

The process of transfer and adaptation of the corporation's global HRM practices in a cross-border post-acquisition integration phase in a context of a small and medium-sized enterprise

Author: Jenni Nuutinen

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Erhard Lüthi

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I Abstract

The process of human resource management (HRM) practice transfer from a multinational organization across its international operations, such as foreign subsidiaries, has been gaining heightened attention in recent years in the field of international human resource management (IHRM). Partly, it originates from the increasing number of cross-border mergers and acquisitions (M&As) found in the latter half of the 21st century, which causes the existing amount of multinational organizations and their foreign subsidiaries. The methods used by multinational parent organizations to solve the problem of coordinating heterogeneous and geographically distant subsidiaries is found to be an essential part of international management (IM) and a key characteristic of a successful multinational organization in the prevalent global economy. Furthermore, the transferability of HRM practices has been seen to improve the performance and competitiveness of the multinational organizations, which is why it has been selected to be the topic under study.

In this study, the researcher studies the topic of the process of transfer and adaptation of the global HRM practices in a cross-border, post-acquisition integration phase in the context of a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME). The researcher has created a theoretical framework through an extensive use of relevant literature and approached the topic with a qualitative approach by using a method of single case study where she conducted in-depth interviews (4) with the key parties involved. With the theoretical and empirical parts of the study, the researcher was able to create an integrative model for the case organization, to guide how the case organization could approach the phenomenon in question. The key result is to understand the process as a multistage model, where multiple external and organizational influences are interlaced by multinational parent organization and subsidiary actors' active involvement. The process was found to be managed successfully by enhancing the following aspects, called as 'critical success factors': 1) Co-involvement and decision-making autonomy, 2) priority management and low integration speed, and 3) trusting relationships and social interaction ties. Besides the managerial relevance for the case organization, this study contributes to the existing scientific literature and responses to the recall of scholars for further research relevant to managerial practice in the field of HRM practice transfer.

Keywords: HRM Practice Transfer, HRM Practice Adoption, HRM Integration, Cross-Border Acquisition, Post-Acquisition Integration, Competitive Advantage

II Declaration of Authenticity

The work I have submitted is my own effort. I certify that all the material in this thesis, which is not my own work, has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which a degree has been previously conferred upon me.

Olten, December 01, 2017



Jenni Nuutinen

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1 Introduction

1.1 Topic Description

It has been noted that the external environmental factors, such as technological innovation and the global convergence of markets alongside the firms' organizational factors, have led organizations to internationalize their operations (Hubbard, 2013, p. 6; Mellahi, Frynas & Finlay, 2005, pp. 6, 196; Pucik, Björkman, Evans & Stahl, 2011, pp. 120-121). These external environmental factors are part of the prevalent global economy, and are, in addition, making the creation of sustainable competitive advantages increasingly difficult (Hubbard, 2013, p. 6; Volberda et al., 2011, p. 95), which, ultimately, has had considerable effects on the organizations' strategies (Pisano, Rieple & Pironti, 2017 p. 37). To continue, the competitive advantages are often strongly related to the resources that organizations hold and how they are managed, and for that reason organizations are continuously searching for new ways to internalize or utilize the external resources that can help them in developing competitive advantage (Volberda et al., 2011, pp. 95, 146) – which is where acquisition strategies step in (Volberda et al., 2011, p. 147). The latter half of the 21st century found most organizations using the named strategies to acquire resources and deal with the aforementioned competitive challenges posed by the external environment they operate in (Volberda et al., 2011, p. 279).

As said, it has been argued that human assets are an emerging source of competitive advantage for multinational organizations, particularly the cross-unit transfer of business practices that reflect their core competencies (Brewster & Suutari, 2005, p. 12; Myloni, Harzing & Mirza, 2004, p. 518). The ability to transfer business practices, especially HRM practices, which have been proven to be efficient in the parent firm to its foreign subsidiaries, is a key characteristic of successful multinational organizations in the prevalent global economy (Ahlvik & Björkman, 2015, p. 497), where the transferability of such practices can form a social competitive capability which is difficult for competitors to imitate (Flood et al., 2003, as cited in Liu, 2004, p. 500). Because of the mentioned reasons, amongst others, multinational organizations attempt to transfer HRM practices across their international operations (Björkman & Lervik, 2007, p. 320). However, the complexity in the context of HRM practice transfer must be noted, particularly in an event of cross-border acquisition. Therefore, this study attempts to explore the process of HRM practice transfer in the context of post-acquisition integration phase, taking into consideration the possible influencing factors.

The interest for this particular topic derives from the previous literature and research. Various authors (e.g., Brewster & Suutari, 2005; Budhwar & Sparrow, 2002; Liu, 2004) have pointed out that the factors hindering the

international transfer of knowledge, including the integration of HRM practices across borders, required more attention in future research. Almost as a response, in recent years the topic has been gaining more attention in the HR scene. Especially in the studies of Ahlvik, Smale and Sumelius (2016), Ahlvik and Björkman (2015), Björkman and Lervik (2007) and Smale, Björkman and Sumelius (2013) where the topic of transferring HRM practices within multinational firms has been well-examined with a similar focus to this study. However, these studies were focusing on examining the topic with multiple case studies methods by studying large multinational organizations, whereas this study is focusing on a single organization and will approach the topic with a qualitative approach. By drawing on recent research, this study applies the current theories and practices to the context of a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) as a foreign subsidiary, by also revealing the limitations of applying these study findings directly to the context of SMEs. Moreover, the selected case organization has faced the challenges of the phenomena and, therefore, the researcher aims to find potential solutions and create a framework to solve this practical real-world problem (Greener, 2011, pp. 170–171). More closely, the researcher aims to guide how the case organization could approach the post-acquisition stage in terms of transferring the global HRM practices into the newly acquired small and medium-sized firm.

1.2 Research Questions and Objectives

Furthermore, the objective of this research, is to study, create, and offer a model of the process of transfer and adaptation of the case organization's global HRM practices in a cross-border, post-acquisition integration phase in the context of an SME. Even though the researcher is familiar with the limitations of the research design and the chosen methods (presented in Chapter 3), she aims to find out the post-acquisition integrative capabilities in terms of the process of HRM practice transfer and, ultimately, offer an integrative model for the organization in question. The second objective of this study is to examine the post-acquisition integration stage by understanding the contextual factors within the focus of the study. Finally, the aim is to enhance the absorptive learning of the organization in question, with the intention that the organization could be able to build the post-acquisition integrative capabilities as a one of its core competences.

Following the focus of this study, the research question was formulated as a descriptive “how” question (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 15):

- I. **How to address and manage the process of transfer and adaptation of the corporation's global HRM practices in a cross-border, post-acquisition integration phase?**

To cover all aspects with the focus of the study, an additional sub-question was defined:

II. What are the challenges faced in HRM practice transfer in the context of a small and medium-sized enterprise?

The following working propositions incorporate the above research questions:

1. The approach to transfer organization's global HRM practices in an event of cross-border acquisition depends on the adopted post-acquisition integration approach and the underlying motivation for such a transaction.
2. The success of the HRM practice transfer and adoption partially depends on the extent to which national external environmental factors, as well as organizational factors taken into account.
3. The acquired firm's pre-existing HRM practices present greater challenges to the HRM practice transfer and adoption.
4. The acquired and acquiring firms' lack of HR functional expertise and capabilities present greater challenges to the HRM practice transfer and adoption.
5. The formal mechanisms, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the HRM practice adoption in the levels of implementation and integration.
6. The informal mechanisms, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the HRM practice adoption in the levels of implementation, integration, and internalization.
7. The informal mechanisms, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the creation of social ties and trusting relationships between the acquirer and acquired firms.
8. The process-management and change-management practices, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the success of the HRM practice transfer and adoption.

1.3 Structure of the Paper

Firstly, the paper creates the context under the study and presents the current theory and literature in the theoretical part of the paper in Chapter 2. The literature review starts by presenting the nature of cross-border mergers and acquisitions and further proceeds to examine the post-acquisition integration phase. After that, the process of transferring HRM practices from a multinational firm to across its international operations is presented including all the relevant factors which might have influence on it. The theoretical part of this paper ends by concluding the examined topics and creating a conceptive model for HRM practice transfer and adoption. Chapter 3 looks into the chosen research methods and shows in detail how the empirical part of this study was conducted. Then the paper proceeds to show the results of the gathered data and reveals the predominant

themes. In Chapter 5, the research results are discussed and further implications are presented. The paper ends by acknowledging the limitations of the research and proposes suggestions for further research in Chapter 6.

2 Theory and Frameworks

The literature review is the first major component of this study; it is an analysis of relevant literature which creates the context for and defines the topic of the study. At first, the key definitions are shortly viewed and the case organization is presented with the aim of supporting the reader in gaining a full understanding of the topic and the context under study. After the definitions, the section proceeds with examining the current theory and literature.

2.1 Definitions

International acquisition is an acquisition of a local organization's assets by a foreign organization, which is aimed at fostering growth internationally by expanding the acquirer's reach in foreign markets (Mellahi et al., 2005, p. 196; Volberda et al., 2011, p. 147). Applying the term **cross-border acquisition**, this means that the organizations involved are headquartered in different countries (Volberda et al., 2011, p. 285).

Post-acquisition integration is defined by Sudarsanam (2011) as being the fourth stage of mergers and acquisitions' process. This is used to describe the activities designed and to bind the two parties involved – acquiring and acquired firms (Pucik et al., 2011, p. 126).



Figure 1. The Five-Stage (5-S) Model of the M&A Process (Sudarsanam, 2011)

Transfer of HRM practices is the process of diffusion of such practices, e.g., from multinational firms to international operations (Edwards & Rees, 2011, p. 123).

Small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) is defined by the European Commission as “The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro” (European Commission, 2017).

2.1.1 Case Organization

The case organization is a global medical products and technologies firm, called ConvaTec, which focuses on therapies for the management of chronic conditions, with leading market positions in advanced wound care, ostomy care, continence and critical care, and infusion devices (ConvaTec Group PLC, 2017). The company has more than 9,000 employees and does business in more than 100 countries (ConvaTec Group PLC, 2017). However, the research is conducted in collaboration with ConvaTec International GmbH, which is a company subsidiary and the European headquarters of ConvaTec Group based in Schaffhausen (Switzerland) (ConvaTec Group PLC, 2017a).

ConvaTec Group Plc acquired EuroTec Beheer B.V., a Netherlands-based manufacturer of ostomy appliances, for a purchase price of €25 million in January 2017 (ConvaTec Group PLC, 2017b). EuroTec manufactures and distributes one- and two-piece ostomy systems and accessories in the Netherlands and Belgium (ConvaTec Group PLC, 2017b). The acquisition also included EuroTec’s production facilities and, approximately, 60 employees (ConvaTec Group PLC, 2017b; EuroTec, 2017).

2.2 Mergers and Acquisitions: A Cross-Border Acquisition

The theoretical part of the paper continues by presenting the field of mergers and acquisitions by concentrating on cross-border acquisitions. After examining the current state of M&As and familiarizing the reader with the broader context under study, the section proceeds by presenting the underlying motivations for such a transaction and how the motivations are related to the chosen post-acquisition integration degree and approach.

As Gaughan (2015, p. 3) looks at the recent history of the field of mergers and acquisitions, at present the field seems to be highly in force; after the economic recovery from financial crisis and great recession, the field of mergers and acquisitions has begun to rebound even stronger. He continues by saying that the waves of such transactions have become longer and more frequent, which is why they have become an ever-important part of the world of corporate strategy (Gaughan, 2015, p. 3). Complementarily, Zhang and Iles (2017, p. 450) state that organizations are using acquisitions to gain access to new global markets and resources, such as technologies or competencies and talents. In turn, Hubbard (2013, pp. 18–19) points out the changing nature of mergers and

acquisitions, the fall of hostile acquisition activities and the increasing use of transformational capacity to quickly extend an organization's geographic extent, which is also the case in this study.

