**“Organizational Justice in Multinational Teams: The Relationships between Cultural Diversity, Conflict, Fairness Expectations, Team Effectiveness, and Diversity Management”**

**Abstract:** The proposed study will bridge five important areas in organizational behavior and human resource management: Teams, diversity, justice, conflict, and team performance. This combination will help to answer one of the main questions in the diversity research: “Under which circumstances are diverse teams able to perform efficiently and successfully, and what are the mechanisms?” (Roberge and van Dick, 2010, Chatman and Flynn, 2001).This paper considers the cultural diversity effects in multinational work environments on conflict, normative justice expectations, and team performance. To improve the understanding and to widen our knowledge about multinational teams, I investigate the effects of cultural dimensions (power distance, individualism, collectivism, being, doing, thinking, context, time) on fairness expectations (distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, informational justice) and on conflict types (relationship conflict, process conflict, task conflict). Finally, I explain the relationship between cultural diversity and team performance (task performance, OCB, innovation, engagement) through the mediating roles of the justice dimensions and conflict types. Diversity management tools (team identification, trust building, goal setting, team structure, training of cultural adaptability and tolerance) are included in the study to improve the processes and outcomes in multinational teams. The management tools are considered as moderators for the relationships between cultural diversity, conflict, normative justice expectations, and team performance. Recommendations for the diversity management will be given.

**Key words:** Diversity, cultural diversity, organizational justice, conflict, team performance, diversity management

**1. Purpose**

The proposed research is concerned with advancing understanding of and improving teamwork in multinational work environments.

The globalization of the economy, exemplified by the high frequency of international mergers and acquisitions, and global organizations (Cartwright and Schoenberg, 2006, Shore et al., 2009), requires managers and organizations to deal with the cultural and nationality diversity of their employees. In line with an increased diversity of the workforce (King et al., 2009, Ragins and Gonzalez, 2003, Moghaddam, 1997) the utilization of multinational teams increases (Shore et al., 2009, Paletz et al., 2004, Earley, 2002, Earley and Gibson, 2002: P. 16). Many organizations rely on multinational teams because more complex or innovative tasks often require teams that can cover a range of different expertise and backgrounds (DiStefano and Maznevski, 2000). Multinational national teams deal with complex tasks like exploration of new markets, determination of international strategy, and creation of new products (Earley and Gibson, 2002: P. 232).

However, just bringing experts with the relevant knowledge together „provides no guarantee that they will be able to work effectively and innovate across contexts“ (Gibson and Gibbs, 2006). Despite their increasing importance little is known about the processes inside multinational teams and what determines work engagement, performance, and effectiveness in these teams.

The predictions and results of cultural and nationality diversity research are as diverse as the investigated employees, managers, teams, and organizations (Shore et al., 2009, Shore et al., 2011, Colquitt and Jackson, 2006, Jackson et al., 2003, Chatman and Flynn, 2001, Dose and Klimoski, 1999, Jehn et al., 1999). Diversity research has showed that it is useful to investigate diversity in work teams (Shore et al., 2011, Parks-Stamm et al., 2008). Teams are considered as a more appropriate subject of analysis to provide the social context than departments, divisions, and organizations (Liao and Rupp, 2005). Past research indicated both advantages and disadvantages of multinational teams (Shore et al., 2009, Shore et al., 2011, King et al., 2009, van Knippenberg and Schippers, 2007). Culturally diverse teams were characterized by high creativity, innovation activity, broader resources, multiple perspectives, and more decision alternatives than homogeneous teams (see as summary (Roberge and van Dick, 2010). A higher level of knowledge can be created in diverse teams through the different information basis, which could result in new insights (Cox et al., 1991, Cox, 1993, Jehn et al., 1999). But nevertheless diverse teams have to copy with many problems. Compared to cultural homogeneous teams, the employee turnover is higher and the job-satisfaction is lower (Basadur and Head, 2001, Earley and Gibson, 2002: P. 21, Shore et al., 2009). Homogenous teams are characterized by good interpersonal relationships, effective communication-behavior, cohesiveness, job-satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (van Knippenberg and Schippers, 2007, Roberge and van Dick, 2010). The mixed results and the inconsistency of results show that further research is required, which specifies the concrete context, mechanisms, and circumstances, under which cultural and nationality diversity is beneficial for teams.

