ICC in a multicultural organization context. The primary emphasis is on A and B, whereas C serves as a cultural context where creativity and ICC takes place, although it is perceived to influence both creativity and intercultural competence, as illustrated with the arrows in figure 1. Culture is perceived as an internal variable, in other words something the organization has and that thereby also creates the possibility to change the culture under the right circumstances and necessary resources (Alvesson, 2002). Additionally I take an eclectic approach, thereby adhering to the missing cross-disciplinary dialogue in ICC research, by using and integrating different theoretical perspectives, with the aim to create a more complex interdisciplinary framework, (Sonne-Ragans, 2012, p. 33). There is furthermore a practical aim, as mentioned previously; in terms of developing a model that hypothetically can be transferred into a practical management strategy to help managers, who want to develop ICC and related practical issues in their organizations.

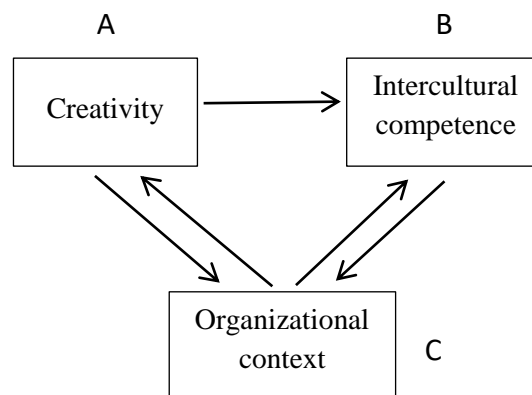


Figure 1: Illustration of the relationship between variables in the posed research question

Methodology

The next part contains the methodology sections in the dissertation. The first section outlines the chosen philosophy of science perspective, in terms of pragmatism, with an emphasis on the concept of inquiry and experience. Inquiry is furthermore integrated in the following design section, where the first four questions in the process of inquiry is integrated to the chosen approach in the dissertation. The purpose of the research design is to explain the chosen approach for answering the problem statement. To begin with is the ICC perspective, creativity perspective and organizational culture perspective outlined and related to pragmatism. The final section elaborates on the reasons and arguments for choosing pragmatism in this dissertation.

Pragmatism

The following section will outline the chosen philosophy of science approach, namely pragmatism. The first part illustrates the historical context of pragmatism and its founders. In the second part, I describe the key concepts in pragmatism, in terms of truth, human action, experience, and inquiry. The second part draws mainly upon the works of John Dewey. The last part showcases the notion of paradigms, in particular, the consequences of working in a pragmatic paradigm for the thesis. This aspect will be further elaborated in the research design section.

The thesis philosophical underpinnings are grounded in a pragmatism framework. Pragmatism has its origins in the works of Charles Sanders Pierce, William James, John Dewey and George Herbert Mead, where Pierce coined the term, but James popularized the philosophical approach (Kelemen & Rumens, 2013; Egholm, 2014). Like other philosophy of science perspectives pragmatism has developed over time and entails several directions; there is in other words, not just one pragmatic approach. For example has the use of the term neo-pragmatism by some scholars been seen as evidence for a “new pragmatism” that is conceptually different from the earlier pragmatism, as Kelemen and Rumens state, by referring to (Malachowski, 2010). However, such distinctions are by no means fixed or widely accepted within the academic community, according to Kelemen and Rumens (2013, p. 8).

Even though there are different views on pragmatism is there a set of common characteristics that encapsulate the pragmatism approach (Egholm, 2014), which will be outlined in the following.

Prior to pragmatism, philosophy held to two significant views on truth. The first being “the correspondence position”, where theory reflects and therefore corresponds to a reality out there, in other words a realist position. The second position is “the coherence position”, where truth is a coherent and plausible interpretation of the world (Kelemen & Rumens, 2013). Pragmatism provides a different view on truth, which rejects the notion of absolute truth; instead, the meaning of truth ought to be determined by its prediction of future experience, which is grounded in the daily experience (Kelemen & Rumens, 2013). This means that the aim of truth is not to correspond with the world, but instead to anticipate and shape future experience.

Another central aspect in pragmatism is the rejection of many of the dualisms or dichotomies inherent in Western science, in particular, Descartes’ distinction between body and soul, since all knowledge arises out of physical sensations in specific situations according to the pragmatist perspective (Egholm, 2014). Instead of using a traditional deductive or inductive approach in research, pragmatism is using an approach that is based on abduction, which is a combination of deduction and induction. Abduction is also known as “a qualified guess”, where one uses analog links between previous knowledge and experience and the phenomenon we seek to understand, according to Egholm (2014).

The process towards pursuing truth is called inquiry from the pragmatism position, which also entails the concept of experience, according to Morgan (2014). The concept of inquiry and experience will be elaborated in debt later in this section.

Two essential elements within philosophy of knowledge that relates to the notion of truth are those concerning the ontological- and epistemological assumptions of a given philosophical position. The notion of ontology entails the assumptions of the nature of reality, which traditionally determines what kinds of knowledge that is possible, in other words, the epistemological assumptions. But these notions are replaced from a pragmatist view; instead, there is an “*emphasis on experience as the continual interaction of beliefs and action*” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1049).

Human action and *experience* are two core concepts in pragmatism. Pragmatism entails a specific focus on the consequences of human action, since only by focusing on the consequences is it possible to understand their meaning.

People are perceived to be active participants in the social world, which they affect and form through their practice, according to Egholm (2014). There is a focus on how experiences from previous situations affect and are applied to current actions – and the potential consequences derived hereof. There is, in other words, an emphasis on social people's actions, and the meaning of a certain social phenomenon is fixed by its consequences in the situation (Egholm, 2014). Human intentions are considered to be processual, relational and situational - and therefore both individual and social at the same time. The two concepts Experience and Inquiry will be elaborated more in-depth in the following section since they are central to pragmatism (Morgan, 2014). I will mainly take a departure from Dewey's perception of the two concepts, whom furthermore is the pragmatist that I draw upon the most in the rest of this pragmatism section.

Experience

The basic unit of analysis in pragmatism is experience, which ought not to be perceived as the opposite to knowledge. Instead, knowledge should be perceived as being part of experience and contribute to it. The pragmatist view on experience embodies both thought and action and it opposes the notion of experience as something concrete, observable and outside of cognitive processes that Western metaphysical philosophy holds. Rather experience is a fluid, plural and ambiguous process according to pragmatism (Kelemen & Rumens, 2013). Throughout his life, Dewey sought to promote pragmatism by reorienting the traditional philosophy away from abstract metaphysical concerns and instead towards a focus on human experience as Morgan (2014, p. 1046) states by referencing to (Dewey, 1920/2008). According to Dewey, experience is linked to two inseparable questions: *What are the sources of our beliefs?* And *what are the meanings of our actions?* The answer to these two questions is linked in a cycle, in which the origins of our beliefs arise from our previous actions and simultaneously are the outcomes of our actions found in our beliefs.

This means that experience creates meaning by connecting beliefs and actions with each other, according to Morgan (2014, p. 1046). The link between actions and beliefs is illustrated in the following figure 2.

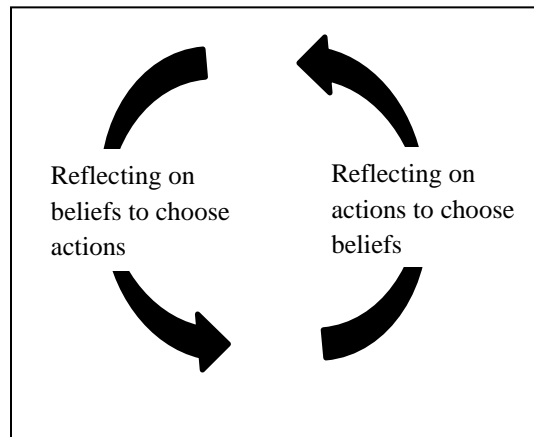


Figure 2: Dewey's model of experience (source Morgan, 2014)

According to Dewey, experience does always include a process of interpretation, therefore must beliefs be interpreted to generate action and actions must be interpreted to generate beliefs, as referred to Morgan (2014, p. 1046). Experiences furthermore have an inherent social nature, since our experiences throughout our lives are shaped by others. All our actions and beliefs are deemed to be social, thus all our experiences. Several of humans' experiences occur without them questioning it on a daily basis. These are what Dewey terms habits, in other words, beliefs that people have acquired from previous experiences that can cope with the needed actions in a given situation, according to Morgan (2014).

An illustrative example could be how employees in an organization go to a canteen in the lunch-break and collect what they want to eat – eat it – and go back to work. In such situations we make a few choices but many of the actions are habitual. In contrast to habits are the unusual or problematic situations that for example employees in an organization are exposed to, which require thoughtful reflection. In these cases is it necessary for reflective decision making, which leads up to the central concept of inquiry.

Inquiry

The notion of inquiry is a specific kind of experience, as partly implied in the previous section, more specifically Dewey describes inquiry as “*a process of self-conscious decision making*” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1046). It is a process-based approach to knowledge, by which beliefs that have become problematic are examined and resolved through action.

Inquiry is a process of making choices by asking and answering questions, “*in which those questions concern the likely outcomes of applying current beliefs to future action*” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047). Although any quest for certainty is impossible from a pragmatic view, is inquiry a scientific method that allows a researcher to reach relatively settled mini-truths that illuminates particular situations, according to Kelemen and Rumens (2013). There is no sharp boundary between everyday life and research in Dewey’s approach to inquiry, rather research is perceived as a self-conscious and careful form of inquiry. According to Shields (2003), Dewey states that there are might be other equally valid means of experience, such as common sense or art, and the activity of knowing through them could also enrich human understanding, as referred to Kelemen and Rumens (2013).

The scientific method of inquiry is processual and knowledge is perceived to be inextricably linked with experience and therefore also open to fallibilism and criticism, according to Kelemen and Rumens (2013). Inquiry is only one form of experience and research one form of inquiry. It is furthermore important that one does not confuse inquiry with a purely rational disembodied process of reasoning, when doing research. Emotions and preferences are manifest aspects during the research process, most notably in terms the starting point in a study, where a person gets the feeling that something is problematic in a given situation. William James (1907/1995, p 26) eloquently illustrates how feelings color the inquiry process with the metaphor: “*The trail of the human serpent is thus over everything*” (Morgan, 2014, p. 4).

Dewey outlines the systematic approach to inquiry through five steps as a basis for research, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Recognizing a situation as problematic.
2. Considering the difference it makes to define the problem one way rather than another.
3. Developing a possible line of action as a response to the problem.
4. Evaluating potential actions in terms of their likely consequences.
5. Taking actions that are felt to be likely to address the problematic situation (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047)

It is important to state that the process of inquiry does not interrupt the cyclical connection between beliefs and action (see figure 2). Rather than a linear step-by-step process, beliefs and interpretations operate throughout the inquiry process as potential actions are evaluated, and the joining of beliefs and action should underlie any research for knowledge, according to Dewey (Morgan, 2014). The notion of experience and inquiry will be further elaborated in the research design, in relation to how it is influencing this thesis and its consequences for answering the problem statement.

The following section outlines the consequences of working within a pragmatic paradigm has for this thesis and the pursuit towards answering the problem statement: *How does creativity as a tool influence intercultural competence in an organization from a pragmatism framework?*

Working in a pragmatism paradigm

The choice of paradigm has consequences for a study, as it constitutes the shared set of beliefs within a community of researchers who share a consensus about which questions that are deemed most meaningful to examine (Morgan, 2007, p. 53). Pragmatism cannot be defined as either constructivist or realistic. On one hand people interpret and construct the social situations that they are in, but on the other hand does the social phenomenon occur in real situations, which limits the possibilities of the interpretation (Egholm, 2014).

The assumptions of the nature of reality, which traditionally are ontological considerations, determine the kinds of knowledge that are possible (epistemological underpinnings) from a traditional philosophy of knowledge perspective.

But this notion is replaced from a pragmatist standpoint; instead there is an emphasis on experience as the continual interaction of beliefs and action (Morgan, 2014, p. 1049). Dewey points to the importance of joining beliefs and action in a process of inquiry that underlies any research for knowledge (Morgan, 2014, p. 1051). Pragmatism insists that one should perceive research as a human experience that is based on the beliefs and actions of researchers. This notion differs from the typical focus in social research to questions as: ontology, epistemology and methodology. Rather pragmatism shifts the focus to ask questions such as: How do researchers make choices about the way they do research? Why do they make the choices they do? And, what is the impact of making one set of choices rather than another? (Morgan, 2014). These considerations will be examined and elaborated in the research design.