2.2.1 Underlying Motivations of Cross-Border M&As

The motives of mergers and acquisitions are widely studied (Mellahi et al., 2005, pp. 197–198; Hubbard, 2013, p. 99; Morschett, Schramm-Klein & Zentes, 2015, p. 80). There are existing multiple motivations for such a transaction but, in general, the drivers of choosing an acquisition as an entry mode stem from strategic, economic and personal motives (Mellahi et al., 2005, pp. 197–198). It could be argued, that in the context of the study, such an ownership option has been made from strategical reasons, which aim to improve the strategic position of the case organization by either creating synergies, leveraging its core competencies, strengthening its market power or by speeding up the access to foreign markets (Frynas & Mellahi, 2015, p. 171). In addition, according to Hubbard (2013, p. 99) cross-border acquisitions are mainly top-line-driven expanding market opportunities, where there is less overlap and a greater likelihood of entering new markets and geographic growth, which are seen to be highly desired when the international competition intensifies (Sweeney & McFarlin, 2015, p. 373). This is supported by research conducted by KMPG, which shows that 48 percent of cross-border acquisitions have occurred because of geographic market entry (Hubbard, 2013, p. 102). However, another motivation highly related to the context under study, is a resource collaboration (Hubbard, 2013, p. 104), because it could be argued that the acquisition model is a cross-border with **a model of related acquisition**, where the acquiring firm acquires a firm from a highly-related field (Volberda et al, 2011, p. 282). In this event, the acquiring firm utilizes the target firm's resources effectively in the wider firm (Hubbard, 2013, p. 104), and seeks to create value through the synergy that can be generated by integrating some parts of their resources and capabilities (Volberda et al., 2011, p. 282).

2.2.2 Integration Approach and Degree

The degree of post-acquisition integration and the chosen approach relate how the organization is planning to achieve its acquisitions objectives (Hubbard, 2013, p. 100). Even though in cross-border acquisitions the degree of integration is not a clear-cut (Hubbard, 2013, p. 102), the relationship between the degree of integration chosen and the reason for acquiring suggest that, in a market-entry model, the degree of integration is possible or even likely, whereas in an event of resource collaboration the degree is stated to remain unlikely (Hubbard, 1999, as cited in Hubbard, 2013, p. 105). As Morschett, Schramm-Klein and Zentes (2015, p. 88) conclude, the collaborative arrangements are often beneficial, especially if the access to local knowledge is the primary motive, where the targets are left semi-autonomously and competencies are shared across the whole organization

(Hubbard, 2013, p. 128). On the other hand, to leverage the innovation capacity in multinational firms, it requires a certain level of integration (Morschett et al., 2015, p. 41). Altogether, the acquiring firm must find a balance ensuring organizational collaboration without integrating the target firm to the point that its unique resources are damaged or lost (Hubbard, 2013, p. 104), which is the trade-off between integration and synergy exploitation (Weber, Tarba & Öberg, 2014, p. 168).

As mentioned, most acquisitions require a mix of interdependence and autonomy, depending on the underlying strategy behind the transaction (Sudarsanam, 2011, p. 698). This classification leads to four different types of post-acquisition integration: 1) portfolio management, 2) preservation, 3) symbiosis and 4) absorption (Sudarsanam, 2011, p. 699). The aforementioned approaches are presented in the figure below.

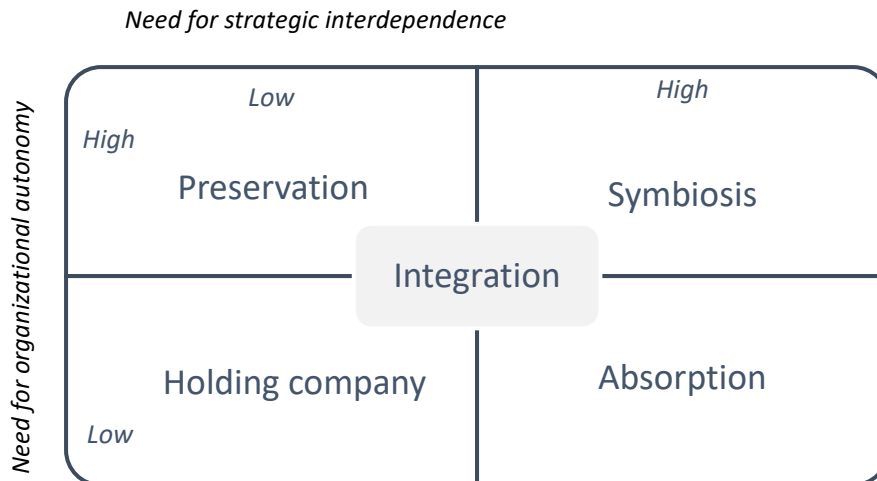


Figure 2. Strategic Interdependence versus Autonomy in Integration (Sudarsanam, 2011, p. 699 based on Haspeslagh & Jemison, 1991, pp. 139–140)

It could be argued that, under the context of study, the approach has the attributes of a symbiotic acquisition, as previously mentioned (compared to a collaborative approach). In a symbiotic acquisition, where the level of integration is moderate (Weber et al., 2014, p. 172), the firms initially coexist but gradually become interdependent (Sudarsanam, 2011, p. 699). Often, this type of acquisition betokens a transnational international business strategy (Barlett & Ghoshal, 1989, as cited in Sparrow, Brewster & Chung, 2017, p. 64).

2.2.3 HRM Challenges in Post-Acquisition Integration Phase

The risks associated with cross-border mergers and acquisitions, such as the differences between the two organizations in terms of national and organizational cultures, structures, technology and/or procedures, which

most likely cause issues in integrating the acquired firm to the parent firm's systems (Mellahi et al., 2005, p. 198; Sweeney & McFarlin, 2015, p. 372), are called 'fit issues' (Hubbard, 2013, p. 107). Additionally, the managers of the acquired foreign firm may not fully accept the acquirer, which results in a weaker degree of relationship and attachment between these two parties (Mellahi et al., 2005, p. 198). On the other hand, process issues are those surrounding the implementation of the target to the acquirer, which include processes such as negotiations, communication or HR issues during the implementation (Hubbard, 2013, p. 107). The mentioned fit issues, as well as the process issues, might cause so-called 'people issues', such as overt conflicting behavior, health problems, absenteeism or employee turnover, which must be controlled and evaluated (Weber et al., 2014, p. 184) throughout the integration phase and during the process of HRM practice transfer in order to ensure the success of such an initiative (Schweizer & Patzelt, 2012, p. 298).

To navigate these obstacles that plague the general post-acquisition integration phase, Goulet and Schweiger (2006, p. 426) emphasize the importance of involving employees from both acquiring and acquired firms. This is achieved by building shared understandings and trust, under leadership at a functional level (Schweizer & Patzelt, 2012; Zhang & Iles, 2017, p. 456) favorably influencing employee aspiration for change and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency during the integration process (Goulet & Schweiger, 2006, p. 426). Besides, creating shared vision helps the personnel to align their goals and understand better why new practices might improve the organization's existing operations (Morris et al., 2009, p. 976). The transparency of the integration process, as well as clear, honest and early communication, are found to be critical success factors to get local acceptance and to mitigate the anxieties of the acquired personnel (Deresky, 2017, p. 265; Sudarsanam, 2003, p. 553). Besides the listed factors, Zhang and Iles (2017, p. 456) mention the use of integration advisors to smooth the process of post-acquisition integration, whereas Teerikangas, Véry and Pisano (2011) the importance of an integration manager. These aspects are seen to be key also in HRM practice transfer, as examined at the later stage of the theoretical part of the paper.

2.3 Transfer of HRM Practices

As previously presented in subchapter 2.2, the approach to transfer corporation's HRM practices, in an event of acquisition, is partly dependent on the strategic logic behind it and the adopted integration approach (Edwards & Rees, 2011, p. 129; Pucik et al., 2011, p. 141), whereas these approaches tend to follow the organization's overall business strategy (The I/R-Framework from Barlett & Ghoshal, 1989) and the state of mind (The EPRG Concept from Perlmutter, 1969) of the organization in question (Morschett et al., 2015, pp. 32–36; Myloni et al., 2004, p. 519). In this case, the business strategy of the case organization has the characteristics of a transnational

business strategy and, therefore, the state-of-mind characteristics of geocentric attitude, which places emphasis on interdependencies and aims for a collaborative approach between the involved parties (Morschett et al., 2015, p. 36).

Similar to a multinational organization's business strategy and integration approach, IHRM strategy deals with the conflicting forces, finding the balance between the need to control the scattered foreign subsidiaries (standardization/convergence) and the need for those units to have the necessity control to handle the local issues agilely (differentiation/divergence) (Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 57; Sweeney & McFarlin, 2015, p. 451; Tarique, Briscoe & Schuler, 2016, pp. 53–54). In terms of HRM practice transfer, the management of a multinational acquiring firm may see clear benefits in transferring the HRM practices across their international operations (Edwards & Rees, 2011, p. 123), such as global efficiency by a worldwide integrated behavior (Hubbard, 2013, p. 100; Morschett et al., 2015, p. 29) through control and coordination (Smale, Björkman & Sumelius, 2012), but in some cases, there is little incentive to transfer practices across borders (Edwards & Rees, 2011, p. 129). With these events, acquirers choose to take advantage of the local context (Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 281). However, in most cases, the successful integration of HRM practices requires some degree of local adaptation (Smale et al., 2012, p. 233) and therefore the multinational acquiring firm might choose a strategy of GLOCAL by combining attributes of global and local strategies, to trade off the best advantages of each strategy (Deresky, 2017, p. 253). The GLOCAL strategy is supported also by the CAGE distance framework introduced by Ghemawat (2001), which explains why the one-size-fits-all strategy might be problematic (Deresky, 2017, p. 254; Ghemawat, 2001).

Moreover, to follow the context under study, the IHRM strategy in question tends to have the attributes of an active IHRM strategy, where the parent organization's HR and HR at the subsidiary level try to balance the control over HR decision-making (Tarique et al., 2016, pp. 55–56). However, it must be noted that the approach for HRM practice transfer is not as simplistic and, in practice, the organization's strategy could be a hybrid (Morschett et al., 2015, p. 265; Myloni et al., 2004, p. 519) by blending the elements of different types of strategies, rather than the binary categorization into either global or local practices (Ahlvik, Smale & Sumelius, 2016, p. 343; Zhang & Iles, 2017, p. 446), partly because of the complexity of the contextual factors, as presented below.

2.3.1 (Contextual) Factors Influencing HRM Practice Transfer

Although many researchers place emphasis on the transferability of such practices as HRM for achieving competitive advantages, in practice, multinational organizations are still struggling to replicate these practices across their international operations (Morris et al., 2009, pp. 973–974). On that account, the process of HRM

practice transfer must be understood as a social process whereby multiple external influences are interlaced by corporate and subsidiary actors' active involvement, as Sparrow, Brewster and Chung (2017, p. 109) advise. Therefore, to go beyond the evaluation of the degree or approach for post-acquisition integration or the discussion of convergence and divergence, the section proceeds to understand how the contextual factors influence the process of HRM practice transfer. Here, the factors have been divided into national external environmental factors and organizational environmental factors.

2.3.1.1 National External Environmental Factors

In order to ensure the success of cross-border post-acquisition integration and the transfer and adoption of HRM practices in relation to the chosen degree and approach, the macro-level, national environmental factors impacting on the business must be examined. The elements of legal, cultural, economic and political environments and systems are predominant in each nation (Frynas & Mellahi, 2015, p. 40), called also as the country of operation effects (Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 108), and the extent to which they are considered impacts on the success of such a transaction (Schmidt, 2002, p. 239). These elements, such as national employment legislations or local labor market conditions, can heavily influence or even hinder the desire for solid transfer of HRM practices between the acquiring and acquired firm (Deresky, 2017, p. 375; Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 108). For further consideration, it has been noted that not all HRM policies and practices can be transferred across organizational types, as examined in next subchapter, or national contexts (Myloni et al., 2004; Thomas & Lazarova, 2014, p. 76). The practices where there are not well-defined local norms nor legal mandates are transferable, whereas the contrary practices are most likely reflecting the local context (Thomas & Lazarova, 2014, p. 76). The table below considers some of the country of operation effects and how they might influence local HRM practices.