To improve the understanding and to widen our knowledge about multinational teams, I have developed the following research model (see figure 1).

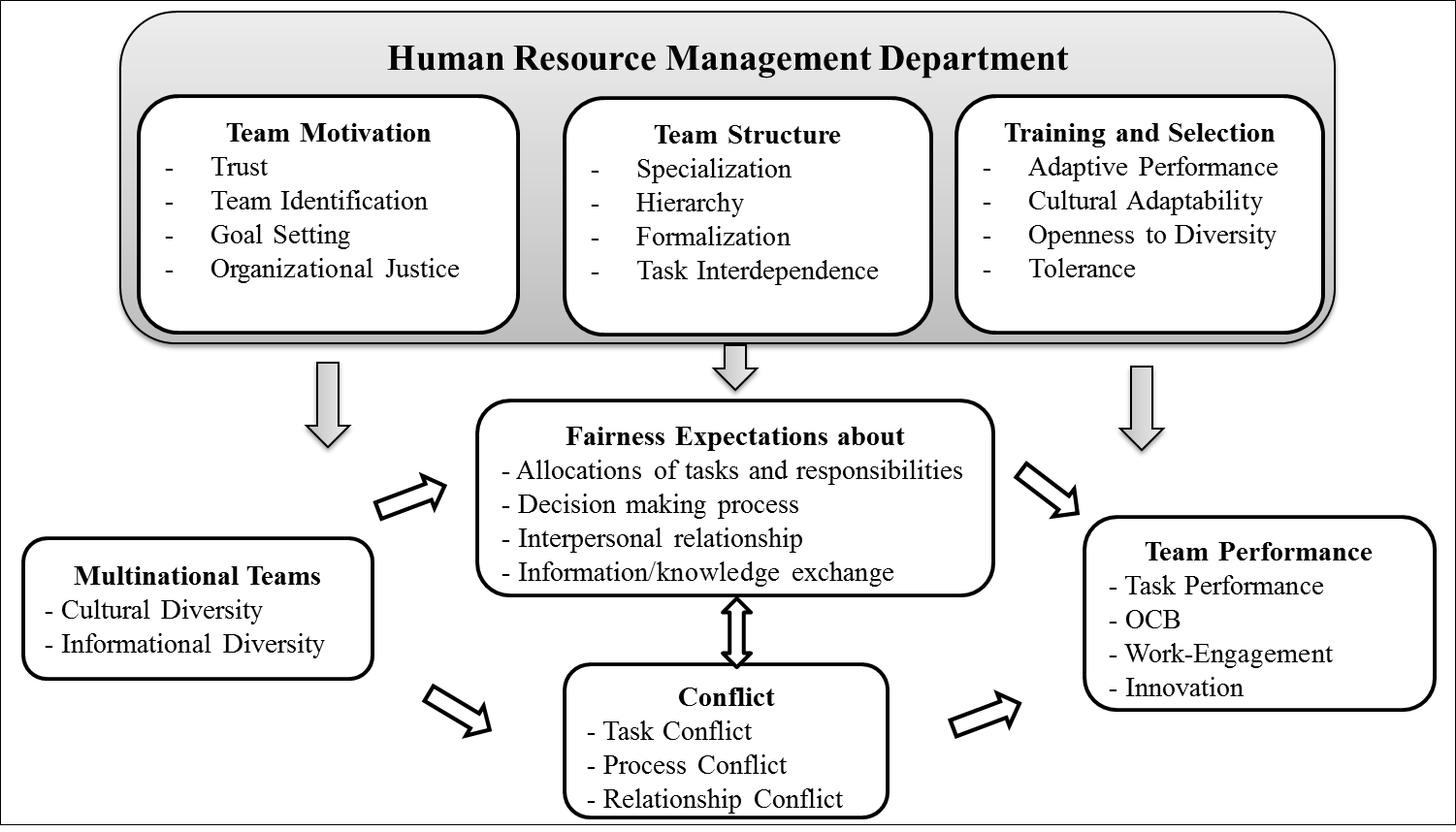


Figure 1: Proposed Research Model.