Lastly it is necessary to clarify that the value of pragmatism for social research extends the mere notion of ‘practicality’. Pragmatism is oftentimes inaccurately summarized to merely be asking “what-works” in a given social situation. Whereas ongoing discussions, the past decades, about paradigms (Guba, 1990) fortunately have created more sophisticated understandings of constructivism and post-positivism; the same cannot be said about pragmatism, in terms of a limited understanding of it as a philosophical system. According to Morgan has the mixed method research (MMR) as a research community embraced the pragmatic position as an approach to problem solving and emphasize the how to in their research (2014, p. 1046). However, the how to question only captures part of the message in pragmatism, which places more importance on why to do research in a given way? It is necessary to ask what difference it makes to our research, when we ask why-to questions in our research, as Morgan refers to James in (2013, p. 1046). Thus, a limited emphasis on “what works” is never enough, since it ignores choices about to goals pursued and the means to meet does goals, according to Morgan (2014).

The following section outline the chosen research design, including the chosen approach towards answering the problem statement, arguments for the chosen approach and the corresponding consequences.

Research Design

The research design is important as its purpose is to outline the chosen approach in a given dissertation. Just as it is essential for someone that is going to build a house to have a blueprint of the house and a well sought out plan for how to build it (de Vaus, 2001), is it important to have a plan before conducting a study that illustrates the approach and furthermore that all the necessary tools are in place in order to answer the stated research question.

In this thesis I want to answer the following research question: *How does creativity as a tool influence intercultural competence in an organization from a pragmatism framework?* I perceive creativity (variable A) as a tool that I apply to intercultural competence (B) in an organizational context (C), with the aim to examine how creativity influence intercultural competence in a multicultural organization. I adhere to Dewey's instrumental notion of regarding concepts and theories as tools for action and as such instrumental in coping with situations (Buch & Elkjær, 2015). The aim in the analysis is to develop a theoretical model that illustrates how a theoretical creativity perspective influences ICC in a multicultural organization context. The primary emphasis is on A and B, whereas C serves as a cultural context where creativity and ICC takes place, although it is perceived to influence both creativity and intercultural competence, as illustrated with the arrows in figure 3.

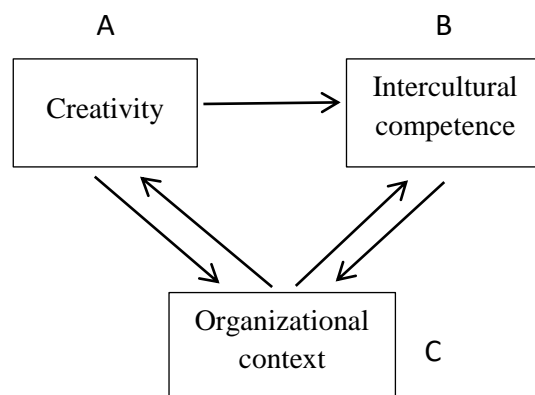


Figure 3: Illustration of the relationship between variables in the stated research question

In addition to Dewey's notion of regarding concepts as tools for action, is the chosen approach inspired by Dewey's concepts of experience and inquiry. Inquiry is, as stated in the section about pragmatism, a process-based approach to knowledge, by which beliefs that have become problematic are examined and resolved through action (Morgan, 2014). It is important to emphasize that the process of making choices, by asking and answering questions in inquiry, should not be perceived as a linear step-by-step process. Beliefs and interpretations (see figure 2) are an integrated part throughout the process as potential actions get evaluated (Morgan, 2014). It is furthermore important to emphasize that the term action is not perceived as merely a physical activity from the chosen pragmatic position. The thesis is additionally influenced by Maxwell's interactive research model (1996, p. 5), in terms of the relationship and influence between the different parts different parts of the thesis. Maxwell argues that the process of conducting qualitative research seldom starts with a fixed starting point, or proceed through a fixed sequence of steps, as often is prescribed in research designs (1996). Rather one often times has to reconsider or change parts of the design as a response to new developments, just as the research question is not fixed from start to finish, because of changes in the conceptual framework or new experiences throughout the research.

The interactive model that Maxwell advocates has an interconnected and flexible structure, where the problem statement is placed in the center of the design. The problem statement is the element in the design that connects most directly to other elements, but it is also the element that is most affected by other aspects in the design (Maxwell, 1996). Even though this dissertation is mainly of a theoretical nature is it argued that Maxwell's interactive model encapsulate the non-linear process of developing this dissertation. Furthermore how the problem statement have been evaluated and changed together with different theoretical perspectives throughout the writing process, as illustrated in the problem development section. It is argued that Dewey's notion of experience and Maxwell's interactive model can be combined as both reflect a process-based, reflective approach to inquiry. This means that the chosen design in the thesis is influenced by both Dewey's process approach of inquiry - and partly inspired by Maxwell's interactive model in terms of the process-based approach.

The following section will outline the chosen approach towards answering the problem statement. Firstly, in terms my understanding of ICC, creativity and organizational context and the reasons for the chosen definitions. Secondly, in terms of the reasons and arguments for the choice of pragmatism and consequences it has for the dissertation. I will furthermore elaborate on the five steps process of inquiry and how it is showcased in the chosen approached.

Intercultural competence perspective

There seems to be a lack of research on intercultural competence (Arasaratnam, 2015), therefore ICC is perceived to be a problematic situation, in terms of Dewey's first step towards inquiry, since ICC is an essential skill in today's multicultural organizations, in terms of maneuvering in an intercultural environment and accomplishing goals (Arasaratnam, 2015). With an increasingly connected world, where organizations are comprised of employees from different culture, it is argued that there is an increasing need for intercultural competence. However, there seems to be something lacking in the existing perceptions of ICC has been perceived in the literature (Holmes, 2016). ICC is thereby perceived as a problematic situation to which I want to apply creativity (figure 3).

This means that I have chosen to re-conceptualize and broaden the operational approach towards ICC. The first element that I have implemented in the ICC perspective is the notion of effectiveness and appropriateness, since they traditionally are included elements to ICC (Chen & Starosta, 2008). As stated in the literature review effectiveness is notably individualistic in its orientation, whereas appropriateness perceives communication from the other person's point of view (Arasaratnam, 2016). Secondly I use Spitzberg and Changnon's definition of ICC as:

“the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world” (2009, p. 7).

It is deemed to be the most helpful definition, according to Arasaratnam (2016) and it is therefore argued as a useful starting point. Orientations refers to categories such as: nationality, race ethnicity, tribe, religion, or region; and whether or not an interaction is deemed an intercultural process depend upon the extent to which individuals manifest aspects of, or are influenced by their group or cultural affiliation (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 7).

Because of the chosen pragmatic approach, it is deemed necessary to elaborate on the consequences this has for the operational approach to ICC. As stated in the literature review (Holmes, 2016) is the discussion about intercultural competence one-sided and very limited in its usefulness in a training environment. Holmes argues that competence is missing its other half, which is performance. By comparing this duality with Dewey's similar organic unity between potential and interaction it is argued that the one-sidedness of ICC is solved, as competence is the awareness of one's potential to manage a situation - and performance is the actual interaction in a given situation (Holmes, 2016). Dewey's notion of experience (see figure 2) further illustrates how this connection can be understood and is necessary from the chosen pragmatist approach; as stated in the pragmatism section experience create meaning by connecting beliefs and actions with each other – and experience have an inherent social nature, since our experience is shaped by others (Morgan, 2014).

It is furthermore argued, by referring to Holmes that the unified view of competence and performance creates an opportunity to unify the individual's ICC and the environment (2016). As, Asante et al. stated in the literature review should one of the future directions for intercultural communication be to integrate the micro- and macro levels of context (Asante, Miike & Yin, 2014). The unification of the individual ICC with its environment following this conceptualization ought to be perceived as a step towards bringing that gap closer together, even though it does not explicitly take the macro context that the authors points to, into account. I furthermore adhere to Holmes argument that the unification of competence and performance increases the opportunity for employees to master situations in a changing organizational environment (2016, p. 248).

The final ICC perspective that I implement in the ICC conceptualization is Yep's "non-Eurocentric reconceptualization of intercultural communication competence through the dialogue with multiple and often marginalized voices" (2014, p. 339). Ethnocentrism has, as stated previously, a negative effect on ICC (literature review). The notion of a persistent presence of ethnocentrism in IC and ICC research is further emphasized by several other scholars (Asante, Miike & Yin, 2014; Chen & Starosta, 2008). Asante, Miike and Yin question whether the field of IC actually is what it claims, as in intercultural (2014).

It is therefore argued that a non-Eurocentric perspective is both something a new conceptualization of ICC should strive after and include in its approach. It is necessary to mention that Yep's perspective relates to intercultural communication competence and not intercultural competence. Even though the two often times are being used interchangeably, there is a difference according to Matveev (2016). Whereas the former focus on the person's communication skills, does the later focus on the skills necessary to be culturally competent. But as I have illustrated in this section, the notion of intercultural competence is missing its other part in terms of performance, from a pragmatic approach, therefore do I argue that it is both possible and necessary to combine the two parts into a unified perspective. And it is argued that the unifying of competence and performance outlined earlier can re-conceptualize and bridge the two concepts into one unified concept in this thesis. I perceive the previous elaboration on the chosen approach to ICC as adhering to the second question in Dewey's five step approach to inquiry, in terms of "considering the difference it makes to define the problem one way rather than another?".

The new re-conceptualization of ICC does inevitably have consequences for how ICC is understood, due to combination of ICC and intercultural communication competence. For one, it is a broader definition that both encapsulate the competences per se and the enactment in terms of the communicative skills and performance. And I have not seen a similar conceptualization of ICC, as the one outlined in the previous section. But I argue that it is necessary to think differently and more creatively about ICC in order to encapsulate an intercultural competence perspective for future research that take an increasingly changing work environment into account. The present perception of IC in the literature and its execution in practice has furthermore undeniably not solved its theoretical potential for better intercultural understanding. The next section states the theoretical creativity perspective chosen in the thesis.

Creativity perspective

As stated in the in the literature review (Hitt, 1975), it is necessary for organizations to be able to adapt and come up with solutions to the current needs and problems in society in order to stay viable, as referred to Puccio and Cabra (2010). This requires the utilization of all available resources, as mentioned previously, especially creative and human resources.

Arasaratnam furthermore states that it is necessary to develop new creative approaches to the challenges of ICC in the future (2015). The chosen solution in the dissertation is therefore a creative one that takes the social and cultural context into account. The chosen creativity perspective aims to encapsulate how: the environment, social and group processes - influence creativity. As referred to in the literature review (Csikszentmihalyi & Sawyer, 1995) have many researchers treated creativity as an individual trait and underestimated how the context might influence creativity.

The aim with the chosen creativity approach is therefore to encapsulate these notions. The chosen creativity perspective includes: The Creative Platform, how creativity is perceived from the chosen pragmatist approach and finally Lubart's broadened cultural perspective on creativity. The creative platform is a didactic approach for intercultural and interdisciplinary collaboration, where the participants' diverse knowledge can be applied unlimitedly in a collaborative knowledge creating process. It is argued that the collaborative process of the creative platform is beneficial for influencing ICC, since Zhang (2012) and Helm (2009) state that collaborative learning facilitates the development of ICC, as referred to Arasaratnam, 2016). It is a process-based approach that aims to remove the common barriers of fear during collaboration, by using the principles of *parallel thinking*, *task focus* and *no judgment*, according to Byrge and Hansen (2009). The principles behind the creative platform furthermore emphasize the importance of creating an environment that facilitates a creative process. It is argued that the creative platform thereby adhere to the importance of taking external factors, as stated previously, into account.