<i>Legal, Cultural and Economic Environment, Political System</i>			<i>Values / Ideologies, Religious Beliefs, Education / Human Capital, Communication, Social Structure</i>
<i>Local Laws & Practices</i>	<i>IHRM</i>	<i>Cultural Norms & Practices</i>	
Collectivism Feminine / Equal Employment Laws Re-Hiring Local Employees Certification Requirements	<i>Recruitment & Selection</i>	Individualism Masculine Obligation	
Skill Levels The Role of the Government HQ / Local Training Education System	<i>Training & Development</i>	Time Perspective; Long/Short-Term Orientation Power Distance	
Achievement Locally Accepted Measures	<i>Performance Appraisal</i>	Ascription Face-Saving Evaluating; Indirect/Direct Negative Feedback Leading; Egalitarian/Hierarchical	
Local Standards; Wage and Salary Levels Group-Based / Individual Performance	<i>Compensation</i>	Uncertainty Avoidance, Risk Propensity Deciding; Consensual/ Top-Down Trusting; Task-/ Relationship-Based	
Unemployment Compensation	<i>Labor Relations</i>	Work Ethics Attitudes toward Unions Loyalty/ Group Harmony Paternalism	
Local Labor Laws & Restrictions Unions		Nature of Employee Relations	

Table 1. Variables Influencing Local HRM Practices (based on Deresky, 2017, p. 375)

As Sparrow et al. (2017, p. 108) conclude, the corporation's HRM personnel must understand the specific context of the foreign subsidiary to which it aims to transfer the HRM practices. Hence, to have a closer look at the context being studied and at the predominant HRM practices in the Netherlands (the location of the foreign subsidiary), the evaluation conducted by Boon and Den Hartog (2012) on societal cultures, indicates that the Netherlands tends to have a culture of highly egalitarian and individualistic approaches, but at the same time a relatively feminine culture with caring values (Boon & Den Hartog, 2012, pp. 35–36; Meyer, 2015, pp. 118–119). This means that employees tend to have high and set wages and are seen as stakeholders in firms, while the need for maintaining good relationships with employees by the management is highly valued (Boon & Den Hartog, 2012, pp. 35–36). Besides, organizational structures are flat and employees' voices are encouraged, whereas firing people is extremely difficult because of employment security. Other characteristics found to be predominant in Dutch companies are: high participation and self-managed teams, training and development, as well as long-term orientation (Boon & Den Hartog, 2012, pp. 35–36).

Even the study of Boon and Den Hartog (2012) gives valuable insights into Dutch culture; it must be noted that no specific extrapolations can be drawn based solely on these assumptions. As Thomas and Lazarova (2014, p. 35) and Meyer (2015, pp. 13, 252) conclude, the cultural values give only very general guidance about the practices which may or may not be culturally appropriate. This information is important for cross-cultural management in planning how the cultural difference between the involved firms might be overcome through judicious management, in terms of HRM practice transfer and adoption (Ahlvik et al., 2016, p. 353), such as by leaving the execution of the actions to the local professionals (Lertxundi & Landeta, 2012, p. 1,801).

2.3.1.2 Organizational Environmental Factors

Even though the examined national external environmental factors presented are not the center of this study, their possible impact must be taken into account while assessing the success of the process of HRM practice transfer. In this study, the focus is placed more on the organizations' (internal) environmental factors, which have been evaluated in the context of forward HRM practice transfer, from the parent to subsidiary.

Formal research reveals that the different subsidiary characteristics (e.g., age and size) and roles influence on the level of coordination and control mechanisms exercised by the multinational parent firm (Barlett & Ghoshal, 1986, as cited in Morschett et al., 2015, p. 58; Smale, 2008, p. 139). Moreover, if the subsidiaries are highly dependent (e.g., resources) on the parent firm and if the parent firm holds higher equity, the more similar their

HRM practices tend to be (Björkman & Lervik, 2007, p. 324). However, here the emphasis is placed on the current HRM practices and policies held by the acquired firm and the capabilities owned by its HR professionals.

The study findings of Ahlvik and Björkman (2015) support the fact that acquired subsidiaries with pre-existing HRM practices, policies, and norms present greater challenges in terms of adopting practices that resemble those of the acquiring firm. Partially, this can be explained by the fact that it is a shift from practices that have become accepted in an organization in question (Edwards, 2011, p. 268), which has a direct effect on the employees and, consequently, elicits strong reactions if there are any changes, especially in ways that make the personnel policies and systems less attractive (Weber et al., 2014, p. 184). This situation also applies to the context of SMEs, although the firms of this category tend not to have formal HRM practices and policies in place, and do not practice them to the same extent as larger firms (Burke, 2011, p. 12). Additionally, in SMEs, the formalization of HRM practices might be seen as a liability, since it is decreasing the flexibility of its HRM practices and policies (Burke, 2011, p. 13).

Moreover, HRM in SMEs tends to be seen as having lower priority than other functions, which partially leads the organizations to struggle with several issues, such as skill shortages and high levels of absenteeism and employee turnover (Burke, 2011, p. 13; Thomas & Lazarova, 2014, p. 58). In this light, the transfer of HRM practices from the acquired firm might seem to be desirable, at least in the eyes of the subsidiary managers and HR professionals. Although it seems to be difficult in the context of small and medium-sized firms, because their HR functions are characterized with limited resources and, partly as a consequence, SMEs are often lacking specialists whose job is to do one task only, which could lead to lack of HR expertise and to hinder the process of HRM practice transfer and adoption (Burke, 2011, p. 12; Chung, Bozkurt & Sparrow, 2012, as cited in Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 108). Similarly, the acquirer's lack of HR expertise, especially the lack of M&A knowledge, have found to have a negative impact on the transfer and adoption of HRM practices (Rothlauf, 2015, p. 76). As Rothlauf (2015, p. 76) states, the knowledge about the process of M&As might be rudimentary, when M&A is an event which is not part of the everyday business of the acquired firm.

2.3.2 The Process of HRM Practice Transfer and Adoption

Chiang, Lemański and Birtch (2017, p. 242) show, based on prior research, that the process of HRM practice transfer is a complex one, including three different stages: 1) the creation of new practices (e.g., through in-house experimentation or benchmarking), 2) the transfer of such practices by codifying, communicating and transmitting, and finally 3) the stage of practice implementation, which refers to the HRM practice adoption in

the subsidiary. Moreover, Björkman and Lervik (2007) and recently Ahlvik and Björkman (2015) show that there exist three dimensions of HRM practice adoption, listed as 1) implementation, 2) integration and 3) internalization. While the extent to which the HRM practices are transferred and adopted plays a crucial role in the success of such an initiative. The first level, implementation, refers namely to the extent to which the transferred practices are in use in the subsidiary, whereas the second level, integration, is about how well the transferred practices are connected to other HRM practices in the subsidiary (Ahlvik & Björkman, 2015, p. 498). Finally, the third level named as internalization, refers to the extent to which the management and personnel of the subsidiary acknowledge the value and symbolic meaning of the transferred practices (Ahlvik & Björkman, 2015, p. 498). The next subchapter will proceed to define the different mechanisms used in transferring HRM practices, and finally presenting a conceptual model of the process of the transfer and adoption of HRM practices by combining the presented contextual factors with the mechanisms examined in the following.

2.3.2.1 Informal and Formal Mechanisms

In order to successfully transfer the practices, there must be a range of formal mechanisms established but, most importantly, informal ways of influencing employment practices at plant level (Edwards & Rees, 2011, pp. 131–132; Morschett et al., 2015, pp. 241–242). The formal mechanisms include aspects such as organizational structure, centralization, formalization, and standardization and planning, whereas the informal mechanisms consist of lateral or cross-departmental relations, informal communication, and normative integration (Martinez & Jarillo, 1989, as cited in Morschett et al., 2015, p. 234).

More and more research findings highlight the importance of informal mechanisms and criticize the role of formal mechanisms and control (Ahlvik & Björkman, 2015; Ahlvik et al., 2016). In some studies, the role of formal mechanisms has been seen even to enhance the blind adoption where the transferred practices are implemented but not internalized in the subsidiary (Ahlvik & Björkman, 2015, p. 502; Ahlvik et al., 2016, p. 352). However, these studies also acknowledged that such mechanisms enhance the levels of implementation and integration (Ahlvik & Björkman, 2015, p. 503), which in the eyes of the researcher, could be seen as a good starting point where the acquiring firm can instruct in detail how the transferred HRM practices should be integrated with the existing practices, and then at the later point use different mechanisms in order to achieve the degree of internalization in the practice adoption. Additionally, formal mechanisms might be highly required in transferring HRM practices in the context of SME, as discussed in subchapter 2.3.1.2.

Since the ideal level of practice adoption is an active adoption, where the transferred practices are well-integrated and have high levels of implementation and internalization, this study is also taking into consideration the importance of informal mechanisms. These intra-organizational factors, such as the intensity of the relationship between the acquiring and acquired firms or the co-involvement in decision-making process, tend to help the acquirer to build trusting relationships and social ties, to mitigate the possible influences of external environmental factors, as well as to facilitate tacit knowledge-sharing between the involved parties in an event of HRM practice transfer (Ahlvik et al., 2016, p. 353; Chung et al., 2012, as cited in Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 108). Especially mutual trust has been found to play a critical role in HRM practice transfer and to the level of practice adoption (Thomas & Lazarova, 2014, p. 76). Besides, with personalization strategies, the acquiring firm mitigates the risk of *ceremonial adoption* (blind adoption), where practices are implemented but not internalized, as presented in the Table 2 (Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 108; Thomas & Lazarova, 2014, p. 76).

	<i>Low internalization</i>	<i>High internalization</i>
<i>High implementation</i>	Ceremonial	Active
<i>Low implementation</i>	Minimal	Assent

Table 2. The Patterns of Practice Adoption (based on Thomas & Lazarova, 2014)

As Ahlvik and Björkman (2015), also Ahlvik et al. (2016) and Sparrow et al. (2017, p. 97) conclude, different transferring mechanisms should be used regarding the nature of the transferred HRM practice; when transferring tacit knowledge such as training practices, more informal and richer mechanisms are used (personalization strategy), whereas formal document-to-person approaches are used in the codification strategies such as pay and performance management practices.

2.3.2.2 Process and Change Management Approach

As Sudarsanam (2011, p. 710) presents, acquisitions are major events of change, which involve concerns and a feeling of uncertainty (Rothlauf, 2015, p. 83) and, given the scale of change that an acquisition may cause, the process of HRM practice transfer must be managed through established process and change management practices, which have found to influence positively on the HRM practice transfer and adoption (Björkman & Lervik, 2007, p. 330; Sudarsanam, 2011, p. 710).

Here, the importance of communications and co-involvement are taken into consideration. Moreover, clear and frequent communications about the progress being made are necessary to maintain the momentum of change, enhance the commitment of the employees involved, as well as for creating trusting relationships between the parties (Sudarsanam, 2011, p. 724). Besides, it is crucial to make the commitment and enthusiasm of the top management for the process of HRM practice transfer visible and inspiring through the delivered communication (Sudarsanam, 2011, p. 724). Above all, the acquiring organization must communicate the need for change and highlight its positive sides, drawing an attractive picture of the future state of the organization by communicating the possibilities and development potential that the employment of new HRM practices could bring into the acquired organization (Kotter, 1996, as cited in Björkman & Lervik, 2007, p. 331). The importance of co-involvement refers to the research findings, which showed that the subsidiary managers are more likely to accept decisions on HRM practices to be implemented in their units if they have been involved in the process of deciding and designing the transferred HRM practices, or if they are provided with in-depth explanations for such decisions made (Björkman & Lervik, 2007, p. 330; Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 107). The perceptions of fair processes are important for employee sense-making, since employees who feel that they are treated fairly and with respect are more inclined to exhibit high levels of commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors, whereas employees who feel mistreated and have negative perceptions of justice and fairness, risk the success of the initiative or even the whole post-acquisition integration (Weber et al., 2014, pp. 184–185). Besides, other process management principles, such as having proper resourcing of the project management bodies, establishing mechanisms for feedback and mid-course correction, setting up milestones and realistic time frames for achieving them, as well as celebrating the achievement of such milestones, impact on the success of such an initiative and, therefore, must be established for the process (Sudarsanam, 2011, p. 723). Some of the concepts used in the phase of post-acquisition integration were also shortly presented in subchapter 2.2.3, and here with the given topic of HRM practice transfer and adoption.

2.3.2.3 A Conceptual Model for Transferring HRM Practices

After all the examined topics, the theoretical part of the study ends by creating a conceptual model, combining the topics into one figure. The role of this model is to conclude the theoretical part, to create a holistic approach to the topic, as well as to reveal the interdependencies between the topics being studied.