The main purpose of the model is the analysis of diversity effects, in particular cultural, nationality, and informational diversity effects, on team members’ expectations, team conflict, and team performance. Further goals of the research model are the testing and identification of the specific levers and diversity management tools that increase task performance (effectiveness), OCB, work engagement, and innovation in multinational teams. OCB is voluntary behavior, which is not required from the formal job description and reward-system, but is crucial for team and organizational success (Organ, 1988, Organ, 1990). Examples for OCB are helping team members who have a heavy work-load; respecting organizational rules and procedures like punctuality and no extra breaks; staying overtime without payment; or expressing ideas to improve organizational procedures (Podsakoff et al., 1990, Lee and Allen, 2002). Employees who are engaged with their work show high proactivity, initiative and responsibility (Kahn, 1990). This leads consequently to high innovativeness in teams (Hakanen et al., 2008). In addition, past research has shown that work engagement is related to better performance and helping behavior (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007, Xanthopoulou et al., 2008, Salanova et al., 2005).

Multinational teams are characterized by a variety of cultural values, perspectives, skills, and knowledge, which often lead to high informational diversity in multinational teams (Roberge and van Dick, 2010, Maznevski, 1994, Cox, 1993). Unfortunately multinational teams often fail to realize their high potential. Problems about allocations, processes, and treatment in multinational teams are often influenced by cultural diversity (Leung, 2005). Employees from different cultural and national backgrounds are likely to have different expectations about working styles (Westwood et al., 1992, Earley, 1994, Ohbuchi and Takahashi, 1994, Hofstede, 2001, Hofstede et al., 2010), appropriate norms, and the implementation or operationalization of norms (Leung and Tong, 2004, Leung, 2005). It is therefore not surprising that demographically heterogeneous groups have been found to initially share less cooperative norms (Chatman and Flynn, 2001). I assume that different expectations lead to controversy about allocations of tasks and responsibilities (equity versus equality), decision-making procedures (strong managers versus participation of employees), interpersonal relationships (formal relation and communication versus friendship and informal communication), information provision (retaining information versus open discussion and collaboration), individualistic versus collectivistic working methods (independent work versus interdependent work), the work-plan (focus on one task versus multiple tasks), or basis of decisions (objective data versus personal experience).

I will use the organizational justice framework to clarify the impact of cultural diversity on team members’ expectations about allocations of tasks and responsibilities, (decision-making) procedures, interpersonal treatment, and information provision. Organizational justice is a theoretical concept, defined as perceptions of and reactions to fairness in an organization (Greenberg, 1987). The subjects of analysis are the fairness perceptions of allocations (distributive justice), procedures (procedural justice), interpersonal treatment (interpersonal justice), and information provision (informational justice) (Colquitt et al., 2005). If the named processes are perceived as fair, the members in multinational teams are satisfied and could neglect their cultural differences. Researchers recognized recently the importance of perceived fairness amongst team members and began to analyze the effects of peer justice on team performance (Cropanzano et al., 2011). Recent studies have also shown that the perceived fairness of treatment, decision making and distributions amongst team members predicted team performance and unit-level citizenships behaviour through the positive effects on communication, coordination, and mutual support for members (Cropanzano et al., 2011, Li et al., 2007). The existing evidence suggests that fairness perceptions are a powerful predictor of work outcomes in teams. Yet we know little about how these fairness perceptions are established in multinational teams, and what are the mechanisms through which fairness concerns can influence performance. Such knowledge will be crucial for organisations and managers who want to improve teamwork.