From a pragmatism perspective, creativity is perceived as a dynamic social process and an innate human condition that exist as a potential in even the most mundane of human practices (Arjaliés & Lorino & Simpson, 2013). In a learning environment should the focus be on experience and action that include participatory exercises and activities (Ormerod, 2006, p. 906). From Dewey's perspective, it is human experience that brings action and creativity together, defined by "*the interaction between people and their environment and intrinsically related in and with the world*" (Glaveanu et al. 2013). It is argued that the creative platform perspective can be incorporated in the chosen approach, as it takes the environment into account and there is furthermore an emphasis on participation and engagement (Byrge & Hansen, 2009).

It is furthermore argued that the chosen definition of creativity as “unlimited application of knowledge” adheres to the pragmatist notion that creativity is part of the human condition and not limited to a chosen few. There is henceforth an assumption in the chosen approach that the creative platform as a tool (concept) can facilitate the right conditions for the inherent creative potential that all people have to emerge, which in turn influences ICC. It is furthermore argued that the chosen creative platform approach adhere to the necessary need, stated by (Holmes, 2016) to bridge competence with performance, in terms of the enactment of ICC in collaborative participation processes in an organization.

The second part of the chosen creativity perspective is included to contextualize the concept of creativity from a broader cultural view. I argue for the necessity to include a cultural perspective on creativity, even though the operational chosen definition of creativity is unlimited application of knowledge, since the aim is to influence ICC.

As Lubart states, the notion of creativity is context dependent, in terms of cultures being involved in defining the nature of creativity and the creative process. Whereas the Western definition of creativity typically is a product-oriented and originality based phenomenon, the Eastern view on creativity is generally perceived as a state of expressing inner truth in a new way, or of self-growth, according to Lubart (1999). Culture furthermore provides facilitating and inhibiting conditions for creativity. Even though the chosen creative platform perspective aims to be able to facilitate a setting that cut across the cultural boundaries and structuring patterns that might inhibit conditions for creativity (Byrge & Hansen, 2009), it is arguably useful to include a broader perception of what creativity might entail for different cultures. The next section follows up on how external factors and the context influence ICC and creativity in the chosen approach to organizational culture.

Organizational culture as context for ICC and creativity

As mentioned in the previous section about ICC and creativity is there an assumption in the chosen approach that the organizational context has the property to both facilitate and inhibit ICC and creativity. And even though the emphasis in this dissertation is on ICC and creativity and organizational culture is perceived as context for the two, it is arguably necessary to elaborate on how that context is understood in this dissertation. An additional reason for including organizational culture (OC) is that it connects the organization as a whole with everyday experience, as Smircich states in the literature review OC does seem to provide a conceptual bridge between micro-and macro levels of analysis and between organizational behavior and strategic management (1983, p. 346).

The chosen approach towards organizational culture adheres to Smircich notion of perceiving culture as an internal variable where organizations are perceived as themselves to be producing culture, although at the same time being embedded in a wider cultural context (1983). This is thereby a different approach than the perspective on culture as something the organization is (Morgan, 2006) or the cross-cultural perception of culture as being an independent variable, or a background factor, often synonymous with national culture (Smircich, 1983). The notion of culture as an internal variable furthermore follows the perception that culture can be changed under the right conditions (Alvesson, 2002). The chosen conceptualization of change is the one stated by Alvesson as: *the reframing of everyday life*, with an emphasis on a local ongoing culture shaping agenda that is anchored in interactions, where the employees influence others, whom they directly interact with. It is argued that this conceptualization of change is compliant with the creative platform, as it is better adapted to material work situations among employees and thereby has stronger action implications (Alvesson, 2002, p. 46-47).

This means that the chosen approach towards organizational culture perceive culture as a toolbox from with the members of an organization can draw a variety of cultural tools, which means that culture entails the property to enable action (Swidler, 1986). The aim with the chosen approach is therefore to move away from the functionalistic perception of culture, advocated by Hofstede, which perceive culture as constrained by the cultural context. It is argued that this approach towards organizational culture (and change) is compatible within the chosen pragmatic framework, because it adheres to the chosen pragmatism perspective of concepts as tools for action, following Dewey's instrumentalist view.

It is furthermore argued that the focus on action, interactions and reframing culture by influencing others adheres to Dewey's notion of experience, in terms of its inherent social nature that gets shaped by the interaction with other people (Morgan, 2014).

The chosen approach towards organizational culture thereby perceives culture as the source of interpretation to generate action and from which employees interpret their actions to generate beliefs (Morgan, 2014, p. 1046). It is experience that creates meaning by connection beliefs and action with each other and culture is one manifestation of that experience in this dissertation. But it is important to emphasize that the meaning established through the experience is perceived in terms of its consequences. In other words, it is the perceived consequences of how the chosen creativity perspective influences ICC that is a main focus. With the previous contemplation on the notion of experience and pragmatism - is it deemed relevant to elaborate on the merits that pragmatism can offer in this dissertation and furthermore the reason for choosing it and elaborate further on its limitations and evaluation criteria of the analysis.

The reason and arguments for using pragmatism as the chosen approach in the thesis

As stated previously, pragmatism cannot be defined as either constructivist or realistic (Egholm, 2014). It therefore seems to offer a third way to the paradigm incommensurability between the realist- and constructivist paradigm in organizational studies, where arguments furthermore have been made to combine paradigms (Antoft & Salomonsen, 2007). The merit of using a pragmatist approach can be further elaborated by Thompson's statement, as referred to Kelemen and Rumens:

"...the epistemological response to such ontological divides has been to adopt positions that embrace an objective and evolutionary perspective organizations while at the same time acknowledging the role played by inter-subjective factors...there is a continuum between entity and process forms of organizational reality..." (2013, p. 16)

It is argued that the focus on social practice and communication in pragmatism is serving the purpose of answering the problem statement, as people are perceived to be active participants in the social world, which they affect and form through their practices (Egholm, 2014).

The pragmatist notion of perceiving concepts as tools for action is arguably useful as the research aim is to examine how creativity influences ICC in organizations, as it creates the possibility to develop concepts on the merit that they are useful in coping with the given situation. It is furthermore argued that Dewey's process-based concept of experience has the potential to encapsulate the constantly changing nature of organizations today; because it enables a connection between the context (organizational culture), creativity and ICC in an organization - in terms of the processual relationship between interpretation beliefs on the basis of action and vice versa. Additionally has the combination of competence and performance, with inspiration from Dewey's notion of potential and interaction, the prospect to conceptualize ICC in a different way that could cope with the pertaining challenge that ICC entail for organizations (Holmes, 2016).

It is furthermore argued that the pragmatist perspective on creativity as a dynamic social process and innate human condition practices (Arjaliés & Lorino & Simpson, 2013), where the focus should be on experience, action and participatory exercises (Ormerod, 2006) is a useful perception on creativity – and one that is commensurable with the creative platform and its inherent perception on creativity as an innate ability that everyone can develop in practice.

It is furthermore argued that the focus on consequences in pragmatism serves the chosen research focus, since the aim in the dissertation is to examine how a creativity perspective influences intercultural competence in an organization.

It is important to state that evaluation and validity criteria in pragmatism are different than the traditional ones like external- and internal validity. According to Weick (1989), pragmatism instead points to the criteria of usefulness and plausibility, as referred to Antoft and Salomonsen (2007). Weick (1989) states that the criteria of usefulness for theoretical dissertations pertain to the usefulness of the developed knowledge, in terms of its ability to accomplish the pursued goals and whether the theoretical arguments and models are plausible, as referred to Antoft and Salomonsen (2007). Due to the focus on practice in pragmatism is it also important to evaluate the developed knowledge in terms of its practical relevance, whereby accounts and judgments from respondents are emphasized (Antoft & Salomonsen, 2017). But when it comes to developed theoretical perspectives and models it is not only up to laymen to decide, as a pertaining challenge becomes to whether those people can fully comprehend the theoretical representations from their perspective. It is consequently advised to turn to the scientific community for validation, according to Antoft and Salomonsen (2007).

The previous section is perceived to entail the third and fourth step of Dewey's inquiry, in terms of: (3) developing a possible line of action as a response to the problem and (4) evaluating potential actions in term of their likely consequences. Although it should be noted that these steps will be further elaborated and reflected upon in the analysis, as the inquiry process is a continual process of asking questions, according to Morgan (2014). Finally, it should be noted that the chosen design combines and conceptualize different perspectives that have not been made in the same way previously, but I argue that the approach and combined perspectives is rooted in sound scholarship - even though not combined in the same way as presented in this dissertation. But the aim in this thesis is also to develop a new innovative and creative approach towards the challenge of ICC in organizations, which evidently, is still apparent in multicultural organizations, which calls for new creative approaches and perspectives.

The next section outlines the conceptual framework, which is perceived as a toolbox that consists of the tools (perspectives) applied in the inquiry (analysis).

Conceptual framework as a toolbox for inquiry

It is important to mention that the next section is a conceptual framework and not a theoretical one. These two terms are often times mistakenly used interchangeably, because there is a difference between them (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). In this dissertation I perceive the literature review as being the theoretical framework, in terms of being the lens that have guided and framed the study. The conceptual framework on the other hand is perceived to be the chosen approach towards answering the research question. The conceptual framework does in other words display the logical structure for the chosen approach and that connects the different concepts. This means that the inquiry will mostly draw upon the conceptual framework, but the literature review (theoretical framework) will also influence and guide the study as it is perceived as the overall framework for the study, from which the chosen conceptual framework is deduced.

The following part of the dissertation outlines the chosen concepts and perspectives. The first section showcase the re-conceptualized notion of intercultural competence (ICC), as argued for in the Methodology section was it deemed necessary to re-conceptualize the understanding of what ICC entails from the pragmatism position. The new approach entails three perspectives in terms of: The dimensions of intercultural competence, as conceptualized by Alex Matveev; Holmes different perception on ICC, as entailing both competence and performance and finally Yep's perspective on how to re-conceptualize intercultural communication competence to adhere to the pertaining ethnocentrism challenge in ICC and IC literature, through a dialogue with marginalized voices.

Then is the creativity approach outlined in terms of: the creative platform; pragmatism's view on the inherent creative nature of humans, drawing on Dewey; the perception of creativity from a Western and Eastern view, as a way to broaden how creativity is perceived different culturally. The final section outlines the approach towards culture as an internal variable I organizations, drawing upon Smircich; Alvesson's perception of change as the reframing of everyday life and finally how culture is perceived as a toolbox and as a contextual source of human experience from which members of an organization interpret to generate action and beliefs in a mutually cyclical manner that also shapes the culture back.

Intercultural competence

The first element in the chosen intercultural competence perspective builds on Spitzberg's (including Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984) approach to ICC. From this perspective ICC is related to a person's communication skills, where context knowledge, motivation or attitudes and skills (see figure 4) are conceptually related and necessary for conveying a mutually perceived competent impression (Matveev, 2017). Competence is determined during a social interaction and by the involved participants, who judge and perceive how effective and appropriate the individual interacts with other people. This approach aims to broaden the previous solely individualistic notion of ICC, by including firstly contextual elements, such as the context of the interaction and secondly outcomes in the interaction (elaborated in literature review). The chosen operational definition is Spitzberg and Changnon's notion of ICC as:

“...the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world.” (2009, p. 7).

Effectiveness has traditionally been perceived as individualistic in its orientation, whereas appropriateness perceives communication from the other person's point of view (see literature review). Effectiveness can furthermore be perceived as successful adaptation to interpersonally problematic situations and achieving intended or desired results through the interaction, according to Spitzberg and Cupach (1984). The criterion for appropriateness is to understand the content of an interaction without violating the norms and rules of the participants. The next section outlines Holmes (2015) approach to ICC, which is perceived to transform the notion of intercultural competence into practice.