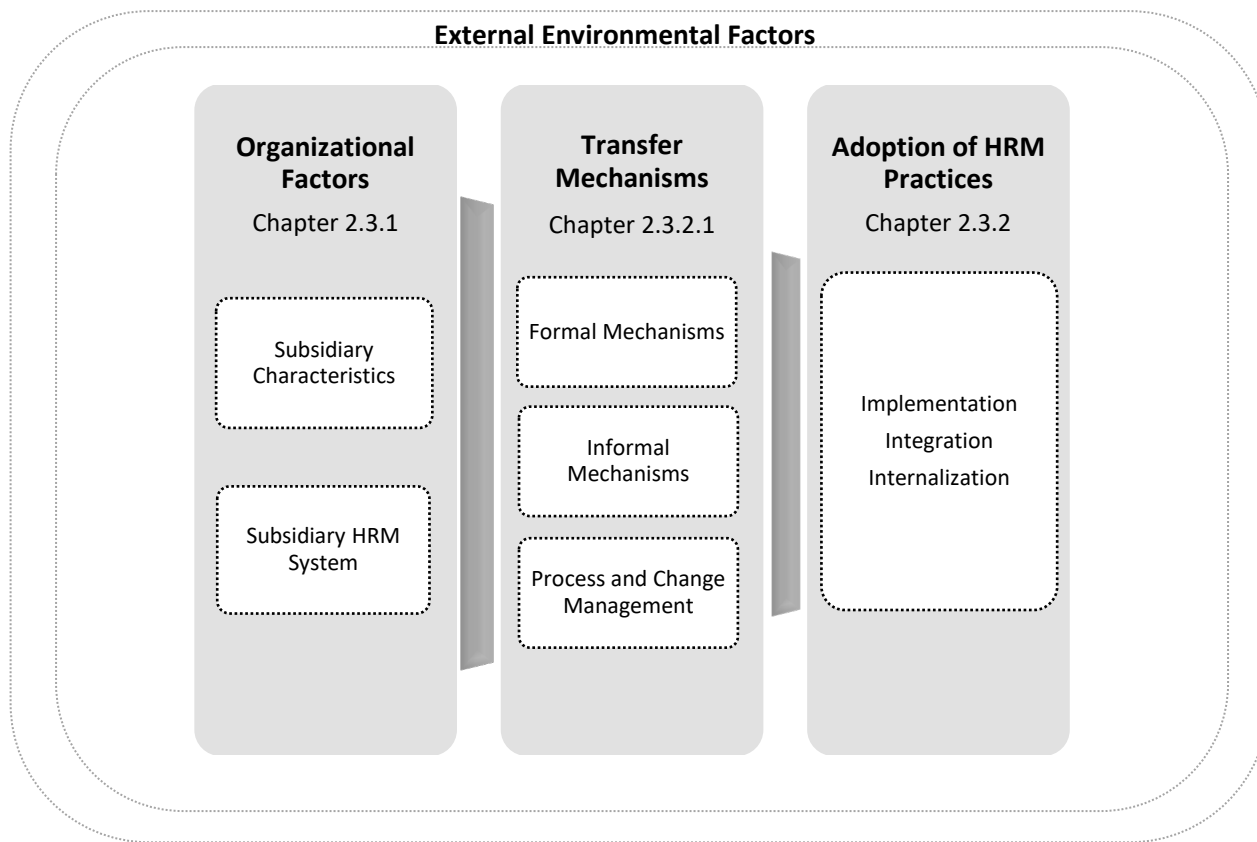


Figure 3. The Process of Transferring HRM Practices

3 Research Methods

The third chapter of this paper examines the research methods used in the empirical part of the study. This chapter shows how the research was conducted and explains the reasons why some particular approaches and methods were chosen to meet the aims of the research. The chapter starts with these aims by presenting the research questions and the formulated working propositions. After that the chapter proceeds to introduce the philosophical orientation of the study and the overall research design. Then the selected procedures are presented, as well as the sampling method and both the methods of data collection and data analysis. The chapter ends by explaining the goodness of the research, potential ethical issues and by presenting the possible limitations of the chosen methods.

3.1 Research Questions and Working Propositions

As already presented in the introduction part of the paper, the aim of this study is to explore the process of transfer and adaptation of the corporation's global HRM practices in a cross-border, post-acquisition integration phase, in the context of a small and medium-sized enterprise, by taking into consideration possible influencing factors. To follow this aim, the main research question was formulated as:

- 1. How to address and manage the process of transfer and adaptation of the corporation's global HRM practices in a cross-border, post-acquisition integration phase?**

To cover all aspects, an additional sub-question has been defined:

- 2. What are the challenges faced in HRM practice transfer in the context of a small and medium-sized enterprise?**

For guiding the research process, the following working propositions were formulated to incorporate the above research questions. Although the creation of working propositions has been seen to be tied to the deductive logic of the research design (Yin, 2014, pp. 37–38), this study is involving both deduction and induction approaches at different stages of the research process, by starting with a deductive approach in the theory creation (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2013, p. 24).

1. The approach to transfer organization's global HRM practices in an event of cross-border acquisition depends on the adopted post-acquisition integration approach and the underlying motivation for such a transaction.

2. The success of the HRM practice transfer and adoption partially depends on the extent to which national external environmental factors, as well as organizational factors taken into account.
3. The acquired firm's pre-existing HRM practices present greater challenges to the HRM practice transfer and adoption.
4. The acquired and acquiring firms' lack of HR functional expertise and capabilities present greater challenges to the HRM practice transfer and adoption.
5. The formal mechanisms, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the HRM practice adoption in the levels of implementation and integration.
6. The informal mechanisms, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the HRM practice adoption in the levels of implementation, integration, and internalization.
7. The informal mechanisms, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the creation of social ties and trusting relationships between the acquirer and acquired firms.
8. The process-management and change-management practices, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the success of the HRM practice transfer and adoption.

3.2 Philosophical Orientation and Research Design

According to Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 33) qualitative research refers to a cluster of different methodologies which ultimately offer frameworks for conducting research and producing valid knowledge. To continue, a qualitative paradigm interprets that useful knowledge can be gained and generated by looking at meaning with small samples, where the researcher should not theorize themselves absent nor be removed from this process (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 33). Therefore, it could be stated that this research follows an interpretivism paradigm, which emphasizes the researcher's understanding about the social world through the participants of the study and their own perspectives (Ormston et al., 2013, pp. 3–4, 22).

The applied research method is a case study method, which means an in-depth and holistic examination of one (or more) case (Guthrie, 2010, p. 66). It has been seen to be an appropriate method by considering the nature of the research within its real-world context (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011, p. 53; Yin, 2012, p. 5). In this case, the case study design consists of a single case study with a single context and different types of embedded units of analysis (Yin, 2009, p. 46); the context is a post-acquisition integration phase, whereas the units of analysis include the people from both parties – from the acquiring and acquired firms. Yin (2014) states that single-case designs require careful investigation of the potential case, in order to minimize the chances of misrepresentation and to maximize the access needed to collect the case study evidence, and that's why the units of analysis include not

only people from both parties but also people from different levels of the organizations, as shown in subsequent subchapter. The case approach with the different subunits allowed the researcher to get insights and gather information on how the individuals and different parties understood and experienced the topics related to the process of HRM practice transfer and adoption.

3.3 Procedures

3.3.1 Sampling Method

The case organization and the participants were selected non-randomly (purposive sampling), where the sample does not represent other populations and any extrapolations cannot be made to them nor from the results and outcomes of the research (Guthrie, 2010, p. 67). On that account, the research participants from different levels, as seen in the below table, were chosen for their characteristics and to gather a diversity of perspectives in order to create better and more in-depth, holistic understanding of the topic (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 56; Ritchie, Lewis, Elam, Tennant & Rahim, 2013, pp. 113–114). In the end, the researcher faced difficulties to get an access to the local employees of the foreign subsidiary and, therefore, the sample size of four is narrower as initially planned.

Research Participants	Acquiring Organization (global)	Acquired Organization (local)
M&A Team	1	1
HR Manager/Professional(s)	1	1

Table 3. Research Participants

To specify, the sample size includes the following employees as the research participants.

- M&A Team
 - EMEA Commercial Operations Director, located in the UK (global), interview number 3
 - Managing Director, located in the Netherlands (local), interview number 4
- HR Manager/Professional(s)
 - HR Manager EMEA, located in Switzerland (global), interview number 1
 - HR representative, located in the Netherlands (local), interview number 2

3.3.2 Data Collection Methods

For collecting data, the semi-structured interviews were chosen (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 46). Looking more closely, the in-depth individual interviews were chosen as the data collection method because they offer an

opportunity for a detailed investigation of people's personal perspectives for a holistic understanding of the personal context within which the research is located (Yeo et al., 2013, p. 178). The semi-structured interview questions were slightly adjusted for each interview group, which made a total of four different interview guides. Additionally, these were sent to the participants in advance, before the interviews took place. In the events of interviewing, prompts and probes, and specifying questions, were used to complete the main questions in order to encourage the participants to open up, as well as to expand their responses.

The in-depth interviews were conducted in English and took approximately 30 to 60 minutes where the data was collected and captured through audio-recording (with a mobile device), which enabled the researcher to devote her full attention to listening to the interviewees and probing in-depth (Arthur, Mitchell, Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls, 2013, p. 172; Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 92). In addition, fieldnotes, collected as written notes during and after the interviews, were used as an additional data collection method. The use of fieldnotes provided the researcher with a means of recording what she saw and heard outside of the immediate context of the interviews, which were used later to complete and compare the gathered data (Arthur et al., 2013, p. 171).

Moreover, it could be argued that the research has elements of single research episodes, since the focus of the study was on the current manifestation (post-acquisition integration phase) of the research subject (HRM practice transfer) and not in the change of an individual, which is the focus on longitudinal studies (Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls, 2013, pp. 61–62).

3.3.3 Data Analysis Methods

To continue, after the researcher transcribed the interviews with the program called f4transkript – for achieving time-saving transcription – and gained a complete overview of the dataset, she could then proceed to the stage of data analysis. At first, the researcher created a codebook and coded the transcribed interviews. After having a complete coding book, the researcher proceeded to create themes and looked for larger patterns across the dataset, before finally conducting the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 224). For the data analysis, a method of thematic analysis (TA) was chosen, which offered a systematic approach for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns throughout the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 178; Spencer, Ritchie, Ormston, O'Connor & Barnard, 2013, p. 271). Because of the small sample size, the researcher conducted the data analysis manually, which was seen to be the most convenient way to execute that. By using the chosen pattern-based method, the researcher could organize the data into categories and higher-level classes that capture conceptual differences in the data and finally tell a story about them (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 254), which is seen in Chapter 4.

3.4 Goodness of the Research

Generalization in social sciences and research refers to the potential of drawing inferences from a single study to wider populations, contexts or theories (Lewis, Ritchie, Ormston & Morrell, 2013, p. 348). However, researchers argue that generalizability is not meaningful for qualitative research, mainly because of assumptions about the context-bound nature of knowledge in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 280). Therefore, the goodness of the research is made up of the following criteria, proposed by Yardley (2000, 2008): 1) sensitivity to context, 2) commitment and rigor, 3) transparency and coherence, as well as 4) impact and importance (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 290). To enhance the goodness of the study, the four principles were considered across the research as follows.

Sensitivity to context: The researcher aimed to be as sensitive as possible to the participants' perspectives and to the socio-cultural context, without speaking to ethical issues, as demonstrated later in the chapter. The context of post-acquisition integration and acquisitions in general are major events of change, which involve concerns and a feeling of uncertainty (Rothlauf, 2015, p. 83), for which a sensitivity to context was highly required from the side of the researcher throughout the research process.

Commitment and rigor: The researcher showed commitment and rigor in every stage of the research by engaging in-depth with the topic being studied.

Transparency and coherence: The researcher made sure that there is a fit between the research questions and the theoretical framework, as well as with the methods used to collect and analyze the data (Yardley, 2000, 2008, as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 290). Moreover, the same data collection procedure was followed for each interview as well as the analysis and interpretation parts which were conducted in a systematic and comprehensive way (Miles et al., 2013, p. 312). Furthermore, the researcher was explicit and as self-aware as possible about her personal assumptions and biases, and how these might come into play during the study (Miles et al., 2013, p. 312; Yin, 2009, p. 72).

Impact and importance: Lastly, the criteria of the goodness of the study is concerned with the importance of the research (Yardley, 2000, 2008, as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 290). As stated in the introduction part of the paper, the researcher aims to find potential solutions and solve the practical real-world problem within the context being studied, which has practical and applied impacts for the case organization.

3.5 Researcher's Role and Ethical Issues

Ethics covers the relationships with the involved participants and with the wider world in which the researcher conducted the research, as well as the used research practices (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 61). For addressing the possible ethical issues, the research followed in each stage the four principles: *respect*, *competence*, *responsibility* and *integrity* (BPS, 2009, as cited in Braun & Clarke 2013, p. 62). By realizing these standards, the researcher familiarized herself with the core requirements of ethical practice, such as maintaining confidentiality and privacy (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 63), by realizing the standards of *respect* and *competence*. To maintain confidentiality and privacy is related to the aim that no one would be harmed from this research being carried out, which is referring to the standard of *responsibility* (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 63). To accomplish the standard of *integrity*, the researcher was honest and accurate in reporting the research results in this report (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 63). And finally, the researcher assessed that the study is very beneficial for the case organization. The research results and recommendations will be provided to the user, where they take the possible actions needed (Miles et al., 2013, p. 215).

