A cross-cultural dilemma of standardization or adaptation

- A study of Swedish B2B firms marketing activities in India

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Abstract

This paper deals with Swedish B2B firms marketing activities in the culturally diverse Indian market, and what adaptations are made to meet the cultural diversity of India. The perception of cultural diversity in India is investigated from a Swedish B2B perspective. The findings were retrieved from three face to face interviews with equal number of respondents and firms; Roxtec, Norden Machinery and Gunnebo, three swedish B2B firms all established in India. The literature review is divided in two categories; Marketing and Culture, the former containing theory on relationship marketing and adaptation vs standardization when designing a marketing strategy, and the latter models of national culture as well as models on multicultural countries, with the models applied on India. The dimensions of culture that we found were most relevant in this paper were Power Distance and Perception of Time. The literature review is concluded with a conceptual framework containing our main concepts. The results from this study suggest that it is the managing of relationships with customers that are the most important part of marketing in India. It was also found that while India is characterized as a multicultural country, the way business is conducted and relationships managed are similar all over this vast country, leading us to suggest that a mutual Indian business culture exists.

Keywords
Cultural differences, Marketing in India, Cultural diversity, B2B marketing, Relationship marketing, Adaptation, Standardization, Cross-cultural marketing
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1 Introduction

In this chapter, the background to our research problem will be presented, followed by a problem discussion leading to our research questions and purpose of the study.

1.1 Background

The pace of globalization has according to Johnson, Lenartowicz and Apud (2006) increased significantly since 1989. As a result of this, firms around the world are looking for opportunities to sell their products on new markets, but also to make use of cheap labor in other parts of the world. In addition to this, the high speed of economic globalization will also mean that the already wide study area of International Business will become even more dynamic in the future, according to Brewer and Venaik (2010). Doing business in an international environment requires a need for international marketing, along with decisions on adaptation and standardization, as discussed by Magnusson et al. (2013). Satisfying global customers implies adaptation of both the products as well as the marketing activities to fit different customer needs, and an important issue that needs to be considered when doing international marketing is cultural differences (Hollensen, 2014). Along with globalization, the importance of culture has become a visible issue/challenge/possibility that has to be considered (Banarjee, 2008).

Several attempts to define culture have been made. Three famous studies on cultural differences between nations have used their own definitions. Hofstede (1984:389) has defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from those of another” (Hofstede, 1984: 389). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) explain culture as the common view of understanding and interpretation of the world shared by a group of people. In the GLOBE study, culture is defined as “the shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives that are transmitted across generations” (House et al., 2010:114).

Globalization has led to cultures becoming more dynamic, due to the increasing movement of goods and migration of people across borders (Hamilton and Webster,
2009). The ability to take advantage of cultural differences, rather than ignoring them, is according to Trompenaars (1996) the key for effective management.

While there are cultural differences between countries, there are also cultural differences within countries. According to Johnson and Grier (2011), countries around the world see a rise in multiculturalization, which has economical, political and social effects on these multicultural countries. Some authors have argued for the importance for marketers to understand the multicultural nature that characterize many countries (Singh et al. 2008; Banarjee 2008; Datta 2009). Rao (2006) points out that cultural diversity do not only concern ethnicity, groups of people from different demographic, psychographic or life style groups that have created a multicultural environment. Solberg (2000) claims that cultural diversity has an impact of firm’s marketing activities. Rao (2006) suggests that companies operating in multicultural countries should use adapted marketing, which is supported by Trompenaars and Woolliams (2004) that suggest a multicultural strategy. The multicultural nature of some countries could be seen as either a threat or an opportunity. Regardless of whether firms see opportunities or threats, knowledge about the culture is necessary in order to operate as smoothly as possible (Banerjee, 2008). Also Barry et al. (2008) argues for the importance of understanding the culture of the customer and their way of doing business. For example, future intentions of a customer are something that can be attributed to cultural background. Since a relationship between seller and customer is not easily duplicated or matched by competitors, maintaining good relationships with customers could be just as important as having a good marketing mix (The 4 Ps of Product, Place, Promotion, Price) (Barry et al. 2008).

The impact of culture for firm’s marketing activities has traditionally been most important for business to consumer firms. According to Trompenaars and Woolliams (2004), in consumer marketing, cultural elements can be included in an advertisement to make it more attractive for customers identifying with that cultural element. However, relationship marketing is perhaps more important in business marketing than in consumer marketing (Brennan et. al, 2007). There are according to Barry (2008) contradicting results of whether culture has any impact on business relationships, where some have found connections and some not. Relationship marketing is defined by Cram (1994: 19) as “the consistent application of up-to-date knowledge of individual
customers to product and service design which is communicated interactively, in order
to develop a continuous and long term relationship, which is mutually beneficially”.

According to Brennan, Canning and McDowell (2007) the nature of the customer is
what differs business to business (B2B) from business to consumer (B2C). Brennan et
al. (2007) explain that the marketing in the B2B context is generally specific for each
customer. Another important difference between the two concepts is that a customer in a
B2B context may be equally active as the seller, creating a relationship of mutual
interaction (Brennan et al., 2007). In the B2B context, Barry (2008) explains
relationships as being an important factor of marketing, since it is commonly considered
more important to maintain good relations with the current customers than to attract
new ones (Barry, 2008). The relationship aspect of marketing is overlooked in the
traditional marketing mix consisting of the four Ps of Product, Place, Promotion and
Price (Brennan et al. 2007). The relationship aspect of marketing is according to Rao
(2006) becoming a more important part of the traditional marketing. While being
important in both consumer and business marketing, it is especially so in the B2B
context (Brennan et al., 2007). Maintaining already existing relationships can in fact be
more profitable than acquiring new ones (Barry et al 2008). Since firms thanks to
globalization interact with each other across borders, culture becomes an important
factor that influence relationships (Hollensen, 2014), and Usunier (1996: 455) points out
that cultural differences have a "major impact on how relationships start and develop".

Melevar and Vemmervik (2004) have presented arguments both for a standardized and
an adapted marketing strategy. One major argument for a standardized marketing
strategy is, besides the obvious cost savings that a standardized strategy implies, that
firms want their brands to be perceived in the same way everywhere. Different
marketing strategies could lead to the brand being understood in different ways
depending on where in the world you are. On the other hand, arguments for adapting the
marketing strategy is that neglecting the differences in culture could result in losing a
competitive advantage that adaptation could lead to. In relationships, Ford et al. (2006)
claim that adaptations made by the seller can be crucial in order to develop a healthy
relationship. The costs that comes with adaptation has to be assessed by the seller in
order to find out if it is really worth the money and effort (Ford et al., 2006)
The background on culture, mix of cultures within nations and the importance of relationships in business leads us down to the chosen country for this study, India, which according to Sharma (2013) is highly multicultural. As of 2013, the Swedish share of the Indian import is at a modest 1%. However, the exchange is increasing and Sweden is a fast growing trading partner for India (Business Sweden, 2012). The main products exported from Sweden to India are machinery, with 45% of the total exports to India from Sweden (Embassy of Sweden New Delhi, 2013). Since 2007, there are ongoing negotiations of a free trade agreement between the European Union and India. The Indian middle class of approximately 300 million has a relatively strong purchasing power, and in addition to the middle class, there is a wealthy upper class of around 15 million. The last years, the Indian GNP growth has been around 8 percent, among the highest in the world, according to Business Sweden (2012).

1.2 Problem discussion

It is argued by Johnson, Lenartowicz and Apud (2006) that globalization brings great opportunities for many firms. However, not all firms succeed in serving an international market. One main reason for failure in international business, they argue, is the failure to understand the cultural difficulties that it means to do business in a foreign country (Johnson et al., 2006). When designing a global marketing strategy, firms need to decide to what extent they should use adapted or standardized marketing when serving international markets (Hollensen, 2014). In the discussion of whether to use an adapted or standardized marketing strategy, Melevar and Vemmervik (2004) provide some arguments that support the usage of a standardized strategy. Some of these arguments are the cost advantages, and that firms simply should not focus on the differences between customer and markets, but rather on the similarities when doing business across borders but also within multicultural countries (Melevar and Vemmervik, 2004).

India should, according to Sharma (2013), not be seen as one country, but rather as a continent, in which the states of Bihar and Gujarat are equally different as Germany is different to Greece. According to Datta (2009), firms in multicultural countries need to be aware of the complexity of marketing in culturally diverse countries, like India. A relatively short ride of 160 kilometers between any two Indian states could be enough to find differences ranging from names of political parties to the kind of hair tonic
available in stores. In India, 22 official languages have been recognized by the constitution of India (india.gov.in, 2014). Shankar and De (2011) explain that companies operating in India have to adapt to local cultures of the area when establishing a retail chain, which have led to companies tending to restrict their operations to certain parts of the country. Datta (2009) argues that cultural aspects such as linguistic ethnicity and religion will influence the purchase behavior of the customer regarding interpretation of marketing communication and the quantity bought on a particular occasion. Chookar (2007) also recognizes the difficulties of finding common denominators in the Indian culture due to the cultural diversity that characterizes the country in differences such as language, region and religion. There are however similarities to be observed among the Indian people, which Banarjee (2008) explain as core values that can be seen in the importance of family, traditions and faith in spirituality. When trying to advise on a marketing strategy to be used in India, Jain et al. (2006) draws a parallel to a classic Indian music theme called raga. This particular music includes a structure with a core musical theme to fall back on, but always have some room for improvisation of the tune. Entering India with a global strategy with no room for improvisation, will lead to much inconvenience, why a strategy following its main business core but at the same time being open to improvisation is recommended (Jain et al., 2006).

The cultural diversity within organizations is widely researched, whereas the cultural diversity in the marketplace has attracted significantly less attention (Demangeot et al., 2013). Rao (2006) is of the opinion that studies made on culturally diversified markets commonly tend to focus on business to consumer marketing. After conducting a literature review, we have identified a research gap in the field of B2B firms marketing activities in a culturally diversified market. When doing the literature review, we found a lot of research on cultural differences that focus on management of culturally diverse organizations (eg. Hofstede, GLOBE, Trompenaars). Furthermore, these studies have mainly focused on cultural differences between nationalities rather than on individuals within the same country. From a Swedish business perspective, we have not been able to find studies made on how cultural differences are perceived neither in multicultural countries in general, nor in India in particular. We have also discovered that a lot of previous research made on marketing strategies concerning adaptation and standardization in multicultural markets were made in the context of consumer
marketing rather than business marketing (e.g. Johnson and Grier, 2011; Datta, 2009; Trompenaars and Woolliams 2004). Regarding relationship marketing, we did find studies made on adaptations in relationships (Ford et al., 2006). However, we did not manage to find previous work on how to deal with this aspect in India. In addition to this, our review of existing literature led us to believe that there is a lack of studies made on relationship aspect of business marketing in a culturally diverse market in general, and between Swedish and Indian firms in particular. Thus, a research gap regarding the perception of cultural diversity in India from a Swedish B2B perspective is visible, as well as how Swedish B2B firms marketing strategies are adapted in India. It is our intention to contribute in filling this research gap.
1.3 Research questions

*In order to start contributing to filling the identified research gap, two research questions have been formulated:*

**WHAT CULTURALLY DIVERSE CHARACTERISTICS DO SWEDISH B2B FIRMS PERCEIVE IN THE INDIAN MARKET?**

**HOW DO SWEDISH B2B FIRMS ADAPT THEIR MARKETING STRATEGY TO MEET THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF THE INDIAN MARKET?**

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to find out how Swedish B2B firms perceive the cultural differences within India affecting business, and how the marketing strategy in India needs to be adapted in order to meet with this. The aim is to provide Swedish managers of B2B firms, that not yet are doing business within India, with a deeper understanding of the managerial implication of marketing in India, and what might await them in their future attempts in building long term relationships with Indian business customers. This study may also be applicable to other B2B firms that are aiming to adapt their marketing strategy to a culturally diversified market.