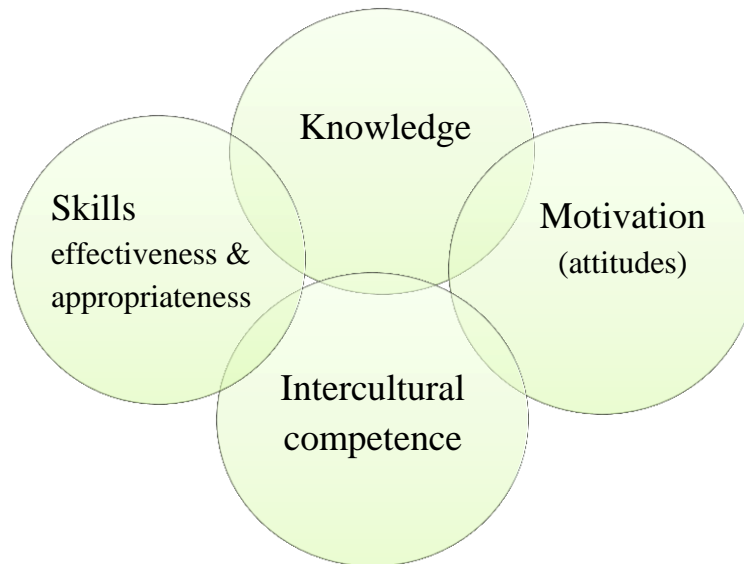


Figure 4: Intercultural competence and its dimension. Sources: Matveev (2017), Spitzberg & Changnon (2009)

Intercultural communication competence – performance

The second element in the chosen ICC perspective is Holmes (2015/2016) approach towards intercultural competence, in which he moves the focus from the abstract potential of competence to performance, which is embodied in experience and situations. As stated in the literature review and methodology section, is ICC perceived as to abstract and limited in its usefulness, due to its missing enactment, in terms of performance. Competence and performance ought to be perceived as an organic unity of the human organism's attempt to master a given situation in a changing environment, such as a multicultural organization (Holmes, 2016, p. 248). Holmes uses Dewey's notion of the organic unity between potential and interaction to connect competence with performance, as he states: "*competence is the awareness of one's potential to manage a situation and performance is the actual, here and now interaction in that situation.*" (2016, p. 248).

The unification can be elaborated with an analogy to soccer. Professional soccer teams look for talent (competence) when recruiting new players and usually have some criteria for it, but what matters is the actual performance of the player on the field.

Experience is essential (see pragmatism section) to any given situation and both potential (competence) and interaction (performance) have to exist in any life experience, according to Holmes (2016). If there is no interaction in a situation there is no experience at all and consequently no basis for future potential, learning or development. Although it should be noted that there is no shift from competence to performance, there is an interaction between the whole and the parts, in other words competence and performance is not either/ or, but two phases in a unified experience in a situation (Holmes, 2016). The last element in the chosen ICC approach is Yep's reconceptualization of intercultural communication competence, which will be outlined in the following section.

ICC as encounter's with the "other"

Several authors have argued that there has been a prevalent Eurocentric view on ICC and IC in general, as stated numerous times throughout the dissertation (see literature review and methodology section). Gust A. Yep elaborates further on this notion by stating that much of the ICC research is based on European and American populations where these cultures become the standard or ideal from which other cultures are compared and measured (2014). IC can be perceived as a process of interacting with strangers, where the stranger is an outsider or "the other", which a term that often times is used.

There is a common tendency to use stereotypical dichotomies to equate cultural differences in the ICC field, such as high-low context cultures (Hall, 1976) or Hofstede's notion of individual-collectivism to understand the difference between Western and Eastern cultures (Yep, 2014). These static, unchanging and essentialist perceptions of different cultures are problematic according to Yep, because these perceptions of culture erase individual agency and can never represent the lives and experiences of people in everyday life (2014).

Yep further elaborates that it is necessary to take the notion of power, ideology and history into account in ICC, as there has been a tendency to only focus on the micro-level and not adhere to contextual factors on a macro level in ICC research (2014). Factors such as power, ideology and history influence ICC, when people are engaging in social interactions, for example can an historical conflict between two countries have an impact on ICC, when two individuals are interacting.

And the field of ICC and IC in general was developed in the 1940s and 1950s in order to train US diplomats for overseas assignments, which raises questions such as competence or effectiveness for whom? Who decide the criteria?

Yep propose a reconceptualization of ICC, where future directions ought to take contextual factors into account including power, history and ideology, and that one develop multiple, contextual, provisional and fluid concepts of culture featuring contradiction and change (2014). A return to the lived everyday experiences of people in cultural encounters to get an understanding of how they interact in general and communicate competently in particular, or as Yep states: “*The citizens of the twenty-first century must learn to see through the eyes, hearts, and minds of people from cultures other than their own*” (2014, p. 339). The next section outlines the chosen creativity approach.

Creativity perspective

The first part of the chosen creativity perspective builds on Byrge and Hansen’s view on creativity as “unlimited application of knowledge” in thinking and doing and their didactic approach towards interdisciplinary and intercultural group work, in terms of “the creative platform”. Firstly their view on creativity is outlined and then will the creative platform be elaborated. Byrge and Hansen perceive creativity as a mean to cut across the otherwise limiting boundaries that individuals are subjected to including: cultural patterns, judgment, fear, professions and as a process to use all the knowledge available in a group or individual (2009). Facilitating creativity involves creating a learning environment where the participants let go of their fears and judgments, by moving away from their dominant ways of thinking and doing according to Byrge and Hansen (2009); and creativity makes it possible for employees from different cultural background to understand and contribute with their knowledge and experience in a given problem-solving situation. Knowledge is perceived to include: information, expertise, know-how or whatever sources individuals thought or actions arise from, according to Byrge and Hansen – and when individuals need to do something new, they need ideas, consequently are ideas knowledge in action (2009).

The creative platform is the notion of a mental workplace for interdisciplinary- and intercultural groups, in which there is no distinction between different subjects, imagination, or the

participants experience from everyday life. The goal with the creative platform is to create a learning process or flow, where the participants learn to put all their knowledge into play, unfettered by subjects, rules, norms or cultural patterns, according to Byrge and Hansen (2015). The creative platform is argued to be a facilitating method, which enables the participants to collaborate in a creative process together and the didactic approach contains four central elements in terms of: parallel thinking, task focus, no judgment and diversified knowledge, which briefly will be outlined in the following section.

Byrge and Hansen state that parallel thinking is the idea of focusing all of the participants thinking in a given collaboration process towards one task at the time in order to experience a mode of flow where they become absorbed in the task at hand (2009). It is perceived as a way to structure the thinking of the group where the main problem or task is divided into a number of subtasks, which all the individuals work on collectively at the same time. Task focus refers to the notion that all the participants should be fully aware and focused on the given task they are working on, according to Byrge and Hansen (2009).

This means that during a creative process the facilitator should control what the participants are creative about, namely the problem or situation they strive to solve; otherwise the focus shift and they will not be fully emerged in the task. The notion of no judgment in the creative platform refers to the act of reducing the fear of being wrong, misunderstood or losing one's face, by removing any kind of judgment during the creative process. Judgment is perceived to inhibit the creative process, henceforth should the participants not introduce themselves during a creative collaboration process, as it would lead to perceived hierarchies and certain expectations from the other group members. On the creative platform the people are instead introduced to each other by performing a set of activities together, which create a common experience, as stated by Byrge and Hansen (2009). Diversified knowledge refers to the necessary need for diverse knowledge in order to develop new ideas, in other words collaborating with a heterogeneous ought to have the potential to aspire more new ideas than a homogenous group of people. What structures the creative platform apart from the previous mentioned elements are 3D cases, which are exercises that involves the simultaneous use of body, brain and attitudes. All of the 3D cases are built upon the concepts of: parallel thinking, no judgment and task focus; and they ought henceforth to be perceived as the theory behind the creative platform brought into practice.

Creativity across cultures

The second element in the chosen creativity perspective attempts to broaden the traditional perception of creativity as an individual trait, by including the environment and furthermore elaborate on how creativity is perceived across different cultures. Lubart argues that uniting the environment and person-centered variables is necessary in terms of creativity, since the context including physical setting, workplace and culture influence creativity (1999). Culture influence how creativity or a creative process is perceived. According to Lubart, Western cultures typically perceive creativity as product-based or originality-based; the ability to produce novel work related to an observable product (1999).

In contrast are Eastern conceptions of creativity related to aspect such as: striving after personal fulfillment, an expression of inner essence and related to meditation. In Hinduism for example is creativity viewed as a religious or spiritual expression rather than an innovative solution to a given problem, according to Lubart (1999). Whereas the creative process in western cultures typically involves four steps: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification; is the creative process in Eastern culture directed towards emotional, personal and behavioral aspects in everyday life domains (Lubart, 1999). Culture provides both facilitating and inhibiting creative conditions; and it should be noted that there are diverse views on creativity in different cultural context and domains, according to Lubart (1999).

The context of an organization in terms of organizational culture

Organizational culture is perceived to be the clue that connects the organization as a whole with the everyday experiences, including their shared values, social ideas and values. It is furthermore perceived to create a conceptual bridge between organizational behavior and strategic management, as referred to Smircich. The chosen approach adheres to Smircich's notion of culture as an internal variable where culture is something the organization has and produces, but simultaneously the organization is embedded in a larger cultural context (1983). There is a focus on the socio-cultural qualities that is developed within the organization, according to Smircich (1983). The chosen OC approach furthermore emphasizes that organizational change is possible and adheres to Alvesson's view on change as everyday reframing (2002).

This cultural change perspective focuses on local change, where employees reframe the culture by influencing other employees through social interaction. It is an ongoing cultural shaping process that tends to be driven by one or a number of people, frequently a manager, but other people might also be involved, according to Alvesson (2002). Culture in the organization is furthermore perceived as a toolbox, which entails the property to enable action (Swidler, 1986). The chosen OC approach strive to move away from the functionalistic view on culture, as referring to national culture, which arguably has constraining properties on the environment and its members.

The chosen pragmatism approach towards organizational culture perceives culture as the source of interpretation to generate action and from which employees interpret their actions to generate beliefs, as referred to Morgan (2014: 1046). It is experience that creates the employees meaning by connection beliefs and action with each other and culture is one manifestation of that experience in this dissertation.

Inquiry

Strategy for analysis

The following section is an exploration and inquiry of how the chosen conceptual framework can answer the stated research question. I perceive and use the literature review in the dissertation as a frame of reference and a theoretical framework, as I stated in the conceptual framework section. In other words, I draw upon the whole theoretical framework, including different perspectives, in the analysis, although the main approach towards answering the research question is the chosen conceptual framework. I make use of a set of analytical tools in order to guide the process, which will be outlined in the following. Firstly I implement Dewey's notion asking questions in an inquiry, in the analysis (inquiry). The five steps towards inquiry ought not to be perceived as fixed; rather the notion of asking questions should be perceived as a continuous process towards getting closer to understand a problematic situation and answer the

stated research question (Morgan, 2014); which in this dissertation is: *How does creativity as a tool influence ICC in an organization?*

Secondly, I use a metaphor of a table (see figure 5) with different people sitting around it, as a way to showcase the process towards answering the research question. The table in this case, is the problem that ought to be solved and the participants that are sitting around it are the different included perspectives in the dissertation.

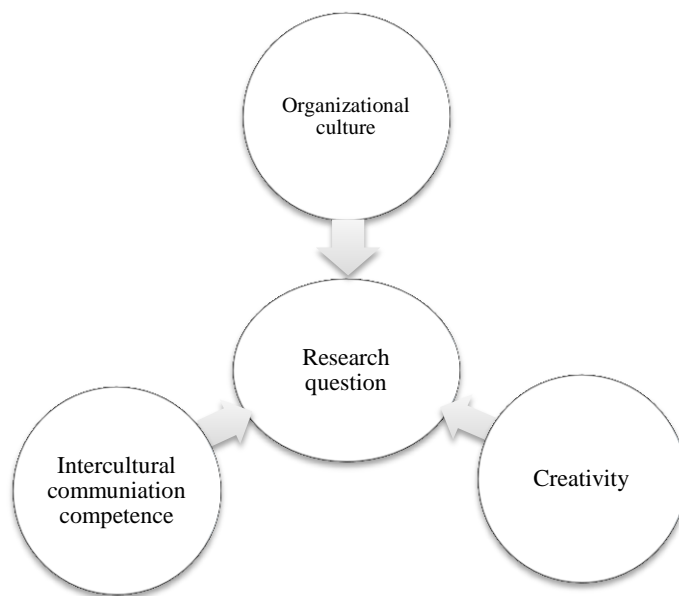


Figure 5: Table metaphor that illustrates the process towards answering the research question

Firstly it is arguably important to conceptualize ICC and showcase what is meant by competence in the field of intercultural competence and thereafter outline the chosen ICC approach; because as I seek to examine how creativity influence ICC - it is deemed important to showcase what exactly creativity is ought to influence. Secondly, outline the pragmatism criteria for such an endeavor. As stated previously, the pragmatism position emphasizes the consequences of human action, when one is examining a certain phenomenon. The meaning and merit of the extent creativity influence ICC should thereby be measured in terms of the future consequences it induces on developing intercultural competence in an organizational context.