3.6 Limitations of the Methods

The study itself has several limitations with the selected topic (presented in Chapter 6) as well as with its research design and the chosen methods. According to Yin (2014, p. 130) some of the limitations related to a case study method are: 1) unwanted biases and flaws by reusing the original data instead of discarding it, 2) incorrect use of collected qualitative data because of a lack of understanding the procedures for collecting and assessing narrative data, and 3) an inability to generalize the findings from a case study to any broader level (Yin, 2014, p. 130). However, since the third point is not the aim of this research, it is excluded, whereas the first two points are recognized as potential limitations. The chosen sampling method (purposive) highlights the importance of the role of researcher and unconscious bias (Guthrie, 2010, pp. 56–57, 74), which is why the potential ethical issues were demonstrated in detail in this study. Another limitation of the chosen sampling method could be the small sample size, since it could be seen to lack breadth (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 80). The chosen data collection method of semi-structured in-depth interviews is posing potential limitations related to the sensitivity of the topic; some of the interview partners might have felt uncomfortable to share his or her opinions and experiences about the topic under study because of the lack of anonymity (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 80). Moreover, there was only one data collection method in use, which did not enable the researcher to triangulate the research results, which is seen to enhance the validity of the research (Braun & Clarke, 2013, pp. 286–286). In the end, the research has elements of a single research episode, as stated, whereas the topic of HRM practice transfer could

be studied also in longitudinal studies for creating more in-depth and holistic understanding of the topic (Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls, 2013, pp. 61–62). All in all, the researcher assessed that the strengths and suitability of the chosen methods outweighed the possible limitations, for which these particular methods were chosen to meet the aims of this research.

4 Research Results

Next, the paper proceeds to present the research results and to offer an analysis from the gathered data. The aim of this section is to transform the data into a complex and nuanced analysis, that tells a clear, coherent and compelling story about the data and its meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 249).

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

As stated, in the earlier stages of the research process, the researcher used a deductive approach for guiding the research and helping to plan and design the research itself, as well as to create the fieldwork (interview) tools (Ormston et al., 2013, p. 22). On the contrary, starting from the interviews, the researcher adopted an inductive approach, where the focus was placed on understanding and exploring the research participants' individual views and experiences about the topic of HRM practice transfer (Ormston et al., 2013, p. 22). At this stage, after completing the initial data analysis, the research results are placed back into the context of the created theoretical framework (Ormston et al., 2013, p. 22). The research results are presented with the created themes in order to provide a holistic and meaningful understanding of the dominant patterns in the data that addresses the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 249). A total of five higher-level categories were found, whereas these categories have seven layers (themes) and a number of subthemes. The chosen methods and the data analysis process are presented more closely in subchapter 3.3.3.

In the text, when referring to the case organization, the terms used include: case organization, acquiring firm/organization and (global) parent firm/organization. Whereas when the researcher talks about the acquired organization, the terminology consists of: acquired firm/organization and local/foreign subsidiary. The process of HRM practice transfer is divided into transfer and adoption parts referring to the different stages of the process. When talking about the process as a whole, the term 'HRM integration' is used, which is comparable to the term 'HRM practice transfer'. Sometimes the researcher talks about the firm-wide, post-acquisition integration; then, the term 'overall integration' is used.

4.1.1 Pre-Acquisition Phase

The first higher-level categorization of the created themes refers to the activities that prevailed the pre-acquisition phase named as corporate and business strategies and a post-acquisition integration approach. Regardless of its name, the approach to integrate the two separate organizations is seen in this study to be attached to the pre-acquisition rather than post-acquisition integration activities.

4.1.1.1 Corporate and Business Strategies

As stated in the theoretical part of the paper, cross-border acquisitions have been motivated by a variety of considerations (subchapter 2.2.1), whereas the transaction in question has been made for strategic reasons and tends to follow the primary motive of market seeking (Morschett et al., 2015, p. 80), as stated in the responses of the research participants. More closely, the mentioned reasons were: 1) to increase the market share of a specific business division, 2) to increase the case organization's presence in the acquired organization's markets, and 3) to acquire new product lines, which could be utilized effectively in the wider firm (interview 3, lines 44–56). In addition to the listed motives, there might also be other motivations for such an ownership made, due to its multifaceted nature (Morschett et al., 2015, pp. 89–90; Weber, 2012), motivations that were just not expressed in the course of the interviews.

In order to achieve these objectives, the case organization has involved an integration manager, up-front, from the pre-acquisition phase onward, where he served in a wide range of roles for achieving and capturing the sought value of the acquisition (int. 3, l. 18–21, 23–25, 138–139). In addition, from the phase of deal structuring and negotiation (Figure 1) onward, there was a regional HR manager involved to provide the necessary support for the local HR executing the integration activities (int. 3, l. 202), as she clarified her role (int. 1, l. 8): “My role is to inform, support, listen, advise and share”. Besides these actors, the integration manager formed a core team with the principals from the acquired organization, and identified some key employees to be involved in the integration process (int. 3, l. 136–138): “Once we had identified the key people, they have been doing multiple jobs. They have been working extremely hard, there is nothing more I could ask from them”. In addition, one of the key employees was assigned to a role of HR advisor (local HR representative) (int. 4, l. 77). All these actions taken could be seen as critical predictors for successful post-acquisition integration phase (Teerikangas et al., 2011, p. 666; Zhang & Iles, 2017, p. 456).

4.1.1.2 Post-Acquisition Integration Approach

The reasons mentioned for acquiring propose a certain level of integration (Hubbard, 1999, as cited in Hubbard, 2013, p. 105), whereas in this case, the adopted approach is located somewhere between the levels of *preservation* and *symbiosis* (Figure 2), as grounded in the responses. At the moment, the intention is to keep the two organizations apart in the external world (int. 1, l. 280–283; int. 3, l. 60–63), but, underneath, at the same time, achieve a close collaboration (int. 3, l. 155–156). This approach has been realized by understanding the importance of people in the process and by exercising high levels of cooperation and co-involvement between the involved parties in terms of the post-acquisition activities, including the activities related to HRM (e.g., int.

1, l. 177–178; int. 3, l. 113–117, 220–221). With the approach adopted, the acquiring organization aims for smooth cooperation and mitigates the resistance to change (int. 3, l. 98–112). However, the previous competitive situation might hinder the solid collaboration between the parties: “But at first in order to do that, is to stopping fighting to each other. So, we have to get past that. And we have to start to work together”, as stated by the integration manager (int. 3, l. 160–161).

Additionally, a symbiosis-based acquisition needs simultaneous protection and permeability of the boundary between the two organizations (Sudarsanam, 2011, p. 699), which was also noted by the local HR representative referring to one particular action (int. 2, l. 322, 328–329): “They weren’t aware of Dutch laws. . . . that now we are aware, okay, we have to keep that in our own hands when those kinds of things happen”. In that event, the parent organization might have not possessed sufficient local contextual knowledge to make the decisions in regard to the legal environment of the subsidiary, as explored in the following theme. Even though the local management and HR have been granted pivotal roles in the integration phase to avoid such situations (int. 1, l. 177–178), the question still remains: How much is the right degree of autonomy given for the subsidiary personnel, and to what extent could the acquiring organization rely on local interpretations, which could, eventually, result in greater local responsiveness, not global integration? (Smale, 2008, p. 150).

4.1.2 HRM Practice Transfer

Under the higher level of categorization, called HRM practice transfer, all the different actors, from the influence factors to the transferring mechanisms affecting the process are gathered and explored in detail.

4.1.2.1 Influence Factors

The theme of influence factors includes the external environmental and organizational factors such as organizational cultures and the specific subsidiary characteristics. This created theme with its subthemes aims to gain a holistic approach to the influence factors mentioned by the respondents.

External Environmental Factors

As concluded in the theoretical part, the external environmental as well as the organizational factors of the local subsidiary need to be taken into account when planning and executing HRM integration (subchapter 2.3.1), whereas in the responses of the participants, the emphasis was partially divided. The research participants of the subsidiary expressed more concerns related to the local environment, whereas the global parent organization emphasized the subsidiary’s characteristics over the external environment it operates in. However, both parties pointed out the legal aspect and its possible influence on the initiative of HRM practice transfer. As

the local HR representative said, “. . . in our (country), the people, the employees are very protected by law (int. 2, l. 227–228). The regional HR manager questioned (int. 1, l. 132): “Are we allowed collect data in various systems?” or “How much centralized data is [one] allowed to collect in an organization like ours without that becoming violating against European Union data protection laws or any local laws?” (int. 1, l. 135–137). However, the reason why the participants of the acquiring organization were not emphasizing the external environmental factors, might be the similarity of the environments they operate in, which have been seen to favor the transfer of HRM practices across borders (Liu, 2004. pp. 502–503). Another probable explanation could be that the parent organization does not consider these factors to be insuperable, but capable of being overcome through judicious management, as shown in subchapter 2.3.1.1.

Subsidiary Characteristics

If the above factors were not emphasized in the interviews, the structural characteristics of the subsidiary were instead. Therefore, it could be interpreted that the national institutional distance is lower than the organizational level characteristics of the involved firms. The local HR respondent concluded (int. 2, l. 255–256): “It is a big change for all of us. We were just a small company in Holland and now we are a part of a great, global organization”, as, in a similar way, the integration manager pointed out: “And the problem with . . . is that it is so small. It is only 65 people and 90 % of those are working in production” (int. 3, l. 122–123). The regional HR manager confirmed the contradictory situation:

The employees . . . are very often in the production side, if you increase the benefit package of the employee in the production, then the product becomes more expensive on the side of the production costs and labor costs. So, is that attractive and is that desirable? (int. 1, l. 146–149).

If the size of the subsidiary is seen as a challenge, so too could the structural equivalence of the two organizations. The integration manager described the subsidiary as “a traditional company” referring to its absence of structures (int. 3, l. 24, 67), which was confirmed by the local HR representative: “. . . we have grown. . . . And not all the processes have grown with us” (int. 2, l. 294–296). At the same time, the fact that the acquired firm has grown in recent years, might indicate an emerging need for formalized HRM practices that could, eventually, result in more favorable attitudes towards HRM integration.

Organizational Culture

Since the two organizations differ in regards to the aforementioned factors, such as size and structure, could there also be differences between the organizational cultures? However, it was found that the cores of the organizations are fairly alike: “So, we say what we do, we work together, we act as a team” (int. 1, l. 20–21) or “.

... caring for people. That is a very central stage" (int. 1, l. 25–26), as the regional HR manager described the parent organization's culture. Whereas the local HR representative described (int. 2, l. 48): "The mission of ... is to improve the life of people". This was, actually, a part of the reason why the organization was acquired in the first place, "the unique consumer experience", as the integration manager outlined (int. 3, l. 47–48). Even so, the organizations might face difficulties due to other cultural characteristics, as the regional HR manager depicted (int. 1, l. 21–23): "Our culture is fast-moving, hardly ad hoc, continuous change. So, it is driving change all the time. We do not have situation where situations remain solid or steady for long periods of time. We tend to have fast-moving organization". Whereas, on the contrary, these are not the typical characteristics owned by SMEs (Burke, 2011, p. 19), as confirmed by the response of the local HR representative in describing a recently hired employee (int. 2, l. 338–339): "... one person comes from a great, big organization, so he is used to work in different ways and rhythms too".

In addition, the informal approach to the management was seen to be tied into the organizational culture of the local subsidiary: "So the lines of communication have been always being short and you just walk into somebody's office when you want to know something", as advised by the local HR (int. 2, l. 57–59). By formalizing this, greater challenges could be posed, due to the perspective that: "I think that is a big challenge that comes with a big organization, who you meet, from who you need to get approvals", she continued (int. 2, l. 261–262). Also, the managing director of the acquired organization admitted that they still need to get used to that (int. 4, l. 199–201). More cultural factors are examined in the subtheme below.

Subsidiary HRM System

The subsidiary's HR function tend to follow the model of a happy family (Thomas & Lazarova, 2014, p. 61), which is typified by a flexible and informal approach to management as well as very close interpersonal relationships (e.g., int. 2, l. 57–60, 120–123), where the formality of HRM practices is low, as stated by the local HR representative:

But now it is sometimes a bit of a mess, sometimes we do it like this and sometimes we do it like that. So, we have to think about how we can do it in a way that we do it always in the same manner. (int. 2, l. 140–141)

As in the above example, in some cases the informality of the existing practices enhanced the positive attitude towards new HRM practices, in order to "professionalize" the processes (int. 2, l. 289–297). However, in some cases, the subsidiary's existing HRM practices might present challenges in terms of adopting practices that resemble those of the acquiring firm (Ahlvik & Björkman, 2015), especially if the cultural values of the

organization are not taken into consideration (Lertxundi & Landeta, 2012). Such a situation might occur at a later point, following the decision made by the global HR:

We are also in a phase of integrating or bringing our global GIP plan, global incentive plan to And, at the same time removing, next year will be the first year when we will remove . . . annual business trip, which has been incentive for whole of the organization. (int. 1, l. 35–38)

This could be seen as an act against the organizational culture, if the personnel have been highly satisfied with the pre-existing incentive, which could ultimately lead to a ‘not-invented here’ attitude or lack of motivation, hindering the practice adoption, as Björkman and Lervik (2007, p. 329), Lertxundi and Landeta (2012, p. 1,800), and Liu (2004, p. 505) advise. Besides, the individualistic rewards might not fit the very collectivistic culture, as the subsidiary’s annual incentive, indicates.