1.5 Disposition

Following the introduction chapter, the literature review will be presented in the second chapter starting with a general description of marketing, moving on to relationship marketing in the B2B context. A discussion of standardized as well as adapted marketing with respect to culture will lead to a deeper review of cultural studies, covering studies made both on differences between nations and also studies that considers the diversity within nations and India. Chapter three will give the reader an understanding of the method used, and an insight in our decisions made
during the process, and in the fourth chapter we will present our empirical findings. An analysis in the fifth chapter will discuss the empirical finding with the literature review which will lead to a conclusion in chapter six.
2. Literature review

In this chapter, theories in the field of B2B marketing and culture will be presented, along with a discussion on adaptation and standardization of marketing strategies. Two kinds of models of culture will be presented; on national culture and various cultures within nations. These models will also be applied to India. The chapter ends with a conceptual framework where the concepts most relevant for our study have been gathered.

2.1 Elements of marketing

2.1.1 The pillars of marketing

Constantinides (2006) explains how the Marketing Mix originates from twelve elements related to marketing, proposed by Neil Borden in 1964. Based on these, the 4-Ps were formulated by Jerome McCarthey in 1964 which have had a big impact on marketing management (Constantinides, 2006). The 4-Ps, which are simultaneously referred to as the marketing mix, are based on the understanding of customers and consists of four elements; product, price, promotion and place. Each element should be evaluated and managed in order to satisfy customer needs, and forms an important part of the marketing implementation (Jobber, 2007). In the B2B context, advantages related to the 4Ps are mostly temporal. Instead of relying on the marketing mix to stand out in the competition, many firms try to use dimensions related to relations, and by doing so distinguishing themselves in something that is difficult for competitors to match, since relationships is not something that can be measured (Barry et al., 2008).

Regarding marketing in the business to business-context, Hollensen (2014) argues that the interaction between the buyer and the seller play a bigger role, where negotiation is the part that mainly influences the purchasing decisions of customers (Hollensen, 2014). The most important difference between B2B and B2C marketing is not the actual product, but the nature of the customer (Brennan et al., 2007). Brennan et al. (2007) explain that selling in a business market rather than in a consumer market is different in the sense that business markets are often characterized by a few powerful buyers who often have trained professionals handle the purchase negotiation. Personal selling is a critical aspect of B2B marketing,
because of the importance of each customer. The promotional strategies are often specific for each customer. Relations are usually of great importance in B2B marketing (Brennan et al., 2007). Barry et al. (2008) argues that maintaining good relationships with customers is more important than acquiring new ones. Thus, relationship marketing, especially for B2B firms, is a very important element in the marketing strategy (Ibid).

2.1.2 Relationship marketing
Ford et al. (2006) explains that commonly, relationship marketing is described as a one way communication where only the seller is involved in the interaction and in managing the relationship, opposing to the general view of a relationship being two-sided. However, they continue by acknowledging that this is not true in practice, and that in fact a business buyer is engaged in the relationship as well (Ford et al., 2006). This is supported by Brennan et al. (2007) who, in the context of B2B, argue that both seller and buyer are equally active in the relationship. The last 40 years have seen one of the most evident changes in the marketing discipline, the new focus being on the relationship between the marketer and the customer in order to understand the value creation exchange, which has been underemphasized in the marketing mix approach (Brennan et al., 2007). When a deal has been agreed upon, the seller and buyer will face some kind of uncertainty. According to Brennan et al., (2007), related to the uncertainty that can occur in B2B are how well the buyer and seller know and communicate with each other. Examples of factors that have an effect on the uncertainty are language and culture. The most advantageous situation for the seller is if it can show a good understanding of the need of the buyer (Brennan et al., 2007).

Möller and Halinen (2000: 31) claim that the relationship between the buyer and seller is "the core issue in relationship marketing and in the whole marketing discipline". In B2B marketing, there are two scopes of communication that are used by firms (Brennan et al., 2007). One is market communication, in which the marketer tries to deliver a message to the whole market, and the other is relationship marketing, which involves direct contact with representatives from a specific company. While market communication is broad in the sense that it tries to reach many buyers, for example through trade fairs, advertising and sales promotion, relationship marketing can be more adjusted to the individual, and includes direct marketing and personal selling (Brennan
et al., 2007). Direct marketing is explained by Möller and Halinen (2000) as aiming for efficiency in communication. Two examples of direct marketing are direct mail and telemarketing. Personal selling, the other form of relationship marketing, occurs according to Brennan et al. (2007) when representatives from the selling company are communicating directly with representatives from the customer company. In this direct form of communication between seller and buyer, the buyer can specify their requirements and the seller can more easily understand them, and representatives from both seller and buyer will meet and interact with each other which could lead to a better relationship (Brennan et al., 2007).

Brennan et al. (2007) mention three ways in which the customers could be categorized. The first one is based on geography, in which representatives have the responsibility of a particular geographic area. This is common if the product is simple and the demands from customers are fairly similar to each other. The second is based on the different demands from customers, which is common if the seller offers a variety of relatively complicated products. A third way is to categorize its customers depending on the nature of customer, which is a preferable way to categorize if the application of a product to meet the needs of the customer varies considerably between customers. Thus, the relationships depend on how the firm categorizes their customers (Brennan et al., 2007). When investing in a relationship, the business marketer may decide to make adaptations. Adaptations in relationships are "when a particular customer is treated in a unique way" (Ford et al., 2006: 136). They distinguish between formal and informal adaptations, where formal are those adjustments that are spoken about in the contract or when closing a deal, while informal are those that are made to satisfy a certain request of the customer, or to manage potential problems. Ford et al. (2006) point out that these adaptations done by the seller may be critical to develop a relationship, but by doing so it may affect the efficiency and raise costs. The task of the business marketer is to fully try to assess the costs of the adaptations before they are done (Ford et al., 2006). The benefits given by making adaptations in a relationship is that the trust between the two parties will increase (Ford et al., 2006).

According to Barry et al. (2008) the importance of culture can hardly be debated when it comes to relationship marketing. The reason for this, they argue, is the many cross cultural contacts that occur thanks to globalization, and the importance for firms to be...
able to understand customer’s future intentions, which is something that is influenced by culture (Barry et al., 2008). Furthermore, Usunier (1996) claims that the development of contacts is an important element of marketing, where a marketer that intends to move across cultures needs to take into consideration the status of the person to whom he speaks, the decision-making process and which persons that will influence. It is important to have knowledge about who has the power to make decisions, to target the right people while still keeping friendly contacts with staff at the intermediary levels which in case of resistance could prevent the marketer from getting in contact with decision makers from the top (Usunier, 1996). When targeting a culturally diversified customer base, adaptations are claimed by Bush et al. (2001) to be important, and especially so if the marketer consider the relationship to have potential to be long-term. The benefits of adaptations are more likely to exceed the costs if engaging in long-term relationships where more knowledge about the customer base can be acquired (Bush et al., 2001).

2.1.3 To adapt or standardize, a cross cultural dilemma
Cross-cultural communication is defined by Vitthal (2013:61) as “the ability to successfully form, foster, and improve relationship with members of a culture different from one’s own culture” (Vitthal, 2013: 61). It occurs "when a message from a buyer (seller) from one culture must be processed by a seller (buyer) from another" (Bush and Ingram, 1996). Bush and Ingram (1996) argue that the ability to understand the diversity of the customer base is a key when communication across cultures (Bush and Ingram, 1996). Weck and Ivanova (2013: 212) define cultural adaptation in a business relationship as "a process of learning and adjusting to culturally dissimilar business practices of partner firms, resulting from individual norms and beliefs". When adapting in a relationship with another party, Francis (1991) mentions three degrees of adaptation; no adaptation, moderate and substantial. The communication style can be adapted in the sense of speaking, such as using other languages, which Francis (1991) refer to as linguistic style, or the adaptation can be seen in how communication are managed in terms of the degree of formality and how greetings are exchanged, referred to as sociolinguistic (Francis, 1991). Vitthal (2013) argues that in the case of India, behavioural differences can be observed depending on mother tongue and the culture, religion and caste to which the customers belong. According to Brennan et al. (2007), one or both of the parties in a relationship may need to make adaptations in order for the
relationship to become more rewarding. One of the exchange elements between two firms in a relationship is the social exchange, which regards the personal experiences of interaction between actors. The adaptations that may have to be made with respect to social exchange might regard the cultural differences between the actors (Brennan et al., 2007). After a while and if successful, the social exchange will have created a bond between the actors which can lead to the relationship becoming stronger (Brennan et al., 2007).

Word-of-Mouth is a process described by Hollensen (2014) as customers sharing information about a product in his or her social life. Lindberg-Repo and Grönroos (1999) describe word-of-mouth as an unplanned message but a part of the brand communication and is relevant for both B2B and B2C. They continue by recognizing that this brand communication can be both negative and positive, why a continuing relation with the customer is of great importance, ensuring satisfaction from the customer. A positive word-of-mouth may also be achieved by securing a good service. Furthermore, Lindberg-Repo and Grönroos (1999) mention that word-of-mouth is an important aspect of relationship marketing.

There is a debate among scholars in the field whether a standardized or an adapted marketing strategy should be used (van Heerden and Barter, 2008). Those in favour of a standardized strategy argue that marketing strategies can and should be standardized to fit all markets with the same strategy (Melevar and Vemmervik, 2004). The argument is firms should try to focus on the similarities and international needs, rather than looking for differences that in fact might be trivial and of minor importance. Organizations should operate as if the world was one market. The benefits of standardization are cost advantages, as well as the formation of a global brand image (Ibid).

On the other side are those in favour of adaptation. They believe that standardization is impossible because of the differences between cultures (Melevar and Vemmervik, 2004). Also, ignoring cultural differences could result in lower sales because of the loss of competitive advantage that adaptation could lead to. Using a unique marketing strategy for each culture is necessary, because the differences are too prominent to ignore. Instead of looking at the world as one, big market, each country should be seen as a market that needs to be served with a marketing strategy tailored for that country (Ibid). A risk of using the same marketing strategy everywhere is that while the strategy might work just fine in one place, it might fail or have a completely different meaning.
in another place (van Heerden and Barter, 2008). To use a standardized marketing strategy that has the intention to work everywhere is according to van Heerden and Barter (2008) too difficult to do. Instead, by designing unique marketing strategies which appeals directly to the customers in that particular market, firms can increase sales and profits (van Heerden and Barter, 2008). Sometimes it is the product itself that needs to be adapted, like for example in the case of a producer of alcoholic beverages offering a non-alcoholic beverage to a market where the demand for a product like that is high, like India. If the producer would not adapt its product to the needs of the market it would probably not be very successful. However, by doing adaptations like these, firms can be successful also in markets initially not seen as susceptible to a particular product due to cultural differences (van Heerden and Barter, 2008).