Reconceptualization of ICC

Several challenges in the field of ICC have been outlined in the thesis (see literature review and methodology section), which are summarized to include:

1. Ambiguity and conceptual vagueness of ICC and relating concepts.
2. The missing element of performance in ICC from a pragmatist perspective.
3. An inherent Ethnocentrism in ICC research.
4. The lack of adhering to contextual factors, in terms of culture, power, and multiculturalism in ICC literature.

These factors will consequently be elaborated upon in the following section. I will furthermore elaborate on the relationships between the different elements, how they are connected and the consequences this has for the chosen reconceptualization of ICC. This first part of the inquiry relates to the two first steps in Dewey's systematic approach to Inquiry (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047).

Firstly it is arguably necessary to elaborate on the notion of competence in relation to ICC and the difference between communication competence and intercultural communication competence, because they have given rise to ambiguity and confusion, according to Chen and Starosta (2008). There is an ongoing argument in the literature to whether competence is an inherent ability (trait) or a learned ability (state). Chen and Starosta's perception of competence include both personal attributes (trait) and communication skills (2008).

A relating aspect to competence, in terms of communication competence, is whether or not competence refers to knowledge or performance. Whereas Chomsky (1965) and Philips (1983) perceive competence as an individual's knowledge, others like Spitzberg (1983) broaden the perception to include motivation and skills, thereby including performance in the conceptualization, according to Chen and Starosta (2008). I adhere to Chen and Starosta and perceive the existing definitions as too narrow, especially when the concept is applied in an intercultural setting, in which the interaction process requires both situational knowledge and behavioral skills (2008). Consequently, future ICC approaches ought to contain both knowledge and performance, as stated by Chen and Starosta (2008). It is argued that this approach to ICC relates to the pragmatism view on the limited usefulness of competence since it is missing its other half, in terms of performance, as stated by Holmes (2016).

As previously mentioned, Holmes uses Dewey's notion of the duality between potential and interaction to explain the relationship between competence and performance. Dewey (1960, p. 237) states that:

"...potential is a category of existence, for development cannot occur unless an individual has powers or capacities that are not actualized at a given time. But it also means that these powers are not unfolded from within, but they are called out through interaction with other things" (as referred to Holmes, 2016, p. 248)

The concept of performance has been lacking in the ICC literature, which is problematic, since performance is the actual interaction in a given situation - and if there is no interaction, there is no experience at all, consequently no future potential, learning or development of ICC, according to Holmes (2016). The stated notion of the duality between competence and performance consequently has consequences for both how ICC can be conceptualized and furthermore the possibility to answer the research question. Because, if ICC is perceived as a situational or mere individual knowledge without any enactment, it arguably becomes impossible to examine how creativity as a tool influence ICC from a pragmatism framework.

Consequently, the chosen approach towards ICC includes both a competence (potential) element and a performance (interaction) element. An employee's knowledge, skill or attitudes are perceived to be called out through the social interaction with other members of the organization. There is, in other words, no means to facilitate or develop ICC if there is no social engagement with other participants in the organizational setting. The following section elaborates on the different components (dimensions), which have been ascribed to influence or develop ICC; critical reflections towards different approaches, in terms of culture general assumptions; how the different elements are perceived from a pragmatism framework; the chosen reconceptualization of ICC and consequences thereof.

There are a number of variables that have been ascribed to influence or relate to ICC (see ICC section in literature review). These components include skills, such as listening skill, behavioral elements, effectiveness and appropriateness; abilities, such as empathy; attitudes, in terms of open-mindedness, motivation; knowledge, cognitive such as self-awareness and cultural awareness. The different dimensions are broadly outlined in figure 4 (Matveev, 2017; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Yep, 2014).

There are, however numerous problems with equating such general components to ICC, since a skill or behavior may be perceived as competent in one context, but not in another and thus no specific skill is likely universally competent, according to Spitzberg and Changnon (2009). It is furthermore problematic to use phrases such as be emphatic or be open-minded from the chosen pragmatism perspective, because, as Holmes states, abstract concepts such as empathy or motivation do not convey what employees should do in practice with their body and mind in a given situation in the organization (2016). The chosen ICC approach, therefore, strives to transform abstract notions such as “be motivated” into tangible and concrete instructions for employees.

It is furthermore deemed necessary for managers in organizations to give instructions and feedback to employees in the workspace from the pragmatist perspective, due to its focus on the consequences of human action. In other words, if the employees do not get any feedback from managers it becomes difficult to perceive the consequences of their actions and in turn future development of ICC in the workplace.

Culture general and culture specific view

The previously mentioned aspect about how components relating to ICC can be generalized to other cultures relates to the debate about culture-general or culture-specific, in other words, the question whether there are components (variables) that regardless of cultural perspective contribute or facilitate ICC. Whereas the majority of existing ICC research have taken a culture-general approach (Arasaratnam, 2016; Chen & Starosta, 2014), several authors (Yep, 2016; Chen & Starosta, 2014) have been critical towards the culture-general perspective. According to Chen and Starosta, recent studies have examined ICC from Chinese, Indian, Japanese and Korean perspectives and found that “harmony” appears to be a coherent element related to ICC in most Asian cultures (2014). And they urge that future research strive to research ICC from a culture-specific approach in order to find commonalities within cultures. It is, however, arguably important to emphasize that notions such as “harmony is a coherent element in most Asian cultures” does not become generalized. Instead state that it is a variable that has a potential, to use Dewey’s terminology, or preference to influence ICC, rather than being a determinable factor.

Yep also voice criticism towards the culture-general approach, by arguing that there are fundamental Ethnocentric assumptions in the ICC literature, and strived to move beyond what he calls the “hegemonic conception of culture” (2014). According to Yep, the current ICC and IC field can be viewed as “encounters with the other”, where the other is an outsider or stranger, who becomes essentialized and marginalized – and are perceived to be incongruous with the Ethnocentric standard, which they are compared with (2014). The other is perceived to have an inherent, essential and unchanging nature compared to the American or Western cultural standard (2014).

An example of a culture-general notion is Hofstede’s term individualism versus collectivism or power distance, where “other” cultures are perceived to have some inherent unchanging nature. Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory has been influential in several different disciplines such as cross-cultural communication - and organizational culture studies; and it has led to a hegemonic conception of culture in intercultural research, in which a majority of ICC research equates culture as national membership, according to Yep (2014). The view on culture as nation state is problematic in a number of ways, according to Yep and he outlines a set of problematic elements. Firstly, when culture is equated with nation state, the concept is not able to represent the lives and experiences of people in their everyday life, which I argue is essential to adhere to when the focus is on employees in an organizational context that comprises of employees from diverse cultures. Secondly, culture as nationality typically ignores intersections, including gender, race and social class; which consequently might lead to diverse groups being treated homogenously and individual differences in groups are obscured, in terms of culture being perceived as shared by all members of a particular cultural background (Yep, 2014).

I argue that this perspective is notably problematic, due to the constantly changing work environment in multicultural organizations, which comprise of employees from diverse cultural backgrounds, who might identify with multiple intersecting cultural characteristics. It is arguably preferable to adhere to how employees navigate through various contradictions and changes in terms of ethnic, gender, racial or sexual position (Yep, 2014), since the research aim is to examine how ICC can be influenced in a multicultural organization and to understand how the employees draw upon their different individual competencies. Spitzberg and Cupach have a culture-general view of competence, which suggests that individuals such as employees have unitary and unchanging cultural identities, as referred to Chen and Starosta (2008).

Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) pursued a culture-general approach by looking at commonalities in emic descriptions of ICC by individuals from a variety of cultural perspectives, as referred to Arasaratnam (2016). Emic means that the researcher seeks to perceive a culture from the perspective of the participants and furthermore emphasize that the participants can identify with the findings. Arasaratnam and Doerfel identified five variables that seemingly contributed to ICC regardless of cultural perspective, in terms of empathy, experience, motivation, positive attitudes towards others and listening, as referred to Arasaratnam (2016). Although, it should be mentioned that Arasaratnam (2016) acknowledge that contextual variables influence the perception of ICC and Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) state that a particular behavior, skill or ability likely cannot be equated to be universally competent, but instead context depend. Even so, it raises questions such as: how is contextual variable perceived to influence ICC? Or how do they differentiate and distinguish between employees behaviors in terms of their cultural characteristics?

It is noteworthy to state that Arasaratnam perceives the culture-general nature of the variables, which contribute to ICC as providing an optimistic perspective, even in the absence of culture-specific knowledge (2016).

By contrast Chen and Starosta view cultures as a set of preferences that inform, rather than determine a given interaction (2008). Employees in an organization shape the culture but are at the same time shaped by the context, especially since employees draw upon multiple identities, which in turn means that interactions do not resemble any one cultural expectation (Chen & Starosta, 2008, p. 219).

The chosen reconceptualization adheres to the notion that individuals have multiple cultural identities in a given environment, especially in the chosen case of multicultural organizations. The cultural context in an organization will be further elaborated in the organizational culture section later in the inquiry. The following section discusses the two concepts effectiveness and appropriateness since they are part of a majority of views on ICC (Chen & Starosta, 2008).

Effectiveness and appropriateness

The notion of effectiveness and appropriateness are often deemed to be essential components of ICC, as showcased in both Spitzberg and Changnon's definition and the ICC dimensions (see figure 4). Appropriateness refers to the ability of an individual to meet the basic contextual requirements of a situation without violating the rules and norms of the interaction, in terms of understanding the context constraints of the communication and being able to avoid inappropriate responses in the situation (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Chen & Starosta, 2008). Effectiveness refers to an individual's ability to accomplish the intended effects through a social interaction, according to Chen and Starosta (2008). But these definitions raises a number of questions: Effective and appropriate according to whom? Who decide the contextual requirements? Desired results according to whom, in relation to Spitzberg and Cupach's notion of effective behavior? (1984).

According to Chen and Starosta these definitions showcase ambiguity and conceptual vagueness and it is deemed necessary to reflect on who decides what is effective or appropriate. The chosen reconceptualization ICC congruous with Chen and Starosta's point that these aspect showcase ambiguity and conceptual vagueness; and that is necessary to reflect upon notions such as the global communication context, the development of multiculturalism and employees multiple identities in future ICC conceptualizations (2008).

It is deemed necessary to implement the notion of power, history and ideology in future ICC approaches, according to Yep (2014). He states that the role of power in intercultural interactions are generally not considered in conceptualizations of ICC, and when it is neglected the inherent power relations becomes reproduced and maintained, in which the dominant voices in a community decides what constitutes competent interaction (2014). And a relating aspect to power is history, as Yep states, can the absence of equating importance to history, become an invisible barrier, which influence intercultural interaction (2014). If for example a group of employees are collaborating on a given task in an organization and do not reflect on the different participants personal cultural history - that can have a negative impact competencies, which they strive to contribute with in the situation.

The final aspect Yep emphasizes is the influence of ideology in ICC, which also relates to the previous discussion about “the hegemonic conception of culture”. Lee-Hurwitz (1990) state that the field of intercultural communication was developed to respond to a specific set of problems; specifically the field was developed in the 1940s and 1950s from the need to train U.S. diplomats for overseas assignments, as referred to Yep (2014). In that light it is arguably not surprising that IC and ICC emphasize effectiveness and appropriateness, but as the field of ICC and IC in general notably claim to reflect a intercultural perspective, given its name, it becomes important to stress whether or not it actually practice what it preach, so to speak. As stated in the methodology section, one could question whether the field is actually what it claims, as in intercultural (Asante, Miike & Yin, 2014).

This does not mean, however, that one should aspire to implement the aspects of power, history and ideology from the pragmatism perspective. I argue that Yep’s view on ICC resembles a poststructuralist or postmodernist perspective, with his emphasis on power, ideology and historical structures; he furthermore refers to Foucault in the text. Even though there are some similarities between pragmatism and postmodernism (Kelemen & Rumens, 2013), they are different schools of thought and consequently have different aims. The merit to whether power, history and ideology ought to be included depends on the consequences this has for the conception of ICC and its future usefulness. The negative aspect which ethnocentrism impose on ICC have been showcased throughout the dissertation and will therefore be implemented in the reconceptualization, because it is argued that to emphasize this aspect is useful and will have positive consequences for how ICC can be influenced.