In addition, the HR capabilities of the acquired organization have been seen to affect the process of such an initiative, as showed in subchapter 2.3.1.2. However, from the side of the acquiring organization, the subsidiary definitely has the capabilities, but not sufficient resources, for the process of HRM practice transfer (e.g., int. 1, l. 250; int. 3, l. 194–197), whereas the local HR representative explained her role and functional HR expertise as follows (int. 2, l. 101–102): “So, actually the HR function in this organization is so in one person, actually I do everything” and “. . . that’s also because I am in the beginning, I am just starting as an HR, in the HR role” (int. 2, l. 159–160). However, the potentiality and the operative capabilities of this person have been seen to outweigh the lack of sound HR expertise, as the integration manager pointed out (int. 3, l. 202–203): “For now, (the regional manager) is the mentor of that person, so she gets the education. So that is okay”. This person is also trusted by the managing director (int. 4, l. 184–187). To add, the managing director noted that the whole HR function must be professionalized in order to “give the right the feeling, that the HR decisions [are] working professional and they are for the people” (int. 4, l. 217–218), which supports the statement of Björkman and Lervik (2007, p. 330): “Internalization of HR practices is expected to be relatively high in units with strong beliefs in the organization’s HR capabilities”.

4.1.2.2 Transfer Mechanisms

The theme of transfer mechanisms was created to gather all the different mechanisms and ways used by the case organization to transfer the HRM practices into the newly acquired subsidiary. Here the theme has been divided into sub-themes of formal and informal mechanisms, as well as change and process management tools.

Formal Mechanisms

As divided in the theoretical part of the paper (subchapter 2.3.2.1), the same split is used here to bring forth the results, by starting with the formal mechanisms. By using the categorization, the formal mechanisms found in use in the HRM practice transfer include centralization, formalization and planning, where *centralization* aims at enforcing global strategies by limiting the autonomy of the subsidiary in its decisions about HRM practices (Martinez & Jarillo, 1989, as cited in Morschett et al., 2015, p. 234; Smale et al., 2013, p. 234). Nevertheless, it was found that the operational decisions were decentralized and only the strategic, ‘bigger’ decisions (as described in int. 2, l. 160–161) were centralized to the parent organization. The centralized decisions were found to be related more to the financial compensation and performance appraisal, such as the decisions made about introducing the global incentive plan (GIP) to the subsidiary (int. 1, l. 84–87) as well as about the performance awards and recognitions (int. 1, l. 34), with the aim “. . . to harmonize our packages across globe”, as the regional HR manager advised (int. 1, l. 86–87). *Formalization* relies on the standardization of procedures, rules, policies, or manuals and was found in use through the aspiration for integrated electronic HRM systems, such as Workday. However, there have been some sort of IT-based difficulties, which have hindered the formalization of some of the HRM practices (int. 1, l. 210–213). The *planning* mechanisms are used by introducing and implementing the performance and talent development (PTD) plan and merit review to the subsidiary for “having the same rhythm within the planning on the daily tasks” as the regional HR manager explained (int. 1, l. 83–84). An additional categorization, *information-based* mechanisms (Kim et al., 2003, as cited in Smale, 2008, p. 137), were used by establishing regular town halls as an information-sharing platform (int. 1, l. 92–94; int. 2, l. 134; int. 3, l. 121). However, the information-based mechanisms were found to be difficult to implement because of the IT-related difficulties, and even with more basic mechanisms, due to the fact that “. . . half of the employees do not have their own email”, as the regional HR manager stated.

Informal Mechanisms

The formal mechanisms for HRM practice transfer were supplemented with informal mechanisms used by the acquiring organization. Here the informal mechanisms are divided into lateral relations, informal communication, and normative integration (Martinez & Jarillo, 1989, as cited in Morschett et al., 2015, p. 234). Both *lateral relations* and *informal communication* were found in use in various ways in the post-acquisition integration phase and in the process of HRM practice transfer. The formed HR network between the regional/global and local HR, conducted mainly through biweekly phone calls (int. 1, l. 60; int. 2, l. 150), allowed the parties to create a supportive platform, to have a “sparring partner”, as the regional HR manager described (int. 1, l. 176–177). Also, the presence of the integration manager and his frequent field trips (int. 3, l. 207–213), as well as the aforementioned town halls, could be seen as informal mechanisms enforcing HRM integration. In addition, the

regular operational meetings were seen to detect and prevent the transfer of unwanted practices, as heard from the local HR representative:

And then I told . . . that I don't think that is a good idea to do it at this moment. Because people are a bit nervous and afraid and I don't think that is a good idea. And then she didn't do it. So, okay, when you don't want to do it, it is okay. (int. 2, l. 155–157)

As the regional HR manager also concurred (int. 1, l. 202–202): “So, it is a dialog. I would not push her to take something over from (us) that does not work for her”. Besides, according to Björkman and Lervik (2007), the social interaction ties between the involved parties are likely to lower the costs of HRM integration through the established trust. This is because the mutual trust has been found to mitigate the fear that the other party would behave opportunistically and, therefore, reduce the potential resistance (Ahlvik & Björkman, 2015, p. 499), as can be seen from the response of the local HR representative:

That is a change for all of us. For me, it is okay, I have (the regional HR manager), I can always, I can always talk to . . . and she is always kind to me and she is always supportive and ready to help me in all way[s]. (int. 2, l. 259–261)

The *normative integration* in the HRM practice transfer aims at shared strategic objectives, perspectives, and values (Morschett et al., 2015, p. 239), which is why the already mentioned centralized HRM practices, related to the financial compensation and performance appraisals, are seen also as normative mechanisms. This is because they are perceived to be components for creating strong corporate culture, shared vision, and emotional integration (Morschett et al., 2015, p. 515).

Change and Process Management

Even though the respondents did not list any particular change or process management tools they would have been using, such as “softwares specifically for this” (int. 1, l. 76), there were different instruments implemented for enhancing effective post-acquisition integration and the transfer of practices. The overall integration process was “kicked off quite quickly with the town halls where the progress was reported to everyone”, as the integration manager recalled (int. 3, l. 120–121), where these town halls are still held regularly one in a quarter (int. 4, l. 122). The town halls are not just used as an informative channel, but also “. . . to take some uncertainties away from . . . side, so that the employees have had the possibilities to ask questions and have had [a] platform to come forward”, as the regional HR manager commented (int. 1, l. 94–95). If the town halls have been established for the whole organization to express and address the uncertainties, the so-called ‘HR network’ between the regional/global and local HR (e.g., int. 1, l. 187–189; int. 2, l. 202–203) was established to take away the uncertainties related to the process of HRM practice transfer. Also, the regional HR representative can,

therefore, act as a local change agent, by mitigating the resistance of the personnel by communicating the need and importance of this change, as well as giving the necessity support as stated:

And there is also lots of things going-on here at. . . People are a bit–the people don’t like changes so they are a bit scared of the changes and then they all want to talk with me about this and it takes time. (int. 2, l. 84–86)

Besides these central roles, the role of the integration manager is vital for the change, for example in terms of capturing the value of both organizations by acting as a change agent or staff mobilizer, not to mention his impact on avoiding the value leakage by enhancing motivation and employee retention in the subsidiary by “. . . managing their emotional states in terms of that it is worth it. Offering support where we could, finding innovative solutions to reduce the workload”, as he stated (int. 3, l. 138–140).

In addition, there was awareness of further change management tools in place, such as gaining “the buy-in from the top management” (int. 1, l. 111) or delivering more change communication (int. 3, l. 128–129). The integration manager mentioned that:

. . . by December we are starting to see the true benefits. And then I think people are going to the cycle that ‘yes it was worth it’, because it takes a while just for ‘this is not working, that is not working’. (int. 3, l. 126–128)

By highlighting the advantages of the change, the integration manager aims to exert influence on the attitudes towards the overall integration and towards the HRM practice transfer. However, in the transferred HRM practices, which are performed rarely, such as PTD plans, there is no point to expecting effective results within the first 12 months, as Sparrow et al. (2017, p. 293) advised: “such things will take years to pay off”.

4.1.3 HRM Practice Adoption

The higher level of categorization, HRM practice adoption, was created with the themes of implementation, integration and internalization in order to evaluate the actual level and degree of the transferred practices in the subsidiary, as shown in subchapter 2.3.2, and also to track and measure the current state of the initiative.

4.1.3.1 Implementation

To evaluate which of the transferred HRM practices were only implemented but not yet integrated nor internalized in the local subsidiary, the researcher highlights the attitudes of the local HR towards the transferred practices. At first, the global performance awards were implemented, as the regional HR manager described:

So, we have informed that you have awards on place. You can award for particularly good work, well done. And that was so far not used. So, what I have done? I have asked. I have asked, have you used any of these awards and the answers have been no. (int. 1, l. 105–107)

Here the interpretative reason could lie in the differing organizational cultures, as previously presented or in the insufficient use of transferring mechanisms. In addition, the global incentive program was implemented, as stated by the local HR representative (int. 2, l. 181–182): “The share stage plans we have introduced, so we are aware of that”. This expression does not particularly describe the observed added-value, which could lead to a ceremonial adoption, as shown in Table 2. Ferner, Edwards and Tempel (2012, p. 180) warn that the prospects for ceremonial adoption are at their highest when the involved organizations have different interests, where the institutional space is moderate and where the local subsidiary is not extra powerful in relation to the global parent organization. Therefore, the parent organization must find tools and solutions to prevent these kinds of situations in order to ensure the success of HRM integration and lower its possible costs.

4.1.3.2 Integration

The practice adoption level of integration is about how well the transferred practices are connected to other HRM practices in the subsidiary, as shown in subchapter 2.3.2. By that account, the integrated practices were found to be related more on the operational level such as by comparing and updating the employee handbooks and the employee contracts (int. 1, l. 40–42; int. 2, l. 192–193). Besides, some adjustments have been made on the safety side, vis-a-vis the employees, to meet the standards of the parent organization (int. 3, l. 68) and improvements in the confidential side of HR, such as in the storage of employee files and administration (int. 2, l. 193–194; int. 3, l. 100). Also, the payroll system was professionalized, as the local HR representative recalled:

We had a look on the payroll cycle, because she–, I do the payrolls, so–, I say the all the slips are okay and then I sent those to (the regional HR manager) and okay we have that much persons in our organization, that is the total amount of salaries and she checked that. And she acts as a second person for the payroll, because we didn't have that. So, she supports me on that. So, this is one thing what is done, the second HR control. (int. 2, l. 177–181)

By adjusting some of the existing HRM elements, the local HR aims to gain better internal fit for its HR function. As both the phase of HRM practice transfer and the phase of HRM practice adoption have been described as an “on-going process” (int. 1, l. 42; int. 2, l. 200–202, 211–212), more practices can be expected to be integrated as the HRM integration process moves forward.

4.1.3.3 Internalization

The practices that were found to be internalized in the subsidiary—and, therefore, having high levels of commitment from the local actors, who acknowledged the value of the specific practice transferred (Ahlvik & Björkman, 2015)—were found to be the town halls. As seen in the responses of the local HR representative, these town hall meetings are highly valued from the HR side as well as from the employees' perspective (int. 2, l. 134) and therefore have high levels of internalization. Another aspect mentioned by the local HR is the PTD plan:

I think the PTD plan is very good for people. We didn't do a lot of that, we didn't do—for our people. And I think it can be very motivating. That it can motivate people more, and that they are visible what they want to achieve here at the organization. (int. 2, l. 289–292)

Overall, the process of the HRM practice transfer was perceived to be necessary in the views of the local HR representative, as she described her perspective:

It is a good . . . that some things are written down. So, that we describe the processes and that it is clear for all people what we are expecting from them and what they can expect from us. So, and of course, also for yourself, that you put certain things, processes, on paper. (Int. 2, l. 235–238)

The initiative has got the full support also from the managing director, as he noted that the formalization of HRM practices is highly required (int. 4, l. 164–166). In the end, the extent to which the transferred HRM practices will be adopted in the subsidiary, relates on how the case organization will handle the overall process with all the aforementioned different aspects, as shown with the created themes.