Justice is likely to be an even more important factor in diverse teams, where people come from different cultures and have different expectations and behavioral codes. Past research suggests that people from different cultural backgrounds are likely to use different justice norms as standards for their justice judgments, resulting both in different expectations and in different justice perceptions (Steiner, 2001, Leung and Tong, 2004, Leung, 2005). In short, both anticipations of justice or injustice (Bell, 2004, Bell et al., 2006, Shapiro, 2001) and normative justice expectations are likely to differ amongst members in diverse teams, which in turn could lead to uncertainty, confusion, and conflict in multinational teams. Anticipations concern the expected fairness of future outcomes and procedures, e.g. “How fair will be the procedures?”, while normative expectations regard moral positions and norm choice, e.g. “How should fair procedures be designed?”. Normative justice expectations have rarely been included in empirical research (Singer, 2000) but are important to study, because they can function as a referent standard to evaluate the fairness of events (Singer, 2000, Chi Kin et al., 2003), and because unfulfilled normative justice expectations can lead to dissatisfaction (Chi Kin et al., 2003). Normally, individuals try to act according to their normative expectations (Leung and Tong, 2003).

Teams with Western and Asian employees could be characterized by different normative justice expectations based on cultural differences. Since Asian cultures accept strong hierarchical relationships (Power Distance) (Hofstede, 2001, Hofstede et al., 2010), the reaction towards managerial injustice will not be so intensive or will even not occur (James, 1993, Tyler, 2000, Tyler et al., 2000, Leung, 2005). Contrary to Western cultures with a low acceptance and tolerance of hierarchical relationships, in which employees would react more furiously and energetically towards managerial injustice.

Not only teams with Western and Asian employees could have different justice expectations, but also teams with European team members. For instance, although French managers have not more power than their German counterparts (Barsoux and Lawrence, 1990, d’Iribarne, 1997), French companies are often characterized by a strong hierarchy, which creates a strong symbolic distance between managers and their employees (d’Iribarne, 1997). The result is that employees have often no influence in decisions of their managers, but in return the employees have a high autonomy in their workplace. Due to strong German labor unions German employees are used to participate in the decision-making process, but in exchange for a strong managerial control of their work. These differences in the business culture could lead to different expectations between French and German team members about the fairness of processes and interpersonal treatment, which could result in discussions and conflict.

Another cultural dimension in which Western and Asian employees could differ is the dimension of individualism/collectivism. Individualistic employees value their personal carriers as more important than the success of the organization (Hofstede et al., 2010). They prefer individualistic working methods, formal communication and relationships (Bochner and Hesketh, 1994, McFarlin and Sweeney, 2001). Past research rated Western employees as individualistic (Schwartz, 1994, O’Grady and Lane, 1996, Hofstede, 2001, Hofstede et al., 2010, Kirkman et al., 2009). In contrast to Western cultures, Asian cultures are considered as collectivistic cultures (Earley and Gibson, 2002: P. 28, Leung, 2005, Hofstede et al., 2010) . Thus Asian Employees could prefer collectivistic working methods and value the relationship of their in-group. Different expectations about procedural and interpersonal justice could be the consequence. In addition differences in distributive justice expectations could arise. It can be assumed that employees from collectivistic cultures prefer equality as allocation norm (Leung and Stephan, 2001, Leung, 2005) and employees from individualistic cultures the equity norm (Leung, 2005).

Most of the cross cultural research on organizational justice was conducted with the cultural dimensions power distance and individualism/collectivism (Leung and Tong, 2004, Leung, 2005, Fortin, 2008). The cultural dimensions doing, being and thinking (Maznevski et al., 2002) were not considered and could also play a decisive role for fairness expectations in multinational teams. Strong cultural differences in these categories could be observed between members of multinational teams. The dimensions doing and being characterize the importance of work: You live to work (doing), or you work to live (being). The work is considered for many Asian employees as their main purpose of life. This attitude could be in strong contrast to the attitude of Southern European employees, who could have a higher preference for the quality of life (Rosinski, 2010). The dimension thinking is strongly related to the work style and describes the preference for spontaneity or for scheduling and planning. French and German employees could differ strongly in these categories (Rosinski, 2010). Many French employees value flexibility, spontaneity, and creativity and are used to work on several tasks at the same time, whereas many German employees schedule their work and prefer to finish one task before they start a new task (Hofstede and Bond, 1988, Hofstede, 1991, Rosinski, 2010). German employees could consider French employees as unorganized and French employees could consider German employees as inflexible. Due to cultural differences, work styles could be considered by some team members as fair and by other team members as unfair.