In a study of companies and their attitude towards standardization and adaptation, van Heerden and Barter (2008) found that a common opinion of the respondents was that while there are similarities between countries and cultures, the differences are too many and too big to assume homogeneity of cultures. Moreover, the results of their study suggested that firms see different cultures even within countries, and thus a standardized marketing strategy would be problematic to implement (van Heerden and Barter, 2008). A firm’s marketing mix needs, according to Datta (2009), to be adapted to a culturally diverse marketplace. The reason for this is that the cultural diversity of a marketplace has an influence on what language is preferred in the marketing communication and when a deal takes place. According to Datta (2009), standardized marketing is a thing of the past, and firms have to respond to cultural diversity with strategies for adaptation and differentiation. Furthermore, for firms operating in a multicultural market, they need to be aware of and respond to the different cultures within that market (Datta, 2009). Cultural diversity may influence the decisions concerning a firm's marketing mix (Solberg, 2000). The importance of culture in marketing is most evident for marketers doing business across borders or marketers operating in a culturally diverse country (Cateora and Graham, 2007).

Trompenaars and Woolliams (2004) points out the issues of multicultural markets and that research has been given relatively little attention to cultural differences within nations. Cultural differences are typically especially visible during special holidays and culturally related occasions. Trompenaars and Woolliams (2004) further suggest that a
multicultural strategy should be developed when marketing in multicultural societies (Trompenaars and Woolliams, 2004).

Regarding marketing in culturally diversified markets, Rao (2006) suggests the usage of adapted marketing where advertising is provided in different languages. The development of multicultural marketing strategies is however explained as moving forward in a very slow pace, where reasons are explained as difficulties in understanding other cultures, and assumptions that there is no need to target special ethnic groups and that the financial benefits will not exceed the expenditure of targeting special cultural groups. The major strategy is commonly to employ staff originating from the ethnic group to which the company wishes to target, in order to have someone that speaks the language and has a better knowledge of the needs of that group (Rao, 2006).

Datta (2009) argues that culture plays such an important role that it in fact is in the core of marketing, thus the cultural differences is not something that marketers can afford to neglect. When designing a marketing strategy, not only is it enough to consider cultural differences between countries, but also local cultural differences within countries (van Heerden and Barter, 2008). A solution to the problem of whether firms should standardize or adapt their marketing cannot be reached if focus is on the extremes, either standardize or adapt (Walters, 1986). The middle ground, to make small adaptations while keeping the global brand image acting global, is according to van Heerden and Barter (2008) a solution to this dilemma.

2.2 Dimensions of culture
Since the publishing of Hofstede’s research, it has become the dominant framework in its field, taking a natural part of international marketing research on cross-cultural studies. His work has served as a basis not only as fundamental criteria, but also to the development of new frameworks regarding cross-cultural studies (Orr and Hauser, 2008). Venaik et al. (2013) claim that a large part of the current culture research has been developed from the work of Hofstede, as the standard in national culture studies (Venaik et al., 2013). Hofstede’s (1983) four original dimensions of culture are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, and masculinity versus femininity. *Power distance* in organization measures to what degree decisions are taken autocratically by the boss without the subordinates’ possibility to interfere,
and to what extent this is actually viewed by employees as preferable. The level of *Uncertainty avoidance* is based on the answers given by employees on to how frequently they feel nervous or tense in their working environment, the loyalty given to company rules regardless of it being in the best interest of the organization or not, and the expected time to remain working in the organization, as well as the tendency to take risks. *Individualism versus collectivism* are based on respondents ranking of the importance of having a challenging job, benefits concerned with the job, high freedom and time for personal life, among others. A high degree of individualism would imply a high ranking of personal time, freedom and challenge, *Masculinity versus femininity* refers to the relative importance given by the employees to aspects such as recognition, challenges, desirable living areas and job security. A high relative importance given to recognition and challenges would imply a high degree of masculine characteristics (Hofstede, 1983). Later a fifth dimension was added, *long versus short term orientation* that regards the perceptions on time within a culture (Hofstede and Minkov, 2010).

A framework developed from Hofstede’s model is the GLOBE model (Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness), that can be used to describe cultural differences between countries (House et. al. 2002). The study is a response to the questions of in what way human communities differ or resemble each other. The nine dimensions of culture that are studied in project GLOBE (House et. al. 2002) are: *Uncertainty avoidance, Power distance, Collectivism 1, Collectivism 2, Gender egalitarianism, Assertiveness, Future orientation, Performance orientation and Humane Orientation*. What the authors of GLOBE found out was that culture has an effect on business and organizations. One use of the model could be within advertising (House et al., 2010), to gain an understanding of cultural differences and preferences among customers around the world. Javidan and House (2001) claim that the implications from GLOBE can be used also in order to understand how to handle cross-cultural relationships, and that the classifications can be a helpful tool for managers who work with multiple cultures (Javidan and House, 2001). Another study made on national culture using cultural dimensions has been done by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). They identified seven dimensions of culture; *Universalism versus Particularism, Collectivism and Individualism, Neutral relationships, Specificity and diffuseness, Achievement and*


*ascription, Orientation towards time and Internal external control* (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012).

### 2.2.1 Cultural models applied on India

When applying Hofstede’s model to India, the results indicates a visible hierarchy which is shown at work and in communication with superiors. India has influences of both collectivism and individualism, where Indians put great importance of family and being a member of a group. Hinduism has an influence on individualism, which make them take responsibility for their own actions. Considering the importance attributed to success and power in India, India is considered a masculine society. The medium low score in uncertainty avoidance is explained being due to the Indians accepting that things does not have to go as planned (Hofstede, 2014). The results from Trompenaars’s cultural dimensions, when applied to India, show that Indians tend to see status stemming from family background rather than personal achievement (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). Chhokar (2007), one of the authors behind GLOBE, acknowledges the difficulty in attempting to define and generalize about Indian culture. This is because of the great diversity in terms of regions, cultures, religions and languages that characterize the country (Chhokar, 2007). However, despite all these differences within the country, there are also similarities that unite the people of India. Even though indeed there are differences within the country, the mutual traditions do bring people together, and the call for a definition of Indian culture might not be as farfetched as it perhaps would appear at first. When applying the dimensions from GLOBE on India, it was found that India is future oriented. Karma may even lead Indians to think about the afterlife, doing activities that could lead to benefits in the life after this. It was also found that India is characterized by hierarchy, which is explained partly being due to the caste system. Furthermore the role of family is significant. Regarding uncertainty avoidance, it is rather common with activities that aim to reduce the unpredictability of the future (Chhokar, 2007).

### 2.3 But what about culturally diverse countries?

What the models above have in common is that they homogenize the culture of each country. (Singh et al., 2008). Singh et al. (2008) propose their own model of culture, a
model that considers the antecedents of culture. This model recognizes the heterogeneous nature of culture and suggests a view on culture not based on, or limited to national boundaries, but rather on the various origins of culture. In doing so, the model would be appropriate to use in countries that are characterized by cultural diversity. The five origins of culture that the authors took into consideration was social identity, historical context, economic parameters, institutional factors and geography.

Examples of aspects that influence the cultural diversity are differences in language & religion, the income distribution within the country, and in federal countries, differences in governance between the states. Singh et al. (2008) writes that institutional factors are important when a homogenous culture is developing, but also of many cultures existing together. Singh et al. (2008) continue by acknowledging that these legal differences within a country may have an impact of the culture. The economic conditions may be a determinant for where firms choose to establish and invest (Singh et al., 2008). According to Gibson and Kong (2005) economic factors materialize culture, and culture is embedded in economy. The authors behind the model suggest that culture is not limited to national boundaries. In large countries like India, the northern part of the country might be more similar to neighboring countries than the south part of the same country (Singh et al., 2008).

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Model 2:1 Antecedents and outcomes of culture. Source: Singh et al. (2008:254)

2.3.1 India as a culturally diverse country
The model developed by Singh et al. (2008) has been applied on India by the authors, a country which regions they argue have distinct differences between them in the historical context. The economic development of India is unevenly distributed, and as far as social factors goes, the diversity of languages and religions, plus the fact that
India has been a Nation State for only a little over 60 years all adds up to a country difficult to categorize as having one national culture (Singh et al. 2008). The federal system that characterizes large countries has an impact on the culture in various part of the country, and this is certainly true for India as well. Language and religion does not always follow geography according to Singh et al. (2008), who say that this further complicate for firms that wants to operate in a culturally diverse country. Singh et al. (2008) believe that entering or operating in such a diverse country like India requires a multi-market strategy. The understanding of the multicultural aspect of certain countries could be initiated by using the discussed model. An understanding of the multicultural reality that characterizes some countries, and the antecedents of culture is necessary according to Singh et al. (2008), particularly for the marketing and human resource departments within organizations.

2.3.1.1 Dimensions of Indian culture: Banerjee’s model
Banarjee (2008: 367) argues that the “core values of any country shape its national culture” and proposes a model with the intention to cover the cultural dimensions and core values of the Indian culture. The cultural dimension is divided into four categories, which are languages, symbols and signs, Rituals and customs, and Traditions. The core dimensions are grouped into seven categories; individual and family, Society through conformity, success and growth, age and youthfulness, happiness and adaptability and religion and spirituality (Banarjee, 2008).
The languages spoken in a country have an important impact of culture, and India is a country characterized by having many different languages and dialects. Other elements affecting the Indian culture are symbols and signs. A marketer being aware of these can use them as a tool in communication. The way in which people in a country express their identity is characterized by rituals and customs, which can be explained as cultural norms and behaviors in a society. The traditions of a society plays a big role when trying to understand the behavior of individuals, and India is claimed to a high extent have remained its traditions.

All countries have specific core values, and an understanding of these is according to Banerjee (2008) essential for success in the particular market. For India, the core values include the importance of family, religion and hierarchy. According to Banerjee (2008), the diversity of a country like India makes it difficult to use the same strategy everywhere within that country. Thus, in order to successfully adapt its activities to fit the country, an understanding of core and cultural values are necessary. By obtaining an understanding of these core values, firms can at least grasp the foundation of a country’s culture, which according to Banerjee (2008) should be priority for firms operating in such countries. The role that language plays in communication with customers should
according to Banarjee (2008) be considered when designing a marketing strategy, as to the possibility to employ a marketer that speaks the language spoken by the customer group or use culturally-bound symbols to create an advantage when developing a brand image.

2.4 Conceptual framework

![Diagram of Conceptual framework](image)

*Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework (own figure)*

In the above figure, we have identified what we consider being the most important dimensions of national culture (Hofstede, GLOBE, Trompenaars) for this study. Considering that this study is in the B2B context, not all dimensions was considered relevant, as the importance of culture may differ between B2B and B2C. *Power Distance* and *Uncertainty avoidance* are both used by Hofstede and in GLOBE. We refer to Future Orientation (GLOBE), Long vs Short Term Orientation (Hofstede) and Orientation towards time (Trompenaars) as *Time Perception*. Included are also Singh et al. (2008) and Banarjee (2008), who studied cultural differences within India, here represented by *religion & language* within the social identity antecedent (Singh et al., 2008) and core values (Banarjee, 2008). With *States*, we refer to the Institutional Factors presented by Singh et al. (2008). Two sub concepts of cultural elements are included; cultural differences between Sweden and India as well as the differences within India. The dimensions of culture presented in the first box are put in relation to the second box, which is made up by the main concept of B2B marketing and the sub concept of *relationship marketing*, which is an important part of B2B marketing, and especially so in India. Relationship marketing was chosen as a sub concept to B2B marketing since we did not want to limit our study to only regard the relationship aspect, but also allow other elements of marketing to be included. However, the importance we put to relationship marketing in this study is emphasized by letting relationship marketing be the only sub concept. When designing a marketing strategy in
the context of B2B with respect to culture, decisions must be taken on whether to adapt or standardize, illustrated in the third box in the above figure. The chapter has presented a discussion on cross cultural marketing, and *adaptation and standardization* has been chosen as the main concept in designing a marketing strategy for India.
3. Method

In this chapter, we will discuss and describe our research process and argue for our choices of research methods. A description of the respondents and the firms that they represent will be presented. The chapter ends with a discussion on the credibility of this study.