4.1.4 Challenges

Here the challenges are measured in relation to the process of HRM integration. It was revealed that the respondents are facing different challenges due to their differing roles in the process. Nevertheless, there was one topic that all the respondents mentioned: the lack of resources. The integration manager stated (int. 3, l. 147–148): “Yes, so, for me in terms of executing the strategy it all came to lack of people. And that was also the biggest challenge”. Similarly, the regional HR manager mentioned the lack of HR resources from both sides (acquiring and acquired organizations) to be one of the main challenges (int. 1, l. 46–48, 51–54). However, she mentioned that the solution to is “. . . to prioritize then with ad hoc and what is possible with the given resources and what it is required from global as priorities at the moment” (int. 1, l. 54–56). Also, the integration manager said that finding “the innovative solutions to reduce the workload” (int. 3, l. 139–140) is the key to overcome this challenge. “It is all about managing time”, as the regional HR manager added (int. 1, l. 158).

Another challenge mentioned by the regional HR manager was the IT infrastructure and the IT-driven systems, which were found to hinder HRM integration (int. 1, l. 219–222). There were found to be two main reasons for that; at first, the integration between the old and new systems, for example:

And if then there is no any interface between the Workday employee system and Dyflexis that would lead into (local HR) needing to take care of two separate systems, which then would add her workload, which is duplication of work what we do not want to have. (int. 1, l. 232–235)

The above challenge, the integration of global HRM systems, is at the moment, under development and will be solved though testing and by creating test environments, as the regional HR manager advised (int. 1, l. 240). “. . . [A]nd then the question is like, where do the costs go”, she continued (int. 1, l. 191), which is a very good point, especially in the context of an SME. More closely, the introduction and implementation of global HRM systems are found to be costly, and not only from the side of the systems themselves, but also in terms of the costs associated with the integration, such as maintenance or training (Smale, 2008, p. 147). “And then we hit in the ground of data protection”, she listed as the second main reason (int. 1, l. 229–230), which is found to be one of the biggest challenges affecting the e-enablement of HRM—the national differences related to data protection (Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 271).

One of the challenges mentioned by the local HR representative was springing from the so-called ‘institutional duality’, which refers to both terrains, to the local environment in which the subsidiary operates, as well as to the requirement to meet the (at least to some extent) the global environment of the parent organization (Ferner et al., 2012). As she said (int. 2 l. 66–67): “Of course, things are changing a bit, and now of course also because . . . has bought us. We try to keep here in . . . the same”, as well as “of course we are working with . . . with new things that we can implement from (the parent organization), but we also have our own things that we have to do and solve” (int. 2 l. 208–210). If not handled correctly, this institutional duality, could increase the resistance to change, as the researcher interprets.

4.1.5 Critical Success Factors

As mentioned, the symbiosis-based acquisition approach betokens a transnational international business strategy (subchapter 2.2.2), where the case organization reaches for the benefits of combining characteristics of both global and multinational organizations by trying to respond simultaneously to the needs for global integration and for local responsiveness (Morschett et al., 2015, p. 34) with the strategy of GLOCAL (Deresky, 2017, p. 254). These predicted strategies were confirmed through the responses of the research participants.

As already mentioned in the created themes, the parent organization has showed the interest in global integration by introducing some of the global HRM practices to its foreign subsidiary including PTD and GIP plans and their related practices. Also, the desire to introduce the global e-HRM systems, such as Workday, is considered a key mechanism to achieving global integration and efficiency (Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 265). However, some of the transferred practices were aligned to the local environment where the acquired organization is located, such as employee contracts and recruitment practices (int. 2, 219–220, 250). To meet these requirements, as well as to enhance HRM integration, the global HR is also assigning more autonomy to the local HR, as the local HR representative stated (int. 2, l. 278–279): “I can make decisions, also together with our general manager, I don't make them on my own, but I do it with our general manager” and by the regional HR manager (int. 1, l. 200–201): “And then we go forwards, she can implement more and more of the ones that she sees are useful for her purposes”. Therefore, one of the ‘success factors’ for executing the strategy and ongoing HRM integration, is the *co-involvement and decision-making autonomy*, confirmed by Björkman and Lervik (2007, p. 324): “The level of integration of the HR practices is also likely to be lower in subsidiaries with a lower degree of autonomy than in units with a higher level of decision-making autonomy”. Moreover, the importance of co-involvement has been mentioned throughout the created themes.

The adopted collaborative approach to the overall post-acquisition integration has many advantages as previously stated, but at the same time it is slowing up the integration process. However, all the participants perceived the overall speed of the post-acquisition integration to be correct in the prevailing circumstances with the restricted resources, in order to achieve an optimum level of pressure to gain peak performance (int. 3, l. 88–89, 142–145). From the perspective of the local managing director the slower speed correlates to the quality (int. 4, 190–191): “. . . we want to do step by step and in a very good way and not to do it fast”. In addition, both the HR manager and the incumbent integration manager acknowledged that you are unable to change everything in one fell swoop (int. 1, l. 254–262, int. 3, l. 189–190), which might even leave you to struggle with more resistance (int. 1, l. 256–257). The speed is perceived to be correct also in the light of employee turnover, which is currently nil, as stated by the integration manager (int. 3, l. 131): “. . . in these almost 12 months and no one is left, one person is got sick”. In fact, higher integration speed with pressure might lead to negative attitudes on the part of local subsidiary (Kostova & Roth, 2002, as cited in Björkman & Lervik, 2007, 327). Moreover, *lower integration speed* has been found to increase mutual trust and to ease the cultural adaptation process, although, in the end, the research findings in regard to the correct speed have been conflicting (Schweizer & Patzelt, 2012).

The trusting relationships have been found to significantly drive the HRM alignment, where the quality of the relationships outweigh the frequency of the interactions (Ahlvik et al., 2016, p. 352). Also in this study, the mutual trust has been explicitly mentioned (int. 1, l. 293; int. 2, l. 312; int. 4, l. 233), as well as implicitly throughout the discussions. Also, quality of the interactions has been considered: “We try to talk more and have less emails”, as explained by the regional HR manager (int. 1, l. 170).

Even though there are, certainly, existing high levels of cooperation between the two organizations, the acquired organization will still be highly (resource) dependent on the acquirer (int. 1, l. 267–269; int. 3, l. 174–175; int. 4, l. 216). Such a situation is found to be typical at the beginning, but where the control held by the parent organization will, most likely, be reduced over time (Harzing, 1999, as cited in Smale, 2008). Nevertheless, the respondents were uncertain when the researcher asked them to look in the future: “Who can tell, it is too far”, as the integration concluded the interview (int. 3, l. 177). In despite of the uncertain future, all the respondents seemed to be confident with the situation: “We try to do every day our best and give good performance for ourselves and for (the parent organization)”, as the managing director outlined (int. 4, l. 132–133). As the researcher interprets, the direct control might be reduced over time but shifted to indirect control created with the normative mechanisms. Then a strong corporate culture or corporate communication channels such as Intranet or other e-HRM systems would drive the control, which highlights the need for information system alignment (Morris et al., 2009). The *integrated e-HRM systems* have been described to offer potential synergies (Smale, 2008, p. 149), which are not yet realized by the case organization because of the difficulties related to the system alignment, as seen from the theme 4.1.4.

4.2 Map of Themes

After all the created themes, Chapter 4 ends with an illustrative map, which demonstrates the distinctive themes in one figure, but also the hierarchical and lateral relationships between the themes and subthemes.

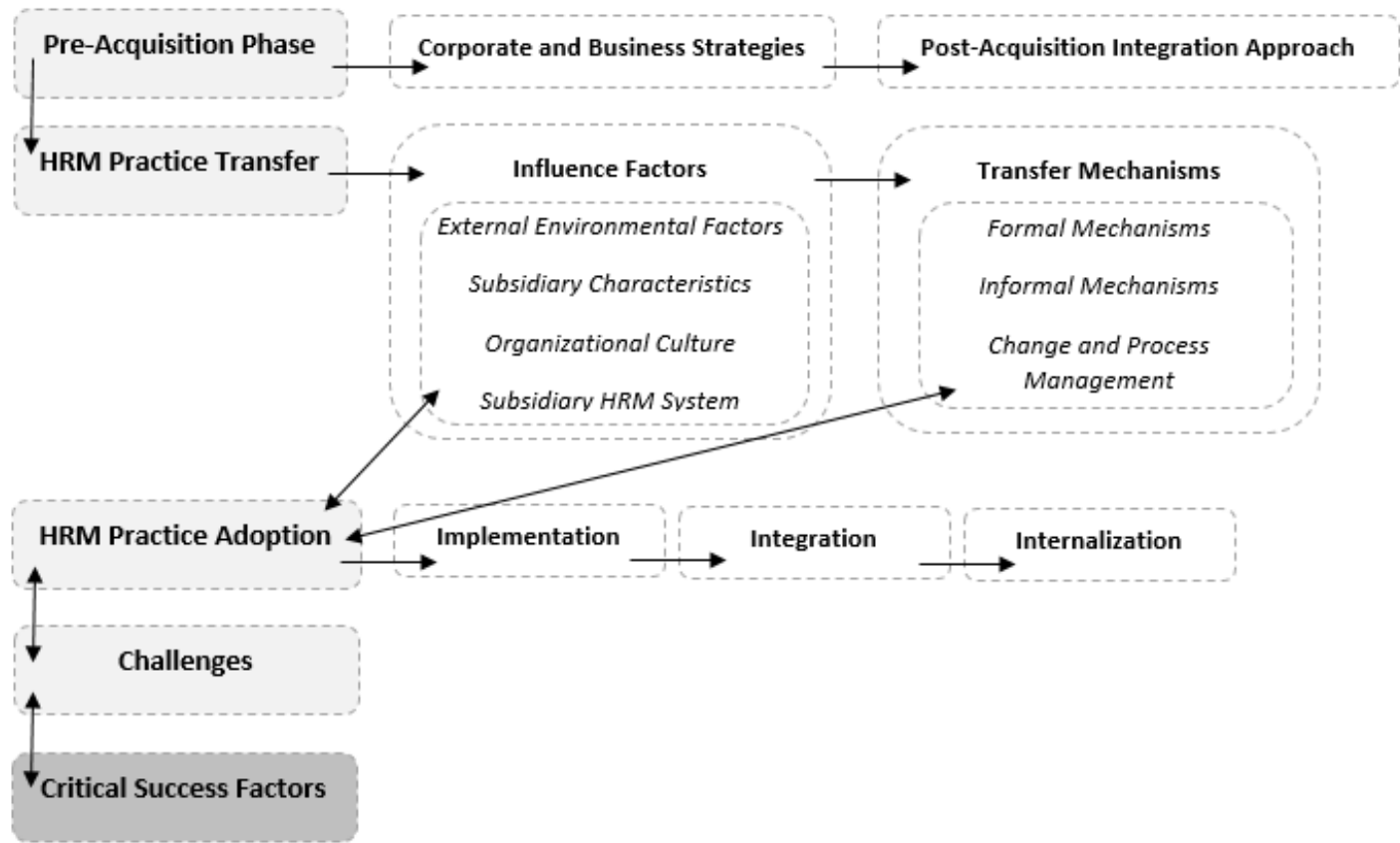


Figure 4. A Map of Themes

5 Discussion of the Research Results

Now the paper proceeds to discuss the way in which the results of the above analysis are in line with the eight theory-based working propositions, as presented in subchapter 1.2. Here the researcher evaluates the relation with the criteria of strongly supported, supported, partially supported, or not supported.

WP 1: The approach to transfer organization's global HRM practices in an event of cross-border acquisition depends on the adopted post-acquisition integration approach and the underlying motivation for such a transaction.

As the presented research results show, the post-acquisition integration approach tends to follow the underlying motivations for such a transaction. In this case, the 'underlying motivations' should rather be replaced with the terminology of specific business objectives. Hubbard states (2013, p. 100) that the degree of post-acquisition integration and the chosen approach relate how the organization is planning to achieve its acquisition objectives. Although the statement is a bit vague, it holds true; the specific business objectives in the examined cross-border acquisition were listed as top-line-driven market expanding opportunities, by entering new markets and achieving geographic growth, but also a resource collaboration, where the acquiring firm utilizes the target firm's resources effectively in the wider firm (Hubbard, 2013, p. 104), and seeks to create value through the synergy that can be generated by integrating some parts of their resources and capabilities (Volberda et al., 2011, p. 282). In order to achieve these objectives and to capture the sought value, the acquiring firm approached the post-acquisition integration phase through collaboration and co-involvement, as seen from the research results, which highlights the need to remain at high levels of organizational autonomy in the local subsidiary as well as the need for strategic interdependence. This leads the acquiring organization to approach the post-acquisition integration with a symbiosis approach (Figure 2). Therefore, the relationship between the underlying motivations for such a transaction and the adopted post-acquisition integration approach is proven, which means that Working Proposition number one is strongly supported in this research.