The chosen reconceptualization of ICC strives to do this by broadening the notion of competence through a dialogue with multiple voices from dispersed cultures. Thereby striving to understand what competent skills, attitudes and behaviors are for people originating from cultures other than Western. The chosen reconceptualization furthermore implements an emphasis on the lived everyday experiences of people in intercultural context, in order to learn how they interact in general and in particular how they communicate competently, which Yep states (2014). The notion of power and history will be elaborated upon later in the analysis, when the theoretical model is developed.

In summary

To summarize, my reconceptualized notion of ICC includes both competence and performance and it strive to transform abstract concept such as “be motivated” or “be empathic” into practice, in order to showcase what managers and employees should do concretely with their body and mind in concrete situations. A criterion for competence is deemed to not be enough, it is also necessary for managers to give instructions and feedback on performance, which respect that employees are at different levels, in order to avoid excessive use of evaluation tools and a climate of fear (Holmes, 2016). The approach furthermore strives to return to the lived everyday experiences of people in intercultural context to learn how they interact in general and communicate competently in particular (Yep, 2014). Culture is perceived as a set of preferences and possibilities that inform rather than determine a given interaction, where the employees both shape the culture and are shaped by the cultural context through the interaction with other employees. The employees are perceived to draw upon a plethora of cultural identities that does not necessarily resemble one cultural expectation (Chen & Starosta, 2008); what is deemed to be competent behaviors, skills or attitudes ought to be established through a dialogue with multiple culturally diverse employees and managers collaboratively in the organization. Intercultural competence is consequently identified as:

“The ability to draw upon diverse knowledge, behaviors and attitudes from lived everyday experience during social interactions, which enables them to understand and collaborate with people from different cultural backgrounds in a meaningful way and which contributes to a relational development of diverse cultural knowledge acquisition through the interaction”

(Salomonsen, 2018)

A final aspect to ICC, which is necessary to reflect on, is whether or not it can be learned. Where some scholars argue that numerous variables related to ICC are innate variables (traits), others, like Beamer (1992) and Bennet (1986) argue that ICC can be learned through a developmental process, as referred to Arasaratnam (2016). Since the aim in the dissertation is to examine how creativity influences ICC, there is an inherent assumption that it can be developed, since it otherwise would not be able to pursue answering the research question.

From the pragmatist position, it is necessary to unite competence with performance and it is thereby argued that there is a developmental aspect to ICC, since it is through the interaction that ICC becomes enacted. Holmes introduces the theory and practice of the Dialogue Process as a learning tool to develop ICC, since it integrates performance and practice in a context (2016). Zang (2012) and Helm (2009) state that collaborative learning facilitates the development of ICC, as referred to Arasaratnam (2016). And that is furthermore the chosen perspective towards learning and developing ICC in the dissertation, as it also adheres to the pragmatist notion of interaction in practice, in regard to competence and performance. The collaborative learning aspect will be outlined in the next section in terms of how the creative platform and creativity influence ICC.

A discussion of how creativity as a tool influences intercultural competence in organizations

How creativity influence intercultural competence in an organization necessarily depends on how creativity is perceived. In the first part of this section I will discuss how a western perception of creativity, in terms of: idea generation, knowledge sharing and problem solving, influence ICC. This part will mainly draw upon the creative platform. In the second part I will broaden the view on how creativity is perceived across cultures and in turn showcase how a broadened perception of creativity can influence ICC in multicultural organizations. In both instances creativity is perceived as a tool that can be used to influence a given phenomenon and the different perceptions of creativity will furthermore be related to pragmatism.

As stated in the literature review (Puccio & Cabra, 2010), organizations in today's business environment need to be able to adapt and come up with solutions to current needs and challenges, which require all available resources, especially creative and human ones. Puccio and Cabra state that organizations, which are richer in ideas and more imaginative have the highest possibility to be more efficient and being able to adapt to changing circumstances (2010). I relate the notion of human resources to intercultural competence, in terms of being able to facilitate and benefit from different employees' diverse competences to come up with solutions to diverse situations.

In order to come up with solutions it is arguably necessary to share ideas and knowledge among the employees and this is where creativity can contribute, since it is deemed to influence knowledge and idea sharing among employees, according to Paulus and Yang (2000). It is deemed to be an important part of group interactions in various contexts such as meetings and collaboration among employees. Numerous research, including Helm (2009) and Zhang (2012) suggest that collaborative learning facilitates the development of ICC, as stated in the methodology section (Arasaratnam, 2016).

The creative platform

The creative platform, developed by Byrge and Hansen, is a didactic approach that enables groups to share their knowledge without limitations from professional, social and cultural patterns, by facilitating different exercises which are termed 3D cases (2009). The essence a 3D case is to engage all of the participants' awareness on the task at hand and furthermore to integrate the participants' body, brain and attitudes simultaneously in the learning process, according to Byrge and Hansen (2009). The 3D cases are developed and executed on the basis of the three concepts "parallel thinking", "no judgment" and "task focus". The exercises ought to be developed for two or more people and comprise the purpose of creating experiences, where the learning is related to a given task. It is argued that the use of 3D cases can facilitate knowledge sharing in general and intercultural competence in particular. One critical aspect in the existing ICC literature is, as stated previously, the limited usefulness, due to the missing element in terms of performance.

Competence and performance ought to be perceived as an organic unity of an individuals' attempt to cope with a given situation from the chosen pragmatism perspective, as Holmes states; experience, which is essential to any situation should include both competence and performance (2016). If the employees in an organization do not perform and engage with each other to exchange their intercultural competence it becomes impossible to develop and facilitate their potential/competences. From the chosen pragmatism perspective there is no intercultural competence if there is no unity between potential (competence) and interaction (performance). As mentioned previously, 3D cases engage the participants' body, mind and attitudes simultaneously during the process.

Byrge and Hansen argue for a united perception of body and mind and state that when the body is active, it becomes easier to apply knowledge to a given situation (2009). In other words 3D cases are about engaging in the given task, not merely taking about it. This aspect is arguably commensurable with the pragmatism view on ICC and the exercises furthermore focus on practice and developing creativity by engaging with each other people.

Paulus and Yang state that idea- and knowledge sharing in groups involves relatively inefficient process, because group members tend to focus on the information they have in common, rather than share their own unique expertise in the interaction (2000). This is arguably problematic aspect in terms of ICC, because the employees' unique knowledge and experience is not conveyed and explored during the collaboration process. According to Byrge and Hansen the main barrier in collaboration is the fear of being judged (2009). Employees in an organization might for instance be afraid of being wrong or misunderstood in different situations such as meetings or other types of group activities. These aspects, arguably, also impact ICC. As mentioned in the literature review, competence is determined and judged during interactions by the involved individuals, as referred to Matveev (2017). Because of the judging process during interaction the employees might limit their diverse intercultural competencies and the organization thereby lose valuable insights that otherwise could contribute to cope with challenges. I argue that there are a number of aspects in the creative platform that influence employees' intercultural competence in an organization and furthermore influence the chosen ICC perspective at large.

No judgment and parallel thinking

If the concept of no judgment and parallel thinking is implemented in a set of 3D cases, which relates to the employees intercultural competence, it is argued that they can draw upon their diverse knowledge, skills and attitudes – and furthermore contribute to the mutual development of diverse cultural knowledge during the process. Because if the employees are introduced to each other in the beginning of a knowledge sharing process, by participating in a set of activities that create a common experience, there is arguable no room for judgments. Additionally, if all of the participating have the same focus during a given 3D case, it becomes easier to avoid judgment.

Byrge and Hansen state that parallel thinking is what creates the necessary focus for groups, where the participants follow the same steps in parallel, in other words they move collectively in their thinking (2015). This ought not to be understood as employees think the same thoughts, but rather that they direct their thinking towards the same task at hand during a given task. It arguably becomes difficult for different employees to draw upon their diverse knowledge during social interactions, such as meetings or other collaborative work in an organization, due to the fear of being judged. Especially if their focus is not directed to a specific task and they start by positioning themselves towards each other and start a discussion.

For example if three employees, where one is Vietnamese and the two other are American and European start a knowledge sharing process by introducing themselves and begin discussing history – a quite possible scenario could be that they start arguing over the Vietnam war and judge or blame each other.

This would undeniable both influence their mutual development of cultural knowledge and the diversity of any knowledge sharing or idea development in a negative way. It is furthermore argued that the notion of diversified knowledge on the creative platform influence ICC among employees in an organization, since heterogeneous groups, where the participants come from dispersed cultural and professional backgrounds are encouraged. Byrge and Hansen argue that for the creative platform to gain its full potential it is necessary to have a diversity of knowledge to develop new ideas (2009).

I furthermore argue that the concept of no judgment has the potential to influence the field of ICC at large, by addressing the pertaining negative aspect of Ethnocentrism in the field. Neuliep (2002, p. 201) defines Ethnocentrism as:

“an individual psychological disposition where the values, attitudes, and behaviors of one’s ingroup are used as a standard for judging and evaluating another group’s values, attitudes, and behaviors” (Arasaratnam, 2016, p. 5).

As mentioned previously, our understanding of ICC is greatly influenced by research from the economically developed part of the world and it is therefore arguable that western perceptions of culture influence the assumptions and outcomes of research.

In the chosen ICC approach should what is deemed as competent behavior, skills or attitude, be established through a dialogue with multiple cultural voices; and this is where I argue that the notion of no judgment from the creative platform can contribute.

I argue that if future ICC research strives to avoid judgment or evaluate other cultures' values, attitudes or behaviors - and instead strive to have an open mind and positive attitude towards diverse ideas and knowledge from different parts of the world - the first step towards solving the pertaining ethnocentrism is taken.

As Chen and Starosta states are people's willingness to engage in other cultures, due to their open-mindedness and cultural sensitivity, in terms of being able to experience and respond to cultural differences. And if people have greater cultural sensitivity they also have a greater potential for exercising ICC, as referred to Matveev (2017). Arasaratnam and Doerfel's developed model, which included diverse cultural perspective furthermore showcased that positive attitudes towards people from other cultures lead to becoming motivated to communicate with them, which in turn contribute to intercultural competence, as referred to Arasaratnam (2016).

It should be noted that there are a number of pertaining limitations of how the creative platform can influence ICC in organization, due to the structured and controlled facilitating process. Firstly it requires a place where there are limited distractions, such as watches, computers or mobile phones, when the participants are on the creative platform and engaged in 3D cases. Secondly nobody except the participants and the facilitator are allowed to be present in the room during the creative process, since the presence of other people will disturb and remove the focus from the specific task. This undeniably can be difficult in a multicultural organization with numerous of employees. One solution could be to dedicate a room for the specific purpose to facilitate the creative platform. The creative platform should be perceived as one creative tool that can be implemented in the organization on certain occasion to influence intercultural competence, or whenever it is deemed necessary by the employees and managers.

It is deemed important to mention that Sternberg and Lubart (1999) are critical towards the DeBono's pragmatic approach towards creativity, which focus on practice and is mainly concerned with developing creativity. I argue that the creative platform is also part of that approach due to its focus on practice and developing creativity.

Byrge furthermore told me that he was greatly influenced by DeBono, during my enrollment in the *Creative Genius semester*. Sternberg and Lubart criticize the approach for not testing the validity of the developed ideas (1999).

However the chosen pragmatism approach equates other criteria measures than validity, as in usefulness and plausibility of the developed knowledge, more specifically in terms of its ability to accomplish the pursued goal, as referred to Antoft and Salomonsen (2007).