3.1 Qualitative research

The choice regarding whether to conduct qualitative or quantitative research will influence how data will be collected, how interviews will be designed and how this data will be analyzed (Seale et al., 2007). Seale et al. (2007) explains the general differences of a qualitative and a quantitative research being that qualitative research focuses more on words, meanings and often use an inductive approach, while the quantitative researcher would put more emphasize on numbers and behavior, data resulting from a deductive approach. Qualitative research also lacks the possibility to make generalizations to the extent that data resulting from quantitative research can (Seale et al., 2007). The decision on whether to use qualitative or quantitative research methods will ultimately depend upon the problems that the researchers intends to investigate. A research may consist of some elements that preferable should be generalizable and easily compared, and others that are based on interpretation, where a mix of the two approaches would be preferable (Seale et al., 2007). The most important element that will distinguish your research as being qualitative or quantitative, is however the formulation of your research question (Silverman, 2013). When formulating a research question, it is necessary to take into consideration the risk of not being able to answer the questions from the data collected. In order to avoid this, the research area must be kept narrow and the questions asked in an interview must be carefully selected (Silverman, 2013).

The benefits offered by qualitative research is the possibility to not only acquire specific answers, but to also take own personal reflections, feeling and opinions of the respondent into the research, which with open-ended questions each will give unique contributions (Merriam, 2009). Regarding adaptations, we wanted to get an understanding of how this was dealt with by interviewing a few respondents with the objective to get descriptions as detailed as possible, rather than getting general answers from a multiple amount of respondents. Also, we wanted our respondents to have
influence of the direction of our research, without having to determine all questions beforehand, why a qualitative research was considered the most suitable for us.

3.2 Abductive approach
Seale et al. (2007) describes a deductive approach as a practice where the research starts by looking at existing theories, then doing empirical observations that will lead to a result. Thus, the validity of the theories can be tested through the results. An inductive approach, on the other hand, start with an observation that will lead to a result, and then relate the findings to theories on the subject (Seale et al., 2007). Dubois and Gadde (2002) suggest that an abductive approach offers the possibility to modify the original framework during the process, when unexpected empirical and theoretical findings have been made, and is especially appropriate if the researcher aims to find new variables and relationships (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). Abduction does not have to lead to consistent conclusions, but can result in an interpretation of a phenomenon related to some theoretical concepts. The findings are not so much related to new discoveries in terms of new facts, but to new ways of connecting and relating them. As an example of this, Seale et al. (2007) takes the discovery of the continent America, and how it came to be referred to as the New World. Not because of a sudden existence of a new continent in the world, but to the new interpretation of the world that this led to. When relating the old interpretation of the world to the new discovery, the concept New World had been created. Different interpretations of data can occur, where the task lies in determining which interpretation is the most relevant or meaningful way of managing the data (Seale et al., 2007:92). Patel and Davidsson (2012) explain an abductive approach as a combination of induction and deduction, where a hypothesis is formulated based on a particular case, as a suggestion to a theoretical framework. The hypothesis will be tested through the study of theories, where it can be developed to be more general. The benefits given by this kind of research is a high degree of flexibility (Patel and Davidsson, 2012).

Our knowledge about the problem was limited and started with an interest and assumption. We wanted to have the flexibility to go back and change the literature review, depending on the results. After doing a brief literature review, we found few studies made on marketing adaptations in the Indian market. For that reason, we
wanted to be able to go back to the literature after having done the interviews depending on the answers and descriptions given by the respondents. After the interview we went back to the literature review, removed what no longer was relevant, and added new material. This was done in order to answer our research questions and easier connect existing theories with our own findings.

![Figure 3:1 Abductive approach (own figure)](image)

The model shows the approach that will be used in our research. Our interest for this topic came from previous studies made on cultural differences that mainly touched upon national differences. From this prior basic knowledge we decided to research about a culturally diversified country and how marketing was dealt with in that country. Rather early India was decided to use as an example, and we decided toresearch how the cultural differences in India are perceived from a Swedish B2B perspective, as well as how the strategy was designed. This led us to our two research questions: “What culturally diverse characteristics do Swedish B2B firms perceive in the Indian market?” and “How do Swedish B2B firms adapt their marketing strategy to
meet the cultural diversity of the Indian market?’. We made a literature review leading to a conceptual framework and from this, the design of interviews was developed as well as which questions to be asked. Empirical data was collected and related to the previous presented conceptual framework. The model intends to emphasize the relations between the empirical and theoretical findings. During the research process we went back and updated the literature review when found necessary.

3.3 The research process

In order to conduct a theoretical framework, Merriam (2009) suggests starting by reviewing literature in the topic of interest, that will lead you to main concepts and theories regarding the problem that you wish to study. In this process it is suggested to state which keywords you are using in your research, in order to easily follow the process (Merriam, 2009). In order to start the research and formulate specific research questions, we first needed to find theories on what characterized multicultural countries both in general and more specifically about India that could contribute to our study, as well as to find out if there were previous studies made on our area of interest. As far as we could see, there was a lack of thorough studies on cultural differences within countries, why we saw a need for searching on information about cultural differences between countries in order to gain cultural knowledge. In this field several studies were found, such as the cultural dimensions by Hofstede, Trompenaars and House, presented in the literature review.

Examples of key concepts that we used are cross-cultural marketing, marketing adaptations, cultural adaptations, multicultural marketing, marketing adaptations within nations, cultural diversity India, the Indian marketplace and marketing in India.

We did find theories proposing adapted marketing strategies for multicultural markets, but mainly in the sense of advertising, targeting consumers. Target marketing is another concept that we found repeatedly, but that also was found being more appropriate for consumers. With key words such as multicultural or cultural differences, many theories were found on how to adapt relationships in diversified working places, but not many on how to adapt B2B marketing in diversified markets. In that sense, a combination of marketing and relationships was found appropriate, where relationship marketing became our main marketing activity to research.
Merriam (2009) suggest that the theoretical framework will help to formulate the problem and the research question, and give an idea of how data may be collected. In turn, this will lead to a conceptual framework, which will work as a guide to identifying the concepts most relevant for your study (Merriam, 2009). The reason for doing a literature review, she argues, is to give the researcher the possibility to identify gaps which give you the opportunity to contribute something to the field, built upon and linked together with previous studies. Merriam (2009) continues by pointing out that the process of writing a literature review will be a mixture of reviewing and interpreting what is already written, which will lead you to rethinking your problem, and then again go back to the literature (Ibid). Merriam (2009) argues that the analytical part of the qualitative research might be the only part where there actually is one preferred way. She suggests starting analyzing simultaneously to collecting the data, as to question the data if it is really relevant to your research. Other suggestions are to write notes on findings along the research process. When having collecting the data, the researcher needs to decide on how to present and arrange it (Merriam, 2009). Further it is suggested to go through the data and look for regularities and trough that it may be categorized, a part that is argued by Merriam (2009) to be the most important part of the analysis (Merriam, 2009).

Our literature review led to a conceptual framework, consisting of the most important concepts for our study. The concepts were used as a guideline when performing the analysis, which was helpful both when deciding upon what data to analyze, and how to present it in the analysis. Categorizing the analysis into main concepts previously used in the conceptual framework, following the same structure and order, is something that we believe helps the reader to more easily embrace the information.

3.4 Research strategy - case study

In research, Merriam (1988) mention different strategies that can be used to obtain data, as through experiments, surveys, historical research and case studies. Merriam (1988) explains case studies as a research method which intends to give a more in depth description of the reality that has been researched. The strength of case studies is explained as being the opportunities given to manage different types of empirical material, such as documents, interviews and observations. Qualitative case studies puts
an emphasis on the interpretation and apprehension given by the data collected, often complemented with an analytical part (Merriam, 1988). Multiple studies is a methodology where data collected from different case studies are combined in relation to the research problem. Each case will be managed separately, with the objective to create a general explanation that will be applicable to different cases (Ibid).

We felt a need for an in depth study in order to answer our research questions and in order to collect relevant data, interviews will be made with employees with knowledge about how the organization adapt to cultural differences, hopefully getting personal insights. Silverman (2013) explains three types of case studies; the *intrinsic*, *instrumental* and the *collective* case study. The intrinsic case study puts the study of the specific case in highest interest, with no purpose to find generalization or build theories on the findings. The instrumental case study does not put the main focus on the case, but is rather a study where “a case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to revise a generalization. Although the case is studied in depth, the main focus is on something else” (Silverman, 2013: 143). The collective case study intends to find a general denominator by studying a multiple number of cases (Silverman, 2013). The purpose of this research is to obtain an understanding of firms marketing activities in India and how they adapt to cultural differences within the country, why the instrumental case study is considered the most appropriate design for our research.

3.4.1. Chosen participants
The search for respondents to interview is explained as a central part of the research, and Seale et al. (2007) points out that the decision upon who to interview often is a result of coincidence rather than a careful evaluation of several respondents, as is often suggested. Getting in contact with people possessing enough knowledge about the subject may be problematic, which can aggravate the “recruitment” of interviewees (Seale et al., 2007:17). When searching for respondents, we first developed some criteria that the companies to which the respondents belonged, had to fulfill. The companies needed to be Swedish B2B, and they had to be present in India with a branch or a subsidiary. The nature of business was not relevant for us. The companies that were chosen to interview are Roxtec, Gunnebo AB and Norden Machinery, that all are international companies present in India. It was not possible for us to choose respondents from the company, but they were assigned to us. When we got in contact
with the respondents, we provided them with our interview questions as well as informed them about the topic of our study. We also asked if they thought they would be able to answer these questions. This left us with three companies, since some potential respondents after getting more information about our study declined to participate. With Norden Machinery we tried to get in contact with the office in India at first, but due to lack of time from their side, a Swedish representative responsible for India agreed to participate.

- **Roxtec:**
  Magnus Oskarsson has more than five years of experience from working in India. Most of his time he spent as managing director for Roxtec, with its head office located in New Delhi. He was also a member of the Swedish Trade Council in India. Roxtec is a Swedish company founded in 1990 that develops, manufactures and sells sealing solutions for cables and pipes. Their products are available in more than 70 countries, with subsidiaries in 23, including countries such as India, China and Brazil. Headquarters is located in Karlskrona, Sweden. In 2011, the number of employees exceeded 500 for the first time. Roxtec India Pvt. Ltd. was established in 2005, and as of today they employ 40. The international characteristic of Roxtec in general, and their presence in India in particular, makes them an interesting company for our study.