In conclusion members of multinational teams could have different expectations about the fairness of work allocations, processes, treatment, and information exchange. Multinational teams could be therefore characterized by a high ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflict, which are often the reason why multinational teams fail to realize their high potential (Earley and Gibson, 2002: P. 101). Problems in multinational teams are in particular related to cultural differences. Thus further research is required to specify the cultural differences in diverse teams, and their effects on justice standards and the preferences for work processes and work styles.

Different normative justice expectations among members of diverse teams are likely to lead to disappointed expectations, misunderstandings, and discussions regarding how fair allocations, procedures, and treatment should look like, resulting in conflicts. Conflicts based on different norms, values, and experiences are very difficult to solve (Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1985, Bettenhausen and Murnighan, 1991). Although justice and conflict are closely related to each other (e.g. injustices often lead to conflicts (Deutsch, 2011, Montada, 2007)), a lack of empirical research about the relationship justice and conflict exists (Spell et al., 2011, Deutsch, 2011). Although justice and conflict have been linked theoretically (e.g. Deutsch, 2011), empirical research about this relationship remains scarce in organizations. Two recent studies analyzed the effects of justice perceptions on conflict types (Van Erp et al., 2011, Spell et al., 2011). But none of these studies analyzed all the justice dimensions in relation to the conflict types and none of them included normative justice expectations. Including normative expectations as well as perceptions will help to better understand the emergence of conflict, rather than just describing the conflict situation. More specifically, I expect that differences in normative expectations regarding interpersonal treatment will be related to relationship conflict, differences in normative expectations regarding procedures to process conflict, differences in normative expectations regarding allocations to process and task conflict, and differences in normative expectations regarding information provision to relationship and task conflict.

Conflict as a team process is a key factor for the functioning in diverse teams and for team performance (Roberge and Van Dick, 2010, Earley and Gibson, 2002: P. 176, Jehn et al., 1999). Based on their informational diversity multinational team members have often task conflicts (Jehn et al., 1999). This type of conflict can be very beneficial, because team members exchange their information and knowledge and discuss the task from different perspectives (Jehn, 1995, Jehn, 1997, McLeod et al., 1996, Amason, 1996, Earley and Gibson, 2002: P. 156, Jehn and Bendersky, 2003, Ilgen et al., 2005). An improvement of products and procedures could be the positive outcome. The different ideas and views lead to higher creativity, innovation activity, problem-solving and decision-making quality, which in turn influence positively the performance (Ayub and Jehn, 2011, Simons and Peterson, 1999).

The different expectations about fairness and work styles are one reason why multinational teams are prone to have dysfunctional types of conflict like personal and process conflict (Jehn, 1997, Jehn et al., 1999, Grossman, 1997, Devine, 1999, De Dreu and Weingart, 2003, King et al., 2009). Many diverse teams fail due to unresolved conflicts or too many conflicts (Wagner et al., 1984, Watson et al., 1993, Jehn et al., 1999, Earley and Gibson, 2002: P. 21). In particular relationship conflict and process conflict affect the team performance in a negative way (Jehn, 1997, Jehn et al., 1999, (Pelled et al., 1999) Simons and Peterson, 2000,(Jehn and Mannix, 2001) De Dreu and Weingart, 2003, Ayub and Jehn, 2011).