I argue that the creative platform is useful in a number of ways, when it is perceived from the chosen pragmatism perspective. Firstly the exercises involve both the mind and the body or competence and performance to use Holmes terms, which is deemed necessary from the pragmatism perspective of ICC. The didactic principles focus on experiences and practice instead of reflection, which is deemed commensurable with pragmatism. The creative platform furthermore arguably has the potential to solve some of the inherent challenges in ICC, in terms of judgment, ethnocentrism, and the limited usefulness of ICC, due to the lack of performance or enactment. And lastly the creative platform is deemed to be applicable and useful for influencing the chosen perception and my developed definition of ICC, in terms of:

“The ability to draw upon diverse knowledge, skills and attitudes from lived everyday experience during social interactions, which enables individuals to understand and collaborate with people from different cultural backgrounds in a meaningful way and which contributes to a relational development of diverse cultural knowledge acquisition through the interaction” (Salomonsen, 2018)

Albeit Byrge and Hansen’s definition of creativity as “unlimited application of knowledge” is perceived as a mean to cut across otherwise limiting boundaries such as cultural patterns and judgment, it is noteworthy to question whether or not they themselves are not victims of cultural patterns and judgment, in terms of how they define creativity. I argue that the word application has a western connotation to it, when one reflect on Lubart’s notion of the western view on creativity as product-based and originality-based (2009). Although, it should be mentioned that Byrge and Hansen state that the creative process itself could be the aim, instead of idea generation towards a given product (2009).

Byrge and Hansen state that this would be the case if one's aim, "*is to use the creative platform to build up social competences or to build on participants' self-respect*" (2009, p. 248), or in the case of the dissertation influencing intercultural competence.

How creativity is perceived arguably has consequences for how it ought to influence ICC and consequently how it shape future ICC experiences from the chosen pragmatism perspective. I argue that this notion relates to Dewey's fourth step in inquiry, in terms of "evaluating potential actions in terms of their likely consequences, as referred to Morgan (2014, p. 1047). Since my aim is to examine how creativity influences intercultural competence it is deemed important to also reflect on the notion of creativity in an intercultural way. In other words, reflect upon how creativity might be perceived differently across cultures and moreover by employees from diverse cultural backgrounds. In the following section I strive to broaden the creativity perspective by implementing Lubart's cultural approach to creativity (1999).

Creativity across cultures and its relationship to pragmatism

Lubart state that the cultural environment effect creativity, in terms of defining the nature of creativity and the creative process, thus creativity might be perceived differently depending on the cultural context from where it manifest (1999). The majority of creativity research originates from a few number of countries, namely the United States, thus it is arguably valuable to perceive creativity across cultures in order to move beyond a single culture's view on creativity, according to Lubart (1999). Creativity from an Eastern view can generally be perceived as a state of personal fulfillment, self-growth and as an expression of inner essence. It is furthermore often times related to meditation, since it can contribute to a clearer picture of one's self or illuminate a given situation; this notion relates to the humanistic psychologies view on creativity as self-actualization, according to Lubart (1999).

Hallman (1970) states that culture is perceived to channel creativity in Hindu cosmology, in which time and history is viewed as cyclical and when an individual creates he/she strive to imitate the spiritual, as referred to Lubart (1999). Eastern views on creativity are furthermore often times focused on everyday life domains of creative activity, since people draw upon their experiences.

I argue that the Eastern views on creativity showcased are relatable to pragmatism in a number of ways. Firstly the notion that culture is channeling creativity and that human creativity is a circular movement, which involves reinterpretation of ideas, is arguably relatable to Dewey's cyclical view on experience. Secondly the Eastern focus on everyday life domains, where people draw on their experiences is deemed to be commensurable with Dewey's notion of experience. The origins of our beliefs arise from previous actions and simultaneously are the outcomes of our actions found in our beliefs, as stated by Morgan (2014, p. 1046). Thirdly, the pragmatism view on creativity as a human condition, which exists in everyday social practices (Arjaliès, Lorino & Simpson, 2013) is deemed to be relatable to the Eastern focus of everyday life domains of creative activity. It is in fact arguable to reflect whether or not Eastern views on creativity are more commensurable to pragmatism's view of creativity than Western views. A common notion in both the Western and Eastern views of creativity is that it seemingly is perceived as a positive phenomenon.

When Eastern views on creativity are encapsulated in the chosen creativity approach it is argued that creativity can influence ICC in organization in additional ways than those previously mentioned. The broadened creativity approach seemingly pertain previously mentioned factors of self-awareness (Deardorff, 2006) and open-mindedness (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005) which are deemed to influence ICC, as referred to Arasaratnam (2016). Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) state that self-awareness relates to the ability to control and modify one's self-representation and one's expressive behavior in different cultural context, as referred to Arasaratnam (2016). In other words, an employee becomes consciously aware of how he/she express and represent him or herself in different situations.

It is argued that meditation as a creative tool can contribute to the development of both open-mindedness and self-awareness, since it can contribute to a clearer picture of one's self and furthermore bring the employees attention to the present moment. It is consequently argued that the implementation of meditation as a creative tool in organizations can influence ICC. A relating factor to self-awareness, which is perceived to influence ICC, according to Gudykunst (1993) is mindfulness, as refereed to Arasaratnam (2016). The Anxiety/Uncertainty Management theory furthermore seemingly adheres to the beneficial aspect of mindfulness, by proposing that the ability to be mindful in intercultural interactions is deemed an essential element in developing ICC (Arasaratnam (2016).

It is argued that mindfulness is relatable to meditation and that different kinds of mindfulness practices consequently could be applied in the workplace to facilitate and influence intercultural competence in different situations when it is deemed beneficial. A practical example of how mindfulness could be implemented in the organization is to use one of the numerous mindfulness apps that are available online. The management could also hire an experienced mediation and/or mindfulness practitioner, who could facilitate exercises for the different employees in the organization and thereby mediate beneficial attitudes, knowledge or skills that influence intercultural competence. Lastly it is argued that mediation and mindfulness are adhering to the pragmatism view on experience in terms of perceiving the mind and the body as a unified whole.

In summary

How creativity influence intercultural competence arguably depends on how creativity is perceived. Therefore was both a Western and Eastern view on creativity discussed. The creative platform and its principle of “parallel thinking” and “no judgment” were deemed to influence intercultural competence. It facilitates a non-judging learning process, where the employees in parallel can draw upon their diverse knowledge, behavior and attitudes to solve a specific task and henceforth contribute to a mutual development of ICC.

The use of 3D cases was furthermore deemed to adhere to the missing aspect of performance in ICC, since the exercises engage the participants’ body, mind and attitudes simultaneously. The principle of no judgment was additionally deemed to be able to influence the ICC field at large. Firstly the negative pertaining aspect of ethnocentrism, by addressing the importance of using diversified knowledge and secondly the limited usefulness, by addressing the importance of bodily engagement, when conveying knowledge. It was argued that the broadened Eastern view on creativity contributed with several aspects that influence ICC. The attitudes and practices of self-awareness, mindfulness, open-mindedness and meditation were introduced as creative tools that managers could implement and use in an organizational setting to influence and develop intercultural competence.

Organizational culture as context

It is arguably important to elaborate on the notion of organizational culture, even though the main focus in the dissertation is on creativity and intercultural competence, since it conveys the context, in which both ICC and creativity takes place. I have furthermore argued throughout the thesis that contextual factors are deemed to be missing in both the field of creativity and intercultural competence. It is furthermore argued that it is important to include the aspect of organizational culture, due to the pragmatism perspective in the thesis, since it perceives the human organism and the environment as an organic unity.

I argue that it is difficult to state a definition of organizational culture, when I strive to convey its fluid and multifaceted nature, since doing so would limit its complexity to the concepts used in the definition. I will instead elaborate on the different elements that I have included and relate them to the previous ICC and creativity section. As mentioned previously, the chosen approach adheres to Smircich's perception of culture as an internal variable, in which the organization is perceived to facilitate different cultural phenomena but at the same time being embedded in a wider cultural context (1983). Culture, in other words, is something the organization has, and serves as social glue, which holds the organization together.

In relation to pragmatism, it is one source for interpretation, which the employees use to generate beliefs and actions. This aspect relates to Dewey's concept of experience, which creates meaning by connecting beliefs and action together, as referred to Morgan (2014, p. 1046). This aspect ought not to be perceived as if organizational culture is the same as experience, but rather one manifestation of it in the organizational context. Just as experience is perceived to have an inherent social nature, since it is shaped by ongoing interactions with other people, according to Morgan (2014), the organizational culture is perceived to be changed and shaped by its members.

I therefore have taken the position that culture is something that can be changed by its employees, managers or other staff in the organization. It is arguable necessary to adhere to this position, since the purpose of the dissertation is to examine how creativity influences intercultural competence, thus also changing the organizational culture. The different creativity tools outlined in the previous two sections arguably influence intercultural competence and henceforth also the organizational culture, since I perceive ICC to be part of the organizational culture.

I have implemented Alvesson's (2002) view on change as the reframing of everyday life to illustrate how this ought to be done concretely in organizations. On a local level the managers or other staff members ought to introduce the creative tools to other employees in the organization, which in turn introduce the practices to other members. Then after a while groups of people should get together, where one person facilitates a learning process on the creative platform, which is centered on topics to develop the employees' intercultural competences, such as to become more accepting towards peoples different perceptions in collaboration work. Other examples could be problems, where the different employees diversified cultural knowledge and skills come into play.

As Alvesson states, the reframing of everyday life is anchored in social interactions and is furthermore better adapted to material work, henceforth having a clear emphasis on action implications (2002). This view on organizational culture is arguably commensurable with both the pragmatism perspective and the ICC and creativity perspective, since it emphasize practice and calls for creativity, insights in peoples' beliefs, values, communicative skills and lastly includes the prospect that people ought to make "mistakes" to learn and develop (Alvesson, 2002). I will now give an additional practical example of how the different creative tools can be used to influence intercultural competence in organizations in the future.

Practical example: of how the creative platform and the use of 3D cases can be implemented and used in an organization to influence ICC

A facilitator introduces the participants to the creative platform, where they get introduced to each other through a brief exercise that involves both their body and mind. Then the participants are told to develop a game, which entails the development of a culturally inclusive and creative workspace, where there is room for mistakes. The facilitator should outline the process, in such a way that the participants are deemed to draw upon their diverse intercultural competences. The process must furthermore include the principles of no judgment and parallel thinking. In other words they must build on each other's ideas, stay open-minded towards the other participants' ideas and the collective focus should be directed towards the given task of developing the game, as referred to Byrge and Hansen (2009).

Just as it is necessary to unite competence with performance from the pragmatism perspective, it is important to perceive the body (employees) and the environment (organizational context) as an organic unity, as referred to Holmes (2016). Frost (1985) view on OC appears to contain this unity as he emphasize the lived experience of people and additionally that ideas and experiences are influenced and shaped by the people within the organizational context, as referred to Alvesson (2002).

I argue that the chosen perception of organizational culture entails the unification of the organizational environment and its members, by both shaping and simultaneously being shaped by the employees' everyday interactions and other social practices (see figure 6). Thus organizational culture entails both facilitating and inhibiting properties in regard to ICC and creativity. I adhere to Dewey's metaphor of rhythm as a way to perceive everyday life, by using it as an approach towards encapsulating the ongoing changing nature of organizational culture. As Holmes state, by referring to Dewey:

“Rhythm is hard to imagine without a body or organism embedded in changing environments. It already has action, tensions and change in its meaning because it is an experience of the human organism and its environment as a whole, and this experience at the same time embedded in a situation.” (2016, p. 254)

As stated previously, organizational culture seemingly provides a conceptual bridge between organizational behavior and strategic management, according to Smircich (1983). I henceforth argue that intercultural competence is one aspect of organizational behavior and that the “creativity as a tool” is a tool related to strategic management, which can be used in the organizational setting. Organizational culture is thus also perceived as a vibrating changing toolkit that both have facilitating and inhibiting properties in regard to ICC and creativity; it is perceived to enable action in the form of different creative practices in the organization to influence intercultural competence and other relating aspects. The different integrated elements and theoretical perspectives in the inquiry and their mutual relationship are showcased in the developed theoretical model (see figure 6) in the following section.