- **Gunnebo AB:**
  Karin Wallström, has been working for Gunnebo for 12 years, and has 2 years of experience as market communication manager with responsibility for India at Gunnebo Security Group. She is based in Gothenburg, Sweden, but frequently travels to various parts of India in work related issues. Gunnebo is a Swedish company focusing on four major business areas: Bank Security & cash handling, secure storage, Global Services and Entrance control. It is a highly multinational company, employing 5 800 people in 31 countries. Gunnebo’s main business area in India is within physical security, banks being the major customers. The Indian head office is located in Mumbai, with regional offices in Kolkata, Bangalore, Chennai and Noida.
Norden Machinery:
Jörgen Johansson is sales manager at Norden Machinery, responsible for South Asia, Australia, the Arabian Peninsula and Africa. Norden Machinery has a subsidiary in Pune, Maharashtra, with satellite offices in Delhi, Bangalore and Calcutta. As having experience of business relationships in India, he possesses the knowledge necessary to provide this study with relevant information on relationships with Indian customers. Norden Machinery is based in Kalmar, Sweden, employing 225 people there. Norden Machinery was founded in 1980, but the origin of the company goes back to 1877. Since 2008, Norden is a part of the Coesia Group. Norden Machinery manufactures and sells high precision tube filling systems, focus being exclusively on this business area, which have made them the world leading supplier in their area. Norden has a network of distributors all over the world, in addition to their own sales offices in for example China and India. 97% of their sales are from export, and they have customers in 60 countries. Norden Business Unit in India is located in Pune, India, and provides the Indian market with sales and services since 2012.

3.4.2 Operationalization
Our conceptual framework has worked as a base for doing an operationalization, a process that Patel and Davidsson (2012) explain as relating theoretical concepts to empirical data. When designing an interview guide, the operationalization will be used to convert theoretical concepts into interview questions (Patel and Davidsson, 2012).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN CONCEPTS</th>
<th>SUB CONCEPTS</th>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
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<td>B2B MARKETING</td>
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Figure 3.2 Operationalization (own figure)
• Cultural elements

General concepts of cultural differences between nations were presented by Hofstede (1983), Trompenaars (1996) and House et. al. (2002), and in order to understand first the respondents general perception of cultural differences between Sweden and India, questions were asked about general experiences of business culture in India. The sub concepts derived from culture was cultural differences between Sweden and India, and cultural differences within India, discussed by Banarjee (2008) and Singh et al. (2008). Banarjee (2008) accounted for both cultural aspects that united Indians, and differences, why questions were asked on both the perception of differences and similarities among the Indians (see question 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5).

• B2B Marketing

In order to get an understanding of B2B marketing and in particular the relationship aspect of marketing, we included a sub concept of relationship marketing, described by Brennan et al. (2007), Barry et al. (2008), Möller and Halinen (2000), Ford et al. (2006), as well as how new relationships are developed (Usunier, 1996). The concepts were translated into questions regarding how this was dealt with in the Indian market (see question 6, 7, 8 and 9).

• Marketing strategy India

Bush and Ingram (1996) and Vitthal (2013) argue for the importance of understanding of culture in marketing, which followed a general discussion on adaptation and standardization presented by Mellevar and Vemmervik, (2004), van Heerden and Barter (2008) and Datta (2009). The discussion on using an adapted or standardized marketing strategy in India was summarized in a sub concepts of adaptation and standardization, that were translated into questions about strategies and marketing adaptations made in India (see question 10).

3.5 Collection of data
Qualitative data, as well as quantitative, can be acquired through collection of primary or secondary data, as Seale et al. (2007) explains. Primary data is collected directly by the researchers, while data already collected by somebody else is referred to as secondary data (Merriam, 1988). Secondary data can be acquired across nations, and is beneficial to use in the sense that it makes it considerably easier, as well as being cheaper, to get information from other countries, which if gathered as primary data would be complicated and probably also expensive (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In most research, secondary data is used in parallel to data collected from own observations (Seale et al., 2007), which is how our research has been performed. Our own primary data collection has been done through interviews, while information available on internet has been used to complement the empirical data with general information about the companies.

3.5.2 Interview design
Merriam (2009) explains that there are different types of interviews that have to be decided upon which to use. Suggested is to choose the amount of structure that is desired in the interview, in order to decide on which interview that feels most suitable for each specific case (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) suggests three kinds of interview structure; highly structured/standardized, semi structured and unstructured/informal. With a highly structured interview, the exact formulation of questions is determined beforehand, as well as in which order the questions are to be asked. In a semi structured interview, an interview guide is prepared with questions and topics that the researcher wants to cover, but are asked in no specific order, which gives the researcher the benefits of responding to the respondent and ask new questions depending on the kind of answers given by the respondent (Merriam, 2009). It usually consists of some structured questions to obtain certain specific information from all respondents. An interview guide is referred to as a list of questions that are intended to be asked. How specific the questions will be, will depend upon the degree of structure that has been chosen for the interview. The unstructured interview is flexible and often used when the researcher does not have much knowledge about the subject to ask specific questions, and can look like a conversation (Ibid).
We choose to do semi-structured interviews, since we wanted to have the opportunity to come up with new questions depending on what the respondent said, as well as giving the respondents the opportunity to say things that we had not thought of to cover in specific questions. In order to do so, open-ended questions were mainly used during our interviews; where "Tell me about a time when…", “Give me an example of…” and Tell me more about that…..” are examples of open-ended questions given by Merriam (2009:99). Preferably neutral questions are often asked as the interview starts, such as basic information about the respondents position that then can be a base when moving on to more specific questions about perception and opinions (Merriam, 2009). This is also something that we had in mind when designing our interview guide (attached in the appendix), such as asking general questions about what kind of clients the respondent was responsible of, in order to ask questions related to that later in the interview. All our interviews were personal interviews, conducted face-to-face, which further increased our possibilities to make observations and to adjust the questions depending on the respondent.

3.6 Research quality - Validity and Reliability
According to Seale et al. (2007) the collection of data requires a consideration of the accuracy of the theories when using them as a base for analysis. When analyzing theories, consideration must be taken if findings are results of correlation or causation. Open coding is a method designed to generate “ideas by close and detailed inspection of the data” (Seale et al., 2007: 84). Merriam (1988) distinguish between two types of validity; internal and external. The former concerns to what extent the results can be considered a reflection of reality, while the latter regards to what degree the data may be applied in other circumstances. Reliability relies on the assumption that there is only one reality, and studies will therefore lead to the same result no matter if it is repeated. Research intends to identify causal relations between variables measured, forming rules that can be applied to various circumstances (Merriam, 1988). Qualitative research intends to give a description of the environment, based on the interpretations from the people forming a part of it. Given that different interpretations may result from the same environment or reality, repeated studies may in practice not lead to similar results (Merriam, 1988). Thus, clear contradictions of the concept reliability may be seen, but the underlying objective is the same; to provide results that can give meaning to others.
3.6.1 Research quality - Trustworthiness in qualitative research

Merriam (2009) points out that validity and reliability commonly are most associated and used in quantitative studies, why a need for discussing and suggest how to deal with the trustworthiness and quality of qualitative research have arisen. She further argues for the ethical part of the research, claiming that the “investigation must be done in an ethical manner” in order to ensure validity and reliability (Merriam, 2009:209). In order to show that the research has been done trustworthy and the conclusions made can be considered reasonable, the researcher needs to be transparent during the research process. The ethics is highly related to the validity and reliability, where the credibility of the researchers is of key importance. This is important in order to trust the results to being properly derived. Ethical dilemmas is a part of qualitative studies, since both the collection and the analysis of data must be done with own interpretations. The researcher must try to carry out the study as trustworthy as possible trying to invite the reader into dilemmas, concerns faced by the researcher and the decisions made (Merriam, 2009).

A common strategy to deal with the trustworthiness of qualitative studies is triangulation, where different methods are used to study the same data (Merriam, 2009., Seale et al., 2007). As an example Merriam (2009) gives investigator triangulation, where data are collected and compared by different investigators. She continues by pointing out that the triangulation is constantly being revisited in qualitative research, and that today it is possible to talk about crystallization, where the world can be observed from far more than three sides, as with triangulation. Other strategies to ensure quality is respondent validation, where the analysis may be sent back to the respondents to get feedback on if the interpretation has been done properly and adequate engagement in data collection, where data are observed closely. This mean that the data collection can be considered done when the same data will appear over and over again. However, triangulation remains the main strategy for ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative studies. Given the limited amount of resources to do the research as well as the limited amount of time, we have used only investigator triangulation. Respondent validation is something that we considered, but came to the conclusion that it would be more relevant in more extensive research. One way for us to deal with the investigator triangulation has been for the two of us researchers to write down separate notes during the interviews and after writing an idea of the most important data from the interview, given our own interpretations. After that
we compared our notes to see if we had interpreted it in the same manner, and from that stage we could write the empirical part in more detail. By doing so, we believe it gives our empirical results more credibility. Throughout the paper we have also tried to describe our process and decisions as thoroughly as possible to give the reader an insight of our process.
4. Empirical findings

In the following chapter, our empirical findings from interviews with representatives from Roxtec, Gunnebo AB and Norden Machinery will be presented. The chapter is structured with our main concepts as headlines; Cultural elements, B2B marketing and Marketing Strategy India. Under each of these headlines, the results from all companies will be presented separately.

4.1 Cultural elements

4.1.1 Roxtec

According to Oskarsson, his experience from working and living in India taught him that even though India is one nation, the differences within the country are so significant that India could in fact be many countries. Oskarsson describes India as "many countries in one". Depending on where in the country you are from, you will have different possibilities. The differences related to where in India people come from are rather easily identified, according to Oskarsson. He gives languages as an example, where interpreters sometimes are needed when negotiating. Because of the great diversity of languages, it is not possible to use the same interpreter everywhere. However, thanks to English being widely spoken, language barriers can many times be solved. He used the states of West Bengal and Gujarat as other examples of the differences within the country, Gujarat being developed and friendly to investments while in the West Bengal, it was not unusual for people to start working at 10.30 and go home at 14.30, having a two hour lunch break in between. This affected his work in the sense that he was extra careful to do business with a customer from the West Bengal. According to Oskarsson, the importance of religion of your counterpart when doing business is difficult to appreciate. Oskarsson told us that he did not notice any distinctive differences between the Hindu majority and the large Muslim minority. It is however important for firms to be aware of the Muslim minority in India, since India has the second biggest population of Muslims, behind Indonesia.

From his experience in India, Oskarsson noticed that certain surnames were related to certain levels in the caste systems, such as a person named Sharma could be assumed being a person with quite high status. The surnames of customer representatives could be a clue to finding the one who can make decisions, which could lead to less time
being wasted on developing a relationship with middle managers who does not have authority to make decisions. According to Oskarsson, something that characterizes India, and where no differences have been seen depending on state, is the importance of hierarchy. Oskarsson’s impression of the caste system is that it still has an effect on personal and business life of many Indians, and in Indian companies more so than in foreign companies, the cast system makes it difficult for certain workers to climb the career ladder. Another observation was that Indians in general do not think in a long-term perspective, and are not very loyal to their employers; whenever they get offered a higher salary in another company they will give notice to leave. In general he would say that people are more loyal to their families than to the company. The tendency to move from a company to another and not plan that much for the future is something that Oskarsson believed could be related to karma, where what happens in the future is not really something that you can have an influence on.

Regarding business culture, Oskarsson learned that the state to which that person originates from may affect his working loyalty, but also to commitment. People originating from Mumbai, in the state of Maharashtra in the western part of India, are very reliable and do what they have committed themselves to. The general experience of people from the southern part of India is that they are honest. Regarding languages, English is often the language used when doing business with each other, even though not in all regions. Oskarsson remembers how he when travelling on a business trip to the southern part of India with an Indian native had to bring with them a translator, since neither English, nor Hindi was spoken. Oskarsson perceive that differences shown in behavior are not so much culturally bound, but rather state bound.