WP 2: The success of the HRM practice transfer and adoption partially depends on the extent to which national external environmental, as well as organizational factors are taken into account.

It was found that the national external environmental factors influence the planning side of the process, but also the extent to which the transferred practices are adopted in the subsidiary; especially in a situation, where there is a wide gap between the two organizations on legal, cultural, and economic environments, and where the possible gaps have not been identified. However, as shown, these gaps could be successfully bridged thorough judicious management. As an example, the regional HR manager mentioned that there is no sense in harmonizing

the pensions plans, because it most probably leads to higher production costs due to the fact that most of the acquired personnel are working in production, which could, instead, have far-reaching consequences. Also, the legal environment, where the acquired organization is located, proposes challenges to the transfer of HRM practices, as mentioned with the aspect of data protection or with legislations on employment security. In the interviews, none of the respondents mentioned the political environment. That could be interpreted in such a way that, in this study, the political environment is perceived to be steady and, therefore, not impacting the initiative to transfer the HRM practices across borders. All in all, the researcher interpreted the institutional difference between the two organizations as quite low. For further planning, the researcher advises the case organization to look Table 1, to see how the national external environmental factors could exert influence on the local HRM practices. In addition, the researcher encourages the case organization to continue to involve the local HR professionals in the stages of planning and executing HRM integration.

Secondly, the extent to which the organizational factors are taken into account while planning and executing HRM integration impacts the result of such an initiative. Here, subsidiary factors such as size, structure, and organizational culture were found to be related. However, the case organization has been acknowledging these points and their potential influence, which is why the case organization has for example proceeded the integration process at a lower speed. In the end, it could be evaluated that Working Propositions number two and three are supported by the research results.

WP 3 & 4: The acquired firm's pre-existing HRM practices present greater challenges to the HRM practice transfer and adoption / The acquired and acquiring firms' lack of HR functional expertise and capabilities present greater challenges to the HRM practice transfer and adoption.

It was found that the subsidiary's pre-existing HRM practices might present challenges to the process of HRM practice transfer and adoption, only if the local management and personnel are highly satisfied with the existing local practices. As seen from the responses, the subsidiary's HR and the management seem to be quite satisfied with the overall change and the opportunities that the integration brings such as the professionalization of HRM. The acquired firm's lack of functional HR expertise and capabilities was not found to present greater challenges to the HRM practice transfer and adoption. This could be explained by the fact that the local HR executing the initiative is highly supported by the HR professionals of the acquiring organization. However, it is too early to evaluate whether the lack of solid HR experience will impact how the practices are eventually adopted in the subsidiary. To avoid any unintended consequences, the researcher suggests that the parent organization exercise close coordination and supervision over the transferred HRM practices, and take into consideration the potential risks, as well as the importance of the measurement tools. To conclude, the researcher got an impression that

all the parties involved from the side of the acquiring firm have the right capabilities to ensure the success of the initiative and the overall transaction, which is why Working Proposition number four is not supported in this study. Working Proposition number three is only partially supported, as previously shown.

WP 5 & 6: The formal mechanisms, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the HRM practice adoption in the levels of implementation and integration / The informal mechanisms, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the HRM practice adoption in the levels of implementation, integration, and internalization.

As predicted based on the current literature, the applied formal transferring mechanisms were found to be related to how the transferred HRM practices are adopted in the local subsidiary on the levels of implementation and integration. Through the formal mechanisms of centralization, formalization, and planning, as well as with information-based mechanisms, the acquiring organization was able to introduce some of the HRM practices to the local subsidiary. However, there were indications, that showed that the transferred practices were only implemented, not internalized, which addresses the need for informal mechanisms. Through the informal mechanisms, the case organization could enhance the practice adoption level. These informal mechanisms were found to be networks, management trips, and presence in the acquired firm, as well as informal communication. For the future, the researcher advises that the case organization could evaluate even more carefully and in a consistent way, which mechanism type to use in which situation, as well as re-consider whether some supplementary mechanisms would be required in order to achieve the level of internalization and active adoption (Table 2). To draw conclusions, Working Propositions seven and eight are strongly supported in this study and by its research results.

WP 7: The informal mechanisms, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the creation of social ties and trusting relationships between the acquiring and acquired firms.

The listed informal mechanisms were found to be positively related to the creation of social ties and trusting relationships between the involved parties. As an example, the collaboration between the HR parties was mentioned as great, which mitigates the potential risk for ceremonial adoption (Table 2). The high collaboration was achieved through the intense relationship between the acquiring and acquired firms (biweekly calls) and by co-involvement in the decision-making process (dialog approach), which ultimately resulted in mutual trusting relationships and strong social ties. In addition, these intra-organizational factors have been seen to mitigate the possible influences of external environmental factors, as well as to facilitate tacit knowledge-sharing between the involved parties in the event of HRM practice transfer (Ahlvik et al., 2016, p. 353; Chung et al., 2012, as cited

in Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 108), as advised in subchapter 2.3.2.1. Therefore, it could be concluded that the Working Proposition number seven is strongly supported.

WP 8: The process-management and change-management practices, used by the acquiring firm, are positively related to the success of the HRM practice transfer and adoption.

Even though the respondents did not mention using any specific change or process-management tools in the overall integration or in the integration of HRM, the researcher found numerous practices in place to enhance the success of the HRM practice transfer and adoption. The practices, including frequent communications about the progress being made in the town hall meetings or the adopted co-involvement approach in decision-making, were and still are necessary to maintain the momentum of change, enhance the commitment of the employees involved, and for create trusting relationships between the parties (Sudarsanam, 2011, p. 724), as shown when evaluating the importance of informal mechanisms. In addition to these, other process-management principles were found to be in place, such as having proper resourcing of the project management bodies and establishing mechanisms and platforms for feedback (Sudarsanam, 2011, p. 723). Therefore, both the change-management tools used by the acquiring firm or the process-management practices, were found to be related to the success of HRM integration, which means that Working Proposition number eight is strongly supported. These factors were found to be used by both parties, which facilitates HRM integration even more.

6 Conclusion of the Research

In this chapter, the researcher answers to the initial research questions and develops an integrative model for the case organization as a theoretical development. Then, the Chapter 6 proceeds to place the research into contexts of scientific and managerial relevance by showing the practical implications of the study and the knowledge contribution. The limitations and the future research suggestions will close the present chapter as well as the whole research paper.

6.1 Theoretical Development

6.1.1 Conclusion of the Research Results

The aim of this study was to explore the process of transfer and adaptation of the corporation's global HRM practices in a cross-border, post-acquisition integration phase, in the context of a small and medium-sized enterprise, by taking into consideration possible influence factors. The study aimed to find out the post-acquisition integrative capabilities in terms of the process of HRM practice transfer and, ultimately, to offer an integrative model for the organization in question. The aim of the contribution was to enhance the absorptive learning of the organization in question, with the intention that the organization could be able to build the post-acquisition integrative capabilities as a one of its core competences.

The specific research questions, the researcher set out to answer were:

1. How to address and manage the process of transfer and adaptation of the corporation's global HRM practices in a cross-border post-acquisition integration phase?
2. What are the challenges faced in HRM practice transfer in the context of a small and medium-sized enterprise?

RQ 1: How to address and manage the process of transfer and adaptation of the corporation's global HRM practices in a cross-border post-acquisition integration phase?

As shown, the IHRM strategy in question tends to have the attributes of an active IHRM strategy, where the parent organization's HR and HR at the subsidiary level try to balance the control over HR decision-making (Tarique et al., 2016, pp. 55–56). This strategy was in align also to the adopted post-acquisition integration approach 'symbiosis', which emphasized the importance for strategic interdependence, as well as for organizational autonomy (Figure 2). To realize these strategies and capture the sought value, there was a need for HRM integration.

Moreover, the forward transfer of practices was found to take place in this cross-border acquisition to enhance coordination and control, which, ultimately, could enable the case organization to achieve global efficiency (Chiang et al., 2017, p. 239). However, as found, the successful integration of HRM practices required some degree of local adaptation, which is why the only remaining question is: How to manage the process of HRM practice transfer and adoption in order to achieve the ideal balance of global efficiency and local responsiveness?

First of all, it must be noted that the approach for HRM integration is not simplistic, as seen from the created theoretical framework and accordingly from the generated research results. On that account, the process of HRM practice transfer must be understood as a social process whereby multiple external influences were interlaced by corporate and subsidiary actors' active involvement (Sparrow et al., 2017, p. 109).

After the researcher found why the whole HRM integration took place, the next question was to find out what to consider in order to ensure the success of the initiative. At first, the researcher divided HRM integration (also referred as HR practice transfer) into the dimensions of HRM practice transfer and HRM practice adoption with the aim to highlight that the potential influence factors have impact to both phases; to the planning side of the transfer, as well to the execution and adoption phase. At a later point, the phase of HRM practice adoption was further divided into three levels: implementation, integration and internalization based on prior research (Ahlvik & Björkman, 2015; Björkman & Lervik, 2007)

To continue with the question of what to consider, the researcher divided the influence factors into two themes: external national environmental factors and organizational factors. The factors of the national environment where the local subsidiary is located were influencing the process from the aspects of legal, cultural and economic environments and systems. However, the case organization could overcome the dissimilarities through judicious management, mainly by leaving the execution of the actions to the local HR professionals under the close supervision from the parent organization. Moreover, the researcher interpreted that the national institutional distance was lower than the organizational level characteristics of the firms involved, which why the emphasis in this study was placed on the organizational level factors. The found factors included: subsidiary's structural characteristics and HRM system, as well as organizational cultural factors. All in all, the case organization was found to be fully aware of the dissimilarities, where those aspects were taken into

consideration while transferring the HRM practices to the local subsidiary. However, as the researcher interprets there are room for improvements in the HRM adaption phase.

Now when the researcher found the reasons for and what to consider in the process of HRM integration, she proceeded to the question of how to transfer HRM practices to the local subsidiary. At first, the researcher noticed that the case organization was transferring individual HRM practices rather than HRM system as its whole to the local subsidiary, which has been seen to an appropriate approach (Chiang et al., 2017, p. 246; Liu, 2004, p. 512). As the respondents guided, they were working on with priorities, which supported the fact that parent organizations tend to transfer certain types of practices at first and when the business unit matures other types of practices will follow (Chiang et al., 2017, p. 246). The yet to transferred HRM practices were diffused to the local subsidiary through various mechanisms, which supported the need for both formal and informal mechanisms. This was supported by the outcome that formal mechanisms were seen to enhance the HRM practice adoption levels of implementation and integration, whereas the informal mechanisms used by the acquiring firm enhanced the practice adoption level of internalization. Now after knowing how the different mechanisms influenced on the HRM practice adoption, the case organization could evaluate even better which HRM practices they would like to transfer and how. To answer that question, the researcher advises the case organization to think at first what are the reasons why the specific practices are transferred and what they aim. When that is clear, then the case organization could plan how to transfer the practices to the local subsidiary, including both informal and formal mechanisms in order to achieve the desired active adoption.

To conclude, the whole process of HRM practice transfer, must be managed through established change-management tools and process-management practices, as shown in the analysis part of the paper. To ensure the success of HRM integration, the researcher found several critical factors to be enhanced throughout the process:

1. Co-involvement in the strategical decision-making and decision-making autonomy in the operative level
2. Priority management with lower integration speed
3. Trusting relationships and social interaction ties

As already discussed, the success of the process of HRM practice transfer and adoption is dependent on the extent to which the transferred HRM practices, eventually, will be adopted in the subsidiary.

RQ 2: What are the challenges faced in HRM practice transfer in the context of a small and medium-sized enterprise?

The challenges in a context of a small and medium-sized enterprise were found to be, as predicted, a central part of the study. First of all, the fact that there weren't existing structures enabling the HRM practice transfer in the first place. As the integration manager advised, the first 12 months were dedicated for establishing policies, procedures, processes, as well as efficiency improvements in the acquired organization. To follow, the organization did not have a formal HR department, which is, actually, a very common characteristic of a small and medium-sized enterprise, as explored in subchapter 2.3.1.2. To conclude, the first challenge was the overall infrastructure around the organization, known as 'fit issue' (Hubbard, 2013, p. 107), which was seen to hinder the process of HRM practice transfer.

The second challenge related to the size and the nature of the acquired organization, was the lack of resources – the lack of HR resources. As mentioned, the organization did not have a formal HR department and also not any trained HR professionals to execute the process of HRM practice transfer. Since there was a need for a role like that, one person was assigned to take over the role of HR advisor (part-time). With this action, the case organization wanted to ensure the success of the process of HRM practice