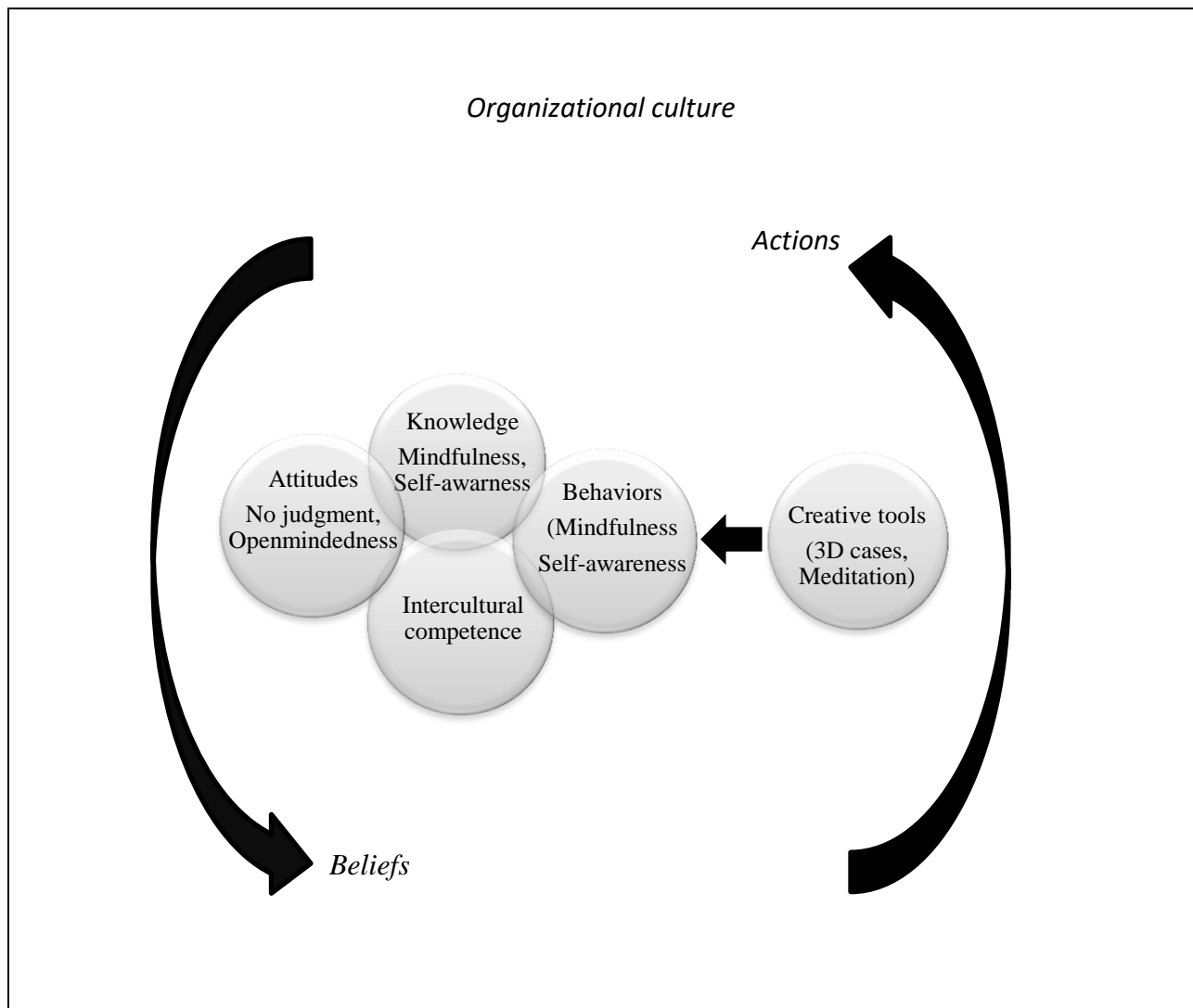


Figure 6: Developed theoretical model by author ©

Developed theoretical model that integrates the different perspectives

The developed model showcase how the chosen integrated perspectives in the dissertation is related and in particular how the chosen creativity perspective is perceived to influence intercultural competence from a pragmatism framework.

The different intercultural competence dimension relates to the developed ICC definition, in terms of:

“The ability to draw upon diverse knowledge, behaviors and attitudes from lived everyday experience during social interactions, which enables them to understand and collaborate with people from different cultural backgrounds in a meaningful way and which contributes to a relational development of diverse cultural knowledge acquisition through the interaction”

(Salomonsen, 2018)

There is a united relationship between knowledge and behaviors, or body and mind, in the ICC dimension to illustrate their organic unity from the chosen pragmatism perspective. There is a processual relationship between how the creative tools influence intercultural competence, where employees are perceived to interpret the different applied tools by using their previous knowledge. They do this by a continual reflection on the tools usefulness, in terms of how the creative tools facilitate and contribute to the development of intercultural competence. In other words the usefulness of the different creative tools depends on the future consequences they have on influencing ICC.

This aspects relates to Dewey’s concept of experience and is showcased in the model with the two arrows that unites in a circular motion. The arrows are adapted from Dewey’s model of experience, in Morgan (2014, p.3). The meaning of the different creative practices and their usefulness for the employees and other staff members, consequently arise from the united experience of the participants beliefs and actions. If some of the creative tools are deemed not useful; the employees can change or develop those tools, in such a way that they facilitate and influence ICC. Organizational culture is perceived as one manifestation of experience, in terms of being a source of interpretation to generate action and from which the employees interpret their actions to generate their beliefs (Morgan, 2014). At the same time is the organizational culture changed and shaped by the employees, there are in other words perceived to be an organic unity between the two.

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation has been to answer the question: *how does creativity as a tool influence intercultural competence in an organization from a pragmatism framework?* In order to pursue this aim, it was deemed necessary to re-conceptualize intercultural competence (ICC), due to a number of reasons. Firstly in order to include both competence and performance in the chosen approach. This was due to the chosen pragmatism framework, from which ICC is perceived as too abstract and entail a limited practical usefulness, due to its missing interaction element. The chosen pragmatism perspective, mainly drawing upon Dewey, stress that competence and performance should be perceived as an organic unity, in which competence becomes enacted through performance. The necessary unification of the mind and body from the pragmatism perspective has furthermore consequently been adhered to throughout the dissertation.

The second and third reason was due to the missing cross-disciplinary dialogue in ICC research and lack of adhering to the cultural context, in which ICC takes place. The developed ICC perspective emphasizes the lived everyday experiences of people in intercultural contexts; where employees are perceived to both shape the culture through the daily interactions with other employees and simultaneously be shaped by their cultural context. It is furthermore argued that what is deemed intercultural competent behavior in organizations should be established through a dialogue with multiple and culturally diverse employees to address the pertaining aspect of ethnocentrism both in practice and in the field at large.

Even though intercultural competence is deemed important in organizations, there is a lack of research, and the present literature mainly originates from the Western world, with a few exceptions. This aspect has resulted in a pertaining ethnocentric view where western perceptions of competent behavior are perceived as the standard norm, from which intercultural competence is measured and assessed. It is henceforth argued that future research address this issue by broadening the intercultural competence approach and include multiple cultural views on what should be deemed as competent behavior.

Just as in the case with intercultural competence was it deemed necessary to reflect on how creativity is perceived, because it arguably has consequences for how it influence intercultural competence in organizations. Due to the intercultural scope in the dissertation it was deemed important to address how creativity is viewed across cultures. The chosen creativity perspective henceforth included both Western and Eastern views on creativity. Creativity is deemed to influence ICC, because it is perceived to influence knowledge and idea sharing among employees. During the inquiry I found that the chosen creativity perspective arguably contributes to solving the pertaining issue of ethnocentrism and influence intercultural competence in a number of ways. I will firstly outline how the included Western view on creativity influences intercultural competence and then elaborate on the different contributions that the broader Eastern views on creativity entail.

It is argued that the creative platform and its principles *parallel thinking* and *no judgment* influence ICC. The creative platform facilitates a non-judging learning process, where the employees in parallel can draw upon and share their diverse knowledge without limitations from cultural or social patterns to solve specific tasks, thus contribute to a mutual development of ICC. It was showcased that a main barrier when groups are collaborating is the fear of being judged, which arguably also has a negative impact on the development of ICC. When employees fear being judged, it arguably becomes difficult to draw upon their unique knowledge during social interactions and other kinds of collaborative work. It is argued that using 3D cases that build on the principle of *no judgment* and *parallel focus* influence ICC, because it creates a common experience where all of the employees' awareness in parallel is directed towards the task, thus there is no room for judgment.

The notion of diversified knowledge on the creative platform furthermore arguably influences ICC, because it encourages the sharing of diverse ideas and knowledge during the social interaction. The use of 3D cases furthermore adheres to the missing aspect of performance in ICC, since the exercises engage the participants' body, mind and attitudes simultaneously. It is argued that the bodily engagement when conveying knowledge and attitudes on the creative platform influence ICC in organizations, because it can facilitate exercises that engage diverse intercultural competence from the different participants.

3D cases thus entail the prospect of mutual development of the participants' diverse intercultural competences, by facilitating a non-judging- and inclusive environment, where the participants are encouraged to engage and share their unique knowledge and attitudes during the exercises. It is furthermore argued that the notion of diversified knowledge and no-judgment can broaden the perception of what ICC entail in organizations, in terms of building upon and encouraging diverse ideas and knowledge during social interactions. It is furthermore argued that the principles of no judgment and diversified knowledge influence the ICC field at large by encouraging cross-disciplinary dialogue and diversified ideas of what may be perceived as intercultural competence.

Eastern views on creativity do in general perceive creativity as a state of personal fulfillment and self-growth, which is different than Western perception, which tends to focus on problem-solving product development and originality, thus Eastern views on creativity enable additional means to influence ICC in organizations. The broadened Eastern views on creativity arguably influence ICC in a number of ways by addressing the notion of self-awareness, mindfulness, open-mindedness, which is perceived as aspects that contribute to ICC.

I argue that the implementation of meditation exercises as a creative tool influence the employees and other staff members' self-awareness and open-mindedness, in terms of enabling them to control and modify their expressive behavior and attitudes in different situations. Additionally, in regard to open-mindedness to become more accepting and open towards diverse cultural beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, thus consequently influence ICC in organizations. I furthermore argue that the implementation of mindfulness exercises in the workplace as a creative tool facilitates ICC, by enabling the participants to become mindful in intercultural interactions. I adhere to previous arguments made in the literature that the ability to be mindful is a central element towards developing ICC.

Even though the main focus of the dissertation has been on creativity and intercultural competence, it is deemed important to reflect on the organizational culture aspect, since it conveys the contextual factors in organizations. Additionally, since it is argued that contextual factors are deemed to be missing in both the field of creativity and ICC. It was arguably necessary to adhere to the view that it is possible to change the organizational culture because the research question implies an aspect of change in terms of how creativity influences ICC.

It is argued that the chosen approach to organizational culture unifies the organizational environment with its members because it is emphasized that the culture both shape and simultaneously are being shaped by its members, thus both entailing facilitating and enabling properties. The organizational culture perspective furthermore arguably enables the unification of the creative practices and intercultural competence, since ICC is perceived as one aspect of organizational behavior and creativity as a strategic management tool that can be used in the organizational setting. It is argued that the different creative tools should be implemented as a reframing of the everyday life in the organization, where managers or another staff member introduce the different creative practices to other members through social interactions on a local level. These members then introduce the practices to other members and thus the intercultural competence in the organization gradually gets influenced and developed. The developed theoretical model showcase the relationship between the different integrated perspectives and how they are related to the pragmatist perspective, moreover outlining the different intercultural competence dimensions in the developed reconceptualization of ICC.

Finally the findings and developed theoretical model ought to be assessed in terms of their future consequences for intercultural competence and furthermore in terms of usefulness and appropriateness for the development of intercultural competence in the future, in line with the pragmatism position.

Concluding remarks and discussion about future prospects

Insight in people's different beliefs, values and attitudes will arguably become an important issue for organizations in the future as employees are deemed to seek new job opportunities by collaborating with people from different corners of the world. Even though new means of communication and information sharing have made it easier to network and collaborate with dispersed people from different cultures, will it arguably still be important for organizations to gain intercultural understanding. Both in terms of attaining a more productive work environment and gain competitive advantages, but also in order to create a culturally inclusive environment, where employees can collaborate and build on each other's knowledge.

In terms of my future prospect, I plan to send the dissertation to a number of journals, which write about the topics that have been brought up and discussed in this dissertation to get it published. I furthermore have plans to turn the findings and the developed theoretical model into a practical app for managers who want to focus and strive to develop intercultural competence in organizations.

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