4.1.2 Gunnebo AB
Wallström refer to India as many countries within one nation, which could make it complicated to do business there. Wallström highlights the importance of origin for Indians, referring to where in India they are from. She does however not blame the cultural differences between the states for the challenge of doing business within India, but rather the difference in some rules between states. The fact that India is divided in a number of states where for examples taxes can differ between states, can in fact make it more difficult to do business within India than simply doing business with Indian customers from abroad. In Wallström’s perceptions, Indians manage well to
differentiate between private life and business, and that while the culture might have a big impact on many Indians private lives, they tend to not bring their culture to their professional life.

Concerning religion and caste belonging, this is not something that Wallström have seen having an impact on her business in India. Gunnebo’s customer are usually on a high level and very professional, and makes a clear distinction between their cultural background and when doing business. Thus, she has felt no need to observe the religious background of her customers when doing business with them. The caste system is not something that she has seen impacting business. Again, it appears to Wallström that Indians manage well in distinguishing between their private life and business life. However, the cultural differences within India can be seen in the own organization when employees choose when they want to have a day off, which often are chosen for various cultural reasons. Festivals and holidays are according to Wallström celebrated with family, and not observed much in the business context. She does not feel that there are expectations of her to observe the various holidays of customers. Overall, Wallström does not give much importance of culture in business.

4.1.3 Norden Machinery

Johansson has observed many cultural elements in India on the national level that are different compared to Sweden and other countries where he is doing business, where the difference in the hierarchical system is one of the major. Because of his experiences from visits to customers, he speculates that the caste system might contribute to the strict hierarchy in many organizations. He has also seen that age matters, elders are looked upon with respect. During customer visits, the hierarchy is reflected in that it usually takes some time before you are introduced to the boss, according to Johansson. The importance of hierarchy is said by Johansson to be a major contributor to the perceived differences in business culture. For example, a deal might have been negotiated and worked on between Norden’s representatives and the customer’s middle management. They might have come to an agreement, when suddenly a boss higher up in the hierarchy steps in and says that it cannot be done. This is time consuming and ineffective, according to Johansson. Perception of time also appears to be a big difference between Sweden and India to Johansson, in which India seems to be much more flexible. That things take more time in India than in Sweden is something that is a
returning opinion in this interview. Johansson experienced Indians as not being very future orientated, which was reflected in the reluctance to make long-term investments. Johansson has not noticed any major cultural differences within India.

4.2 B2B marketing

4.2.1 Roxtec
Relationships are of great importance in India. According to Oskarsson, good relations with a partner can sometimes be more important than having a superior product. Oskarsson understood the importance of good relationships with customers, and highlighted the importance of putting the customer in focus. One way of maintaining good relationships with customers is according to Oskarsson to reply to inquiries from customer regardless of what day it is, even on holidays. Another important way of maintaining or improving relationships with customers would be to observe the local holidays, and because of the diversity of India, there might be different holidays in different parts of India. By recognizing and observing local holidays, foreign firms can according to Oskarsson improve their chances to succeed in India.

Another difference noted between Sweden and India was that the customer was always in the center of attention, and as a relatively small company Roxtec could not afford to only be available Monday to Friday, but customers should be able to get in touch with representatives every day of the week. During big holidays the customers were usually given gifts.

Oskarsson’s experiences of Indian business culture was that many Indians tend to say yes when they actually mean no, which is something that one needs to be aware of especially in the beginning of a relationship. Today, Roxtec’s products can be seen all over India, and thanks to this they have established themselves as a brand not limited to the capital New Delhi or the economic center of Mumbai, but in most of India. Your firm’s reputation is very important, and the perhaps most valuable marketing activity is one that is not easy for the firm to influence other than doing a good job overall with managing customers, product and support etc.; the so called word of mouth.

4.2.2 Gunnebo AB
Concerning marketing, Wallström was of the opinion that advertising in newspapers and magazines were a relevant and important way to reach out to customers in India, as opposed to how it is in Sweden. According to Wallström, India is a "relation market",
referring to the importance of relationships when doing business in India. When in a relationship, it is important to be aware of the importance that Indians gives to hierarchy. Gunnebo puts great care in trying to show for each customer that they are important, and one way of doing this is to make a story about a certain customer visit and publish it in the company magazine "Global". Sometimes, Gunnebo brings its customer on trips, with the purpose of showing the facilities to the customer and by doing so trying to strengthen the relationship. The cultural background of the customer is not something that affects how Gunnebo handle the relationship building with their customers, since they use ways of relationship building that can be applicable and appreciated everywhere.

4.2.3 Norden Machinery
According to Johansson, Norden Machinery has managed to create a name for themselves in India. They have positioned themselves in the absolute top segment of their business area. Compared to many of their competitors, their products are generally more expensive, and Norden is relying on the quality of the product rather than competing with low price. The premium status of the brand Norden Machinery has led them to attract customers that are willing to invest in the future. According to Johansson, in the long run it will pay off to choose a Norden product rather than a cheaper one, since the superior quality will mean that a customer can use the product for a long time. Two of their key customers in India are Unilever and Colgate, and while not being Indian companies, they are represented by Indians. If Norden has sold a product to these companies in another country, it helps them when trying to sell to the same company in India. In those cases, they can get references from these companies offices in other countries that have invested in a Norden product, and if the reference comes from the own company, it becomes more valuable. In addition to these major customers, Norden Machinery also has a number of Indian companies as customers. One of the difficulties that Norden Machinery sees in India is related to the difficulty in convincing customers to invest in the future, which investing in a Norden Product means. Often the customers only look at the price, and if a competitor offers a cheaper but inferior product, it is not unusual for the order to go to the competitor. Convincing customers that it pays off in the long run to choose a product from Norden rather than a cheaper one from a competitor is one of the main challenges for Norden Machinery in India, according to Johansson.
Norden Machinery promotes themselves in technical, regional magazines, as well participating in trade fairs around the world. However, in India they have experienced troubles in finding relevant trade fairs for their products, why this is not a major marketing activity. While promoting their products in magazines and at trade fairs is an important part of their marketing, Johansson claim that the relationship aspect of marketing is more important in India. In fact he was of the opinion that relationships are of key importance in India. He perceived relations to be more important in developing countries than in developed countries. By being close to the customers and making frequent visits to them, something Norden Machinery calls "Courte visits”, they try to make use of this importance and emphasis that is being attributed to personal relations among Indian customers. Johansson frequently makes these courtesy visits, along with his Indian colleagues to various customers, spread all over India. When creating and cherishing relationships with their Indian customers, English is always used as the language of communication. Johansson has seen no need to bring an interpreter to a customer visit since English works everywhere and with everybody. It has never been necessary to be proficient in Hindi or any of the other languages of India in order to create good, long term relationships according to Johansson. During his many courtesy visits to Indian customers, he has not noticed or thought of any particular cultural differences between one region and the other.

4.3 Marketing strategy India

4.3.1 Roxtec
If Roxtec wanted to do business with firms from a certain state in India, usually Oskarsson tried to recruit staff originating from that specific state that would be responsible for that region, and named three reasons for doing so. The first was that the person could bring with him his network, which usually was how they found new customers; the network and trust upon each other was even more important than the quality and nature of the products sold. The second reason was that the person responsible of that region could communicate in the same language or even mother tongue, and lastly the knowledge of the specific culture characterizing that region would ease the business. The fact that English is widely spoken eases the communication with customers, and when English is not enough, an interpreter is used.
The marketing material was however not adapted to fit especially with customers from a certain region of the country, but was usually provided in English. In specific cases the material could have been translated to a specific language, but not in the general case. The adaptation was more seen in the interaction between the Roxtec representative and the customer, which given the recruitment criteria already explained, naturally was done in the language spoken in that region as well as with region specific customs. Given the nature of Roxtec’s products, a marketing strategy adapted for specific regions or cultural groups would only lead to a small, if any, increase of revenue. It is not sure that it would results in more customers, but the costs would certainly rise thus an adapted advertising strategy could not be motivated. He pointed out that if, hypothetically, advertisement adaptation was to be made, it would be done to specific states rather to specific cultural groups. The key to the adaption made at Roxtec was the recruitment of representatives, which affected their relations.

4.3.2 Gunnebo AB
Wallström explained that Gunnebo has a global strategy that they use in all markets, and only do minor modifications. For instance in India they had certain products that were only available in the Indian market, why a certain strategy was necessary for this product. However, this strategy was adapted due to the product rather than to location. The modifications that were made, was done in connection to language. The language diversity of India is also something that is shown in Gunnebo India’s code of conduct, which is translated to six of the major languages of India. No other modifications were used to fit better with the local culture of the customer. The advertisements are similar in all parts of India, since the perception of the brand Gunnebo should be the same everywhere. However, Wallström recognized the need to adapt the language used in advertisements because of the language diversity that characterize India.

Wallström told us that the hierarchy of the counterpart in business is observed in business meetings and that she tries to adapt to this. One example she provided was when she during a customer visit thanked a servant for pouring her a cup of tea, which apparently made the servant feel uneasy since his presence had been noted by the visitor. She has not noticed any differences in various parts of the country in the importance of hierarchy, believing that it is something that could in fact be applied to all of India. When it comes to preparing herself before visiting countries, Wallström puts
more importance in being updated about the business and the products rather than collecting information on the culture and customs of a region or country. What is important in a highly diversified country like India is to be aware of the different rules and regulations in the states. This, together with the language diversity, is according to Wallström what mostly has an impact on the marketing strategy in a multicultural society. Taking advantage of the local competence that already exists within India is Wallström’s advice, rather than sending expatriates. The general strategy that they use is to employ locals. Local management is a key to success, according to Wallström. By employing locals, the need for foreign managers to be aware of the cultural differences, both within and between, is reduced, according to Wallström.

4.3.3 Norden Machinery
The marketing strategy used in India put more emphasis on the relationship aspect of marketing, stressing once again the importance of relation in India. Regarding other aspects of marketing, Norden use a standardized marketing strategy in all of their markets. Creating long lasting personal relationships is according to Johansson of key importance. The relationship needs according to Johansson to be adapted to the receiver. He believed that he and his Swedish colleagues needed to adapt more to the Indian way than the Indians to the Swedish way. There are differences in how you act as a person when interacting with Indian customers, with the purpose of either cherishing an already existing relationship or trying to create a new one. Johansson describes it as an "act", that you need to be a different person when you are in India in business. The need to be flexible is especially highlighted by Johansson. One part of maintaining a good relationship with a customer is the support and after sales service. This is something that is being adapted to the various markets where Norden Machinery is present or exports to. According to Johansson the support can be adapted to Indian customers. Another part of the marketing strategy that is adapted to Indian customers is the terms of payment. One example could be that Indian customers get more time to pay for the products, since in some cases customers from India might have trouble raising funds on time. In the promotion aspect of marketing, there is no adaptation done whatsoever, and English is used in all forms of marketing; be it relations, promotion or fairs.