Relationship conflict is defined as disagreement or contention about interpersonal issues and incompatibilities between team members (Jehn and Rispens, 2008). Multinational teams experience more relationship conflict because of categorization processes and stereotype thinking. According to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) and self-categorization theory (Turner, 1985, Turner et al., 1987) team members categorizes their team-mates in absence of additional information with the help of diversity attributes in so called “in-groups” and “out-groups”. In in-groups one team member classifies himself and employees, who have similar diversity and demographic attributes. Different employees are categorized as out-groups. The cultural and national backgrounds are very salient in multinational teams, because the team members differ strongly in these categories (Turner, 1985, Earley and Gibson, 2002: P.83). Thus the cultural and nationality diversity are often the basis for these categorization processes in multinational teams (Stahl et al., 2010). Individuals strive for a desirable social identification (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Identification is easier with demographic similar people (Tsui et al., 1992). A desirable social identification is reached through favoring similar people of the in-group. Simultaneously people of out-groups are disadvantaged. Through the favored treatment of similar people, they try to increase the status of their in-group, so that they experience a higher social status. This process can have far reaching consequences for a working team. For instance out-group members get lower performance evaluations or show a lack of mentors (Stone-Romero and Stone, 2005). Sub-groups could be another negative consequence (Lau and Murnighan, 1998). The categorization process could create stereotype thinking and prejudices among diverse employees (Stone-Romero and Stone, 2005), which could lead to intensive relationship conflicts. Decisions, relationships, and treatment inside the group are based on national and cultural backgrounds instead of useful work evaluation criteria like job attitude or job performance. It is likely that team members feel unfairly treated, are dissatisfied and do not help each other with their tasks. Relationship conflict disrupts the team atmosphere and the interpersonal relationships, and deteriorates cooperation and communication among team members. The deterioration of the coordination process will have a negative impact on innovation activities, engagement, and team performance. In addition a depersonalization process could occur. Furthermore the categorization in social groups could bring people to change themselves through the adaptation of the groups’ attitudes, behaviors and feelings. Social-psychological research confirms the existence of the categorization process in social systems (Tajfel, 1981, Turner, 1982, Higgins and Bargh, 1987, Schneider and DeMeyer, 1991), which occurs automatically (Stone-Romero and Stone, 2005).

Process conflict is observed when team members have different attitudes about the best way to conduct a task (Jehn, 1997; Ayub and Jehn, 2011). Process conflict may prevent the team from agreeing on team procedures, which hinders the speediness and flexibility of the team. This type of process conflict has typically a negative impact on performance (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003).

Past research has showed that relationship and process conflict affect team performance and OCB in a negative way (Ayub and Jehn, 2011; Simons and Peterson, 2000). Relationship conflict is associated with demographic diversity (Pelled, 1996, Pelled et al., 1999, O'Reilly III et al., 1998, Jehn et al., 1999), and process conflict with value diversity (Jehn et al., 1999). Both types of diversity are given in nationally and/or culturally diverse teams, thus making these teams particularly prone to problematic types of conflict. Therefore it is important to understand the sources and mechanisms of conflict in diverse teams and to find ways to prevent, address, and manage dysfunctional conflict. I suggest the organizational justice framework as a lens through which to understand how diversity in teams can lead to conflicts, and how these conflicts can be avoided or managed.

Summing up, multinational teams have a high potential resulting from their cultural and informational diversity, which can create enormous benefits regarding task performance and innovation. However the potential is often not exploited due to different fairness expectations about teamwork and due to dysfunctional personal and process conflict. The diverse views and backgrounds members bring with them to the group must be successfully managed. That means that the human resource department has to use the right tools and initiatives to reduce the negative diversity effects and to create an environment, which supports the potential and inclusion of the team members. Hence I will analyze the effects of management tools like team-motivation, team-structure, and team-training on employees in multinational teams. Through their influence and right application I expect positive effects for work engagement, task performance, OCB, and innovation in multinational teams. The management tools are considered as moderators of the relationships diversity and conflict; different fairness expectations and conflict; different fairness expectations and team performance; and conflict and team performance.

Team-motivation in the model is based on trust, team-identification, goal setting, and organizational justice. Trust in the ability, strength, character, and integrity of team-mates and team leader facilitates cooperation and helping behavior (Lau and Cobb, 2010). Team-trust increases the probability that team members communicate openly and fulfill their tasks and responsibilities. Thus trust could be the key to effective cross-cultural integration (Govindarajan and Gupta, 2001). Team-identification creates strong belonging and attachment to the team (Van Der Vegt and Bunderson, 2005). Team members with a high identification are more willing to put back their own interests and to compromise. Through common and challenging goals team members could realize that an effective teamwork is necessary to reach these goals (Locke and Latham, 2002), Earley and Gibson, 2002: P.62). They could stop with disrupting conflicts and behavior, and try to create a feeling of togetherness. If the allocations, processes, treatment, and information provision are perceived as fair, the members in multinational teams are satisfied and could neglect their cultural differences. In conclusion the increase of trust, identification, fairness, and the establishment of common and challenging goals have the possibility to guarantee the functioning in multinational teams through a high engagement of the members, which increases innovation, OCB, and task performance.