Johansson’s advice for firms to do business in India, is to be well prepared before trying anything, or "Do your homework before". It is especially important to understand that things tend to take time, and that it is necessary to be flexible. He advises firms to use
an agent or distributor at first, and then move on to establishing a subsidiary on location in India.
5. Analysis

*In this chapter our empirical findings will be related and compared to the theories in the literature review. The same headlines as in the empirical chapter, originating from the conceptual framework, will be used in this chapter. This structure was chosen in order to easily identify the basis of our analysis.*

5.1 Cultural elements

A clear connection between the answers we received from all respondents and our literature review is the importance of hierarchy in India. India scored high in the Power Distance dimension both in GLOBE and Hofstede’s evaluation, which is given support by all respondents participating in this study. All respondents attributed quite a lot of importance to the hierarchical characteristic of Indian society as well as in business, without the risk of being led to a particular answer by the question since we did not ask specifically about hierarchy. Thus, theory on the subject, i.e. Hofstede, GLOBE, Trompenaars, and our snapshot of reality from three firms conform.

Institutional factors, one of the antecedents of culture proposed by Singh et al. (2008), which regards governance, legal system and taxes, is mentioned as being of importance for two of the respondents, the representatives of Gunnebo and Roxtec. The differences in rules and regulations, while not exactly having an impact on the marketing and relationship building activities, was one of the aspects that contributed to the view that these two representatives held, of India as many countries within one. Being aware of laws and taxes is important in all countries, but since India consists of many states with its own rules and regulations, the great variety and diverseness become especially evident here. This does however not affect how relationships are managed, but rather the choice of location and the overall ease of doing business in some states. However, there is reason to believe, especially from Oskarsson’s answers, that differences between states make firms that are aware of these differences to be more eager to seek long term relationships with customer companies based in states where business regulations are more beneficial, than they would be if the customer is from a state with more complicated rules and regulations. Wallström even went as far as claiming that doing business within India may be even more complicated than doing business between Sweden and India, due to the legal differences between the states in India. This antecedent indeed shows the diversity and vastness of the Indian nation. The perception
that India is like many countries in one nation, is a belief shared by both Oskarsson and Wallström, that can also be supported in the theory where both Singh et al. (2008) and Banarjee (2008) accounts for the differences that characterizes India. Singh et al. (2008) also accounts for the federal states in India that leads to cultural differences between the regions, which is also mentioned by Wallström. Banerjee (2008) explains that hierarchy plays a major role in the Indian society, something that is also supported by Wallström. Johansson acknowledges great cultural differences between Sweden and India that has influenced the way of doing business, but had not experienced any certain differences within India, in the way of doing business. The view of all respondents that business is conducted more or less in the same way all over India, leads us to believe that while India certainly is a culturally diverse country, this is not reflected in the Indian business culture. Thus, despite India’s great diversity, the models of national culture (Hofstede, GLOBE, Trompenaars) presented in this paper seems to be relevant when looking at Indian business culture, since the findings of this study suggest that the business culture is more homogenous and similar across the country than the societal culture, which has an impact on the everyday life of Indians outside of work.

All respondents acknowledge great cultural differences between India and Sweden. A mutual impression of all respondents is that they talk about India as a unit. Oskarsson, having lived in India for more than five years, seems to be more aware of the great diversity of the country than the other two respondents. An interpretation of this could be that the diversity is shown in daily life, but as a visitor to India in business, this diversity is not as easily recognized. Oskarsson observed that where in India you are from seems to be highly important, and it is in this aspect that the diversity of India is shown, according to Oskarsson. Singh et al. (2008) suggest that an understanding of language and religion of the host country is important for marketers. Also Vitthall (2007) and Banarjee (2008) argue for the role of religious understanding, since it can have an impact on behavior. None of the respondents share this view and are of the opinion that religion is one aspect of culture with minor impact on their operations in India. While Singh et al. (2008) not directly state that this is mainly of relevance for business directed towards consumers, the views of our respondents indicates that at least religion is not important to consider. A reason for this could be that the firms in this study are all B2B firms, manufacturing and delivering products that need no adaptations for the individual person. Neither in the relationships with the Indian customer, could
they see any impact of religion and it was not something that they considered much. All respondents recognized the religious diversity of Indian society, but none of them saw it having any impact on their business. Oskarsson claimed that behavioral differences among people were not so much related to religion, but rather to the state from which that person originated, which also can be seen in Singh’s (2008) antecedents of culture, where geography was one factor that was claimed to impact the culture in levels such as the working culture. Oskarsson experienced that Indians are very loyal to their families and put their interest first, something that Banarjee (2008) also pointed out in his model of Indian culture.

A mutual impression from all respondents was that things generally take longer time in India. According to the GLOBE study, India is a country characterized by a long term perspective and being future oriented. This contradicts the impression from Johansson, who was of the opinion that one of the major challenges in India was to convince potential customers of the benefits of investing in a product from Norden Machinery, that it would be an investment for the future. His impression was that many Indians looked more at the price than at the quality of a product, indicating a short term rather than long term perspective.

Brennan et al. (2007), when discussing the uncertainties between supplier and buyer that can arise after a deal has been agreed upon, attribute cultural differences between the parties as a reason for the potential uncertainty. While their discussion mainly concerns the uncertainty faced by the buyer, responses received in this study suggests that also the supplier faces uncertainty in international business. An example from this study that illustrates this is from Johansson at Norden Machinery, where an Indian customer broke the contract after Norden had already started producing the products that they had ordered. While this is a single example that not necessarily has anything to do with the customer being from India, Johansson had several experiences with such disloyalty, which could mean that, at least from his perspective, a difference between Indian and Swedish business culture may be the value attributed to contracts. Hofstede (2014) has explained India as a country where things does not always have to go as planned and with a medium-low score in uncertainty avoidance, which could be an explanation of the tendency seen by Johansson that the value of signed contracts differ between Sweden and India. Formal adaptations, such as adjustments in a contract as
discussed by Ford et al. (2006), seem to be less important than the informal adaptations (Ibid), since flexibility, which is said by all respondents to be important in India, seem to be important for managing relationships in India. India’s medium-low score in uncertainty avoidance can also be connected to the mutual impression of all respondents in this study reporting that things tend to take longer time in India, which suits well with Hofstede’s (2014) description that things do not have to go as planned, and that the concept of time is much more flexible than what they, the Swedes, are used to.

5.2 B2B marketing

Brennan et al. (2007) mention how customers may be categorized depending on region, which goes in line with Rao (2006) pointing out that a common strategy for companies operating in multicultural countries is to employ staff from the ethnic group that the company wish to do business with. This can be supported by Oskarsson’s explanation of how Roxtec recruited people from different regions in India, in order to let them take care of the business in that area, in its own language and culture. The role of language and culture in B2B is something that also is explained by Brennan et al. (2007), who claim that they impact communication, and that a smooth communication can affect the understanding of the customer positively. One of the suggestions from Banarjee (2008) for firms operating in India is indeed to employ people with knowledge about the customer’s culture in order to get a competitive advantage. In the case of Roxtec however, the reason was primarily to get into business networks, with language abilities as a second reason.

Word of Mouth was said by one of the respondents, Oskarsson, to be an important aspect of marketing in India. Just as Lindberg-Repo and Grönroos (1999) describes word of mouth, Oskarsson said that it is not something that he can control. He is however confident in his product, and if he and his colleagues manages the customer relationships in a good way, there is a chance that the word spreads of Roxtec as a trustworthy partner. Now that their brand is relatively well known within its industry in India, sometimes the customer comes to them first without Roxtec having to approach them directly or indirectly, a result of their good reputation and word of mouth between customers. Thus, Oskarsson would agree that word of mouth is important not only for B2C firms but also for B2B firms, as argued by Lindberg-Repo and Grönroos (1999).
One way of managing the cultural differences within India is according to Oskarsson to hire people from various regions with knowledge about the local culture and rules, but most importantly having the right contacts, so that Roxtec gets the opportunity to become part of a network. Relationships are such an important aspect of business in India that it in fact might be the most important aspect according to Oskarsson, supporting both Barry’s (2008) and Brennan’s et al. (2007) views that relationships are a significant aspect of marketing, and especially so in B2B marketing. Oskarsson, having experience from many international markets, acknowledges that relationships are important everywhere, but especially so in India. The relationship aspect of marketing is something that all respondents in this study put importance in, and they all agree with the view found in literature (Barry et al., 2008; Brennan et al., 2007) that maintaining and developing long lasting relationships with customers is of key importance. No real difference in the way of communication, however, could be identified between different parts of India and relations were handled mostly in the same manner in all of India. Brennan et al. (2007) argue that the relationship aspect is of great importance in B2B marketing and Barry et al. (2008) claim that it is more important to maintain relationships than to gain new ones. Keeping customers and develop long term relationships with those that are seen as having potential are of importance for all respondents in this study, but especially Johansson shares the view of Barry et al. (2008) that maintaining relationships with profitable customers are more important than acquiring new customers. That being said, Norden Machinery works hard to also gain new customers, but focus is on maintaining customers.

Hofstede’s (1984) cultural dimension of power distance seems to have an effect on the relationship aspect of marketing, in the sense that it determines with whom it is preferable to have a relationship with, since one wants a relationship with someone who can make decisions, which was supported by all the respondents when talking of hierarchy in relationships. Johansson explained that hierarchy impacted his work in a sense that it could be troublesome to find a contact with the authority to make decisions, and know with whom it is worth to build a long-term relationship. The social exchange of a relationship (Brennan et al., 2007) is highlighted by all of the respondents. Johansson’s so called courtesy visits could certainly be a form of social exchange, as could the recognition of local holidays that was highlighted by Oskarsson. The main
The purpose of the courtesy visits was according to Johansson to show customers that they are a serious company not just looking to earn fast money, but instead being a partner for the future. By visiting customers and creating personal relationships with representatives, Norden Machinery seems to put great importance to the social exchange of marketing. Wallström, by taking key customers on business trips to show facilities, and writing articles about certain customer visits in the company magazine *Global*, pointing at the importance of the particular customer. This indicates an understanding of the importance of social exchange and the creation of bonds in relations. These activities add up to all firms in this study recognizing the importance of social exchange in a business relationship, supporting the view of Brennan et. al (2007) that social exchange is a key element of business relationships. The view that culture influences the social exchange is by the respondents mainly reflected in the differences in hierarchy and perception of time.

5.3 Marketing strategy India

Rao (2006) argues for usage of marketing material in different languages, which is something that Roxtec, the company Oskarsson works for, generally did not do. However, Oskarsson admits that adaptations concerning language could have been done in order to target customers from certain regions where the knowledge of English was limited but did not expect such an investment to be profitable. Wallström explained that advertising campaigns are adapted in the sense of translation to local languages, in line with what Rao (2006) suggests on how to deal with marketing in culturally diversified markets, but other than that Wallström pointed out the importance of having a unified brand with no other adaptations. Datta (2009) points out that marketers need to be aware of cultural differences when operating in a multicultural market. This is not something that can be supported by Wallström’s answers, who believes that there is no need to be informed about the culture before entering the market, but only be prepared and informed about the business and what is going on at the subsidiary. English is however, according to Wallström, usable in all parts of India, why no adaptations of language need to be done in relationships. Johansson stresses the importance of relationship when doing business in India, something that can be supported by Oskarsson and Wallström. This may be explained by the collectivistic influences of India in Hofstede’s dimensions, as well as ranking third of all participating countries in collectivism in
project GLOBE. Johansson explained that they used a standardized marketing strategy in India, with no adaptations to certain cultures in trade fairs or marketing material. Not even the language was adapted, and English was used everywhere. Regarding the relationships, certain adaptations are made. It is especially important to be aware of the hierarchy that characterizes the business culture in India.

One of the arguments for a standardized marketing strategy presented by Mellevar and Vemmervik (2004), is that a standardized strategy leads to a brand image that is similar everywhere. Roxtec’s wish for a global brand image is most likely connected to their extremely niched product that leaves little room for interpretation depending on cultural background. The desire for a global brand image is also the case with Gunnebo and Norden Machinery, why they use a standardized strategy. Since the firms in this study are all B2B companies from Sweden, the findings from this study suggests that Swedish B2B firms wish for their brand to be perceived in the same way everywhere, and a way of achieving this is to use a standardized strategy with only minor adaptations for the different markets that the company is present on. Banarjee (2008) argues that foreign firms operating in India could use the cultural diversity to gain a competitive advantage by including cultural symbols in advertisements, but this was not something that any of the respondents considered important for their firms.
6. Conclusion

_In this final chapter, our conclusions will be presented. The conclusions lead to the answering of our research questions. Furthermore, managerial implications, recommendations for further research and our limitations will be presented._

6.1 Research questions

In order to answer our research questions “What culturally diverse characteristics do Swedish B2B firms perceive in the Indian market?” and “How do Swedish B2B firms adapt their marketing strategy to meet the cultural diversity of the Indian market?”, the conclusions of the most important findings from the respondents will be presented. The discussion will be divided in our three main concepts used in the conceptual framework; _Cultural elements, B2B marketing and Marketing Strategy India_. From the theories that we have included in our literature review, we created a conceptual framework with the concepts and dimensions most relevant for our study after having conducted the interviews. Concepts derived from the main theories in the field of national culture has been included and integrated with cultural elements characterizing India as a diversified country. The impact of these elements on B2B marketing and further on the designing of a marketing strategy in India is what our conceptual framework aims to capture. By relating our empirical findings to a conceptual framework with support in the literature review, we believe that our contributions can more easily be used to future analysis.

6.1.1 Cultural elements

The cultural elements derive from studies made on cultural differences on national level, as well as differences within India. We combined these since we believe that both perspectives were useful in order to analyse cross-cultural differences. We found that in B2B there might be only minor differences within the country that affects the business, why we believe it is appropriate to include studies made on cross-cultural differences on national level. The literature indicates a high level of hierarchy in India, and mention language and religion to be two important factors that influence Indian culture. From the literature reviews, we included six main dimensions in our study; power distance, uncertainty avoidance, time perception, religion, language and states. Our empirical findings indicates that hierarchy, as a part of power distance, is in fact something that highly affects business, since it determines to whom a relationship preferably should be
developed. The general impression is that Indians in general do not seem to fear uncertainty and have a different view on time. Differences in time perception have been observed in different regions in India, but the general observation is that things tend to take longer time in comparison to Sweden. In our study, religion has been found not to have an impact on either the business nor the marketing activities, where the conclusion has been drawn that it is because of the nature of the firms studied, B2B. Despite of, or thanks to, the great linguistic variety in India, there is a common business language in English. Differences in certain regions and states have been observed by the respondents, but it does not seem to affect the general business. To conclude, the differences between India and Sweden are easily observed and the diversity within India is visible, but not something that significantly impacts the business of Swedish B2B firms operating in India.

6.1.2 B2B Marketing

Our main focus throughout this paper regarding marketing activities has been relationship marketing, and relationships are explained in the literature to play a vital role in the context of B2B marketing. Our empirical findings confirm this, where all respondents claim that cherishing relationships is the biggest part of the marketing activities in India. India is even referred to as a “relation market”.

All respondents put a high emphasis in maintaining existing customers. The influence of culture on the marketing activities is not explicitly confirmed by any of the respondents, but the conclusion drawn is that the choice of staff is a way to deal with this implicitly.

Our study indicates that taking use of local personnel with an already established network, as well as cultural knowledge, is a way to reach customers and improve the brand reputation. One experience is that the reputation of the brand is more important than the actual product, this being rather unique for India. The cultural influences on marketing have mainly been observed in the time perception and the hierarchy that has influenced the decision processes. To conclude, managing relationships was found to be the major marketing activity for Swedish B2B firms in India, and cherishing existing relationships seems to be the key for success on the Indian market. Cultural differences within India seem to only have minor importance in marketing.

6.1.3 Marketing Strategy India
The theory suggests firms to have a multicultural marketing strategy in India, adapting its marketing material with respect to culture and languages. This cannot be supported by our empirical findings. After conducting the interviews, a common opinion was found among the respondents that cultural differences between the states of India do not seem to lead to a need for cultural adaptations in marketing. Only one of them claimed that the company translate the marketing material to local languages, but to that should be added that the message was kept the same in order to keep the same brand image regardless of which region the marketing wished to target. All respondents have a standardized strategy and was keen to keep its brand image similar, not only within India but on all markets. Furthermore, they all agree on that English is the language for communication in business, given that the parties do not speak the same mother tongue.

None of the respondents could account for any certain adaptations made in communication with different Indian customers, except from employing local staff. The main conclusion that we came up with regarding a marketing strategy for India was that in the nature of B2B, perhaps a need for cultural adaptations was not that important. Given that the products were aimed for other businesses, none of the respondents saw a need for adapting the marketing material for different religions. All firms tend to have a common marketing strategy for India as a nation rather than to different parts of India.

The importance of being prepared of the cultural differences awaiting is shown, even though the need for adaption less so.

To conclude, no major marketing adaptations are done with respect to culture. English is the officially accepted business language for communication, why differences in language does not seem to be an issue for Swedish firms designing a marketing strategy for India, and for Swedes establishing business relationships in India. To employ local staff does however seem to be an alternative way to deal with differences.

6.1.4 Final conclusion

- “What culturally diverse characteristics do Swedish B2B firms perceive in the Indian market?”

Differences in language and religion in India has been perceived by our respondents, but does not seem to have any significant impact on marketing activities due to English being the official business language. Differences in
laws and regulations between the states can be observed and are important to be aware of when doing business, but its impact on marketing activities have not been supported by our respondents. From a Swedish perspective, the cultural diversity in India is observed but its relevance when doing business is only minor. On the national level, cultural differences between Sweden and India are however more easily observed. The difference in time perception is observed by all respondents, where things tend to take longer time and indicates a need for flexibility. Hierarchy is observed by all respondents in relationships and decision making, and uncertainty avoidance is also something that is shown where Indians are often found to change their mind quickly and not being afraid of uncertainties. The importance of relationships in India has been accounted for, but the cultural impact on these less so.

Our study indicates that cultural diversity is in fact of minor importance for Swedish B2B firms when doing business in India.

- “How do Swedish B2B firms adapt their marketing strategy to meet the cultural diversity of the Indian market?”

Despite the cultural diversity, our empirical findings indicate that Swedish B2B firms use standardized marketing strategies, with only minor adaptations. Differences in language lead to some adaptation in terms of translation of advertisement materials, but in the management of relationships English was the official language used. None of the respondents could account for a need to adapt their marketing due to differences between the states in India. The only adaptation made with respect to cultural differences was to employ Indian locals from different regions, that could manage relationship marketing in its own culture and mother tongue. For the Swedes, no personal experience of adaptation in the relationship marketing within India could be accounted for, even though religious holidays sometimes was paid attention to by letting the customer know that they were aware of it, and thus showing respect for the local culture. As with respect to the cultural differences between India and Sweden, the relationship marketing was adapted mainly with respect to hierarchy.

Our study indicates that for Swedish B2B firms, there is in fact no need to adapt
marketing strategies for the cultural diversity in India. Rather, a common marketing strategy for the entire India is used.

6.2 Managerial implications
The managerial implications drawn from this study is the importance of being aware of cultural differences, even though the adaptive part is less important. Hierarchy is important to be aware of when doing business in India, influencing whom is preferable to develop a relationship with. Recommendable is to employ locals that know local language and specific culture, but for foreigners engaging in relations there is no observed need to speak local languages with English being the commonly accepted business language India. The Indian business culture seems to be more homogenous than the diversity that can easily be observed in the everyday life, why we believe that models of national culture can be useful tools for managers when trying to analyze the situation in the Indian market.

6.3 Recommendations for further research
In this study we have identified a research gap in the field of Swedish firms B2B marketing in India and the perception of culture. The objective of this study was to begin the contribution of collecting relevant theories for the subject, taking into consideration the special nature of diversity in India. We found that studies made on national level did in fact contribute to our study in the nature of B2B marketing, in combination with studies made on the differences within India. For example, we believe that Singh’s model of antecedent of culture could be applied more in detail in further research when trying to identify various cultures. Hopefully these can be combined in further research to further provide managers with knowledge about what to take into consideration when going into the Indian market and what adaptations are necessary.

6.4 Limitations
One limitation to our study is that all of our respondents were Swedish. If we were to ask an Indian the impact of, for example religion, the answer could very well have been different. In general, our study is from a Swedish perspective only, with only Swedish respondents. This might have limited the study, since an Indian’s response to our questions could have been different than those received from the Swedes. Since all participating firms had presence in India with local staff employed there, a way to improve the validity of our results could have been to interview the Indian staff employed by these firms. Furthermore, the fact that only three firms and equal number
of representatives were interviewed could be another limitation to this study, since more participants could have contributed to the research with, perhaps, other perspectives on things. One of the respondents was stationed in India and had lived and worked there for more than five years, while the other two had gained knowledge about the Indian market by making frequent business trips to India. This difference between respondents may have affected their answers. The information was gathered from only one interview per representative and firm, which could have limited this study because of the pressure put on the respondent to try to include as much information as possible within a limited amount of time.
References

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**Interviews:**

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Karin Wallström, Marketing manager Gunnebo. Interview conducted 13th May 2014

Jörgen Johansson, Sales manager Norden Machinery. Interview conducted 15th May 2014

**Internet sources:**


Figures


Figure 2:3 Conceptual framework (own model)

Figure 3:1 Abductive approach (own model)

Figure 3:2 Operationalization (own model)
Appendices
Appendix A: Interview Guide

Questions

Respondents introduction
- Please tell us about your position and your responsibilities.
- How long have you been working with India?
- Tell us about what kind of companies you have as customers in India

Cultural elements
1. How would you describe cultural differences between India and Sweden?
   a) From your experience of meeting with Indians from various part of the country, what would say that they all had in common?
   b) Did you notice any cultural differences between regions or states in India?
2. India has various religions, how did this affect your relationships with customers in India?
   a) Please tell us the impact of caste system when you do business in India.
3. How did the cultural differences affect you when doing business?
4. Could you tell us about a time when cultural differences led to misunderstandings/mistakes between you and your customer?
5. What would you say has been most difficult working with Indian customers?

B2B marketing
6. Can you tell us about your marketing activities in India? (Trade fairs, catalogues, visit customers etc.)
   a) From your experience, how do you perceive the diversity of India has affected your marketing activities?
7. How do you manage your already existing relationships with customers in India?
   a) Is this exclusive for India/certain parts of India? (Specify depending on respondents previous reply)
8. Tell us about what you do to in order to attract new customers in order to create new relationships
   a) From your experience, what role did culture play in the relationship building?
9. Please tell us about how a visit at the customer company could look like.
Marketing strategy India

10. Can you tell us about your marketing strategy in India.
   a). How do you work with standardization and adaptation in India?
   b). How does the diversity impact the decision of what strategy to use?
   c). How did the great variation of languages spoken in India affect your strategy?
   d). How does the strategy differ depending on the region/culture you wish to target?