Team-Structure is defined in the model as the degree of formalization, specialization, and hierarchy (Bunderson and Boumgarden, 2010). Formalization refers to the clarity of procedures for coordinating and prioritizing work. Specialization considers the task division horizontally and hierarchy the task division vertically (clear team-leaders). I expect that a clear team-structure is beneficial for multinational teams, because it avoids ambiguity and uncertainties of multinational team processes. Less relationship and process conflict could occur.

Training initiatives that focus on adaptive performance and tolerance could be the right method for multinational teams. Adaptive performance is a theoretical concept that highlights the importance of adaptability and flexibility in the changing and dynamic business environment (Pulakos et al., 2000, Pulakos et al., 2002, Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel, 2012). In particular the training of cultural and interpersonal adaptability seems to be important for multinational teams. Combined with diversity initiatives to support tolerance, openness, and cultural awareness, multinational teams could be trained to overcome their conflicts and problems, and to use their potential effectively.

Concluding multinational teams are characterized by an enormous potential resulting from their cultural, informational, and knowledge diversity, which can create enormous benefits regarding task performance and innovation. However the potential is often not exploited due to different expectations about teamwork and fairness and due to dysfunctional personal and process conflict, which are based to a high extent on cultural differences. It is not sufficient to assemble multinational teams. The diversity of multinational teams has to be managed. The human resource management has to support multinational teams through the described management tools, so that the potential can be transformed into task performance, innovation, OCB, and engagement. Our analysis of diverse teams promises new insights into the linkages between different aspects of team members’ work experience and different types of outcomes relevant for the organization. Based on our findings, we will also provide specific recommendations for team and diversity management.

**2. Design/methodology/approach;**

A quantitative design will be utilized to analyze the relationships between diversity, justice expectations and perceptions, conflict, and performance. I am planning to test the core research model through online-administered surveys, employing validated measurement scales to measure cultural diversity, informational diversity, total team diversity (diversity score), normative justice expectations, justice perceptions, conflict, trust, team identification, adaptive performance, task performance, OCB, and work engagement. Self-reporting surveys will be used. To measure task performance and OCB the performance evaluation of the supervisors will be included to reduce the problem of common method variance. The measurements will be conducted on individual level, and then the results will be aggregated to the team level. In the end a multi-level analysis could be conducted to analyze how much of the variance is explained by individual variables and how much by team variables. Ideally, the research should employ a longitudinal design to enable a temporal separation of normative justice expectations (time 1) and justice perceptions (time 2) and to measure team the development of variables like trust and identification (Time 1,2,3).

Additionally qualitative interviews could be included in order to validate the measurement instruments (e.g. justice norms in teams), to contextualize the study (through interviews with managers/participants from every sector in company), or to validate the findings (through interviews with participants and managers).

**3. Findings if paper is empirical**

The study will investigate cultural diversity as an antecedent of different justice expectations among team members. The analysis of cultural differences in combination with organizational justice can show if multinational team members are able to work efficiently together despite different cultures and fairness expectations. If the teamwork functions, it will be interesting to know the conditions and circumstances under which an effective performance is possible. A satisfaction of the different fairness expectations could be for example such a condition.

The consideration of normative justice expectations in connection with conflict can help to answer the question why conflicts arise from injustices. It can be shown which expectations about justice norms trigger which conflict type. These findings can be used to reduce dysfunctional relationship and process conflicts and to increase beneficial task conflict.

In addition it will be interesting to find out if cultural differences lead directly to dysfunctional conflict.

Observing negative effects of conflicts, cultural differences, and different justice expectations on team performance, it is necessary to find out which management tools could reduce the negative effects to enable team functioning and team performance. Trust, team identification, team structure, goal setting, task interdependence, and training of cultural adaptability and tolerance seem to be promising variables to influence positively multinational teams. Therefore it is interesting to measure their influence.

Many managers and organizations consider diversity as something negative, which has to be “managed” (Shore et al. 2009). Organizations and managers often fail to develop a work environment where diverse employees feel integrated and valued (Bilimoria et al., 2008), Roberge and Van Dick, 2010, Shore et al., 2011). The analysis of diverse teams with the organizational justice framework promises to provide recommendations for an effective diversity management. The diversity management can be improved through the understanding of differences and commonalities in cultural and justice norms, and fairness experiences. Diversity initiatives and programs could benefit from learning about the agreements and disagreements on norms that typically seem to lead to different types of conflict. Diversity initiatives and programs could try to focus on cultural and justice norms in order to create fair perceptions inside the team. Less relationship and process conflicts and more task conflicts could be the positive outcome.

**4. Research limitations/implications**

One of the research limitations could be the generalization of the results. Multinational teams are often characterized by a unique composition of diversity attributes and values. The nations and cultures of the team members differ in every multinational team. In some multinational teams the nationality and culture play a decisive role, in other multinational teams nationality and culture are not considered (Earley and Gibson: P. 256), the team members focus on other diversity characteristics like gender, age, or functional background. Therefore it is often not possible to generalize the findings. But nevertheless the proposed research model has the potential to find general conditions, circumstances, processes, and mechanisms, which are valid for every multinational team and could therefore improve the functioning of different multinational teams.

Due to the research design of using self-reporting surveys to measure the variables of the research model, the problem of common method variance could arise.

Future research could test the findings with multinational teams in different countries to find out if certain processes and relationships are generalizable in multinational teams.

A further research possibility could be the inclusion of the organizational context and the national culture of the considered organization. It will be interesting to observe if multinational teams are acting independently from their environment, or if their teamwork is influenced by the organizational context, organizational culture, or national culture of the organization.

Another important avenue that researchers might pursue could be the comparison of the results with results from homogenous teams. The comparison could show if only multinational teams are prone to have different cultural and fairness expectations, which lead to conflict, or if domestic teams could have the same problems. Perhaps the findings apply in the same way for domestic teams, so that their functioning could profit from an application of the presented results. An indication for the validation of the findings for domestic teams could be that cross-cultural research assumes that cultural differences also exists among employees with the same nationality (Rohner, 1984, Martin, 1992, Schwartz, 1994, Earley & Gibson, 2002: P. 65).

**5. Originality/value of the paper**

The proposed study will be the first study to bridge five important areas in organizational behavior and human resource management: Teams, diversity, fairness, conflict, and performance. This combination seems to be a promising field and could help to answer one of the main questions in the diversity research: “Under which circumstances are diverse teams able to perform efficiently and successfully, and what are the mechanisms?” (Roberge and Van Dick, 2010; Chatman and Flynn, 2001).

Past research already analyzed cultural diversity as an antecedent of justice dimensions and conflict types (Ravlin et al., 2000, Leung, 2005). But most of the research analyzed this relationship in homogenous teams in cross national studies, little is known about these relationships and their effects in multinational teams.

The investigation of organizational justice in teams started recently (Cropanzano et al., 2011, Li et al., 2007), and to my knowledge only one study exists which analyzed organizational justice in diverse teams (Colquitt and Jackson, 2006). Colquitt and Jackson analyzed racio-ethnicity and not cultural or nationality diversity. The findings of the study are promising and indicate that diverse teams value different justice norms.

Two recent studies analyzed the effects of justice perceptions on conflict types (Spell et al., 2011; Van Erp et al., 2011). But none of these studies analyzed all the justice dimensions in relation to the conflict types and none of them included normative justice expectations. Including normative justice expectations as well as justice perceptions will help to better understand the emergence of conflict, rather than just describing the conflict situation. This paper is one of the first papers that will test the relationship between justice and conflict empirically in a business environment.

Another value of the paper is the focus on improving the diversity management. Not only the theory will be tested but also recommendations for an effective diversity management will be given. The influence of different diversity initiatives and programs will be analyzed in collaboration with the human-resource-department of the considered organization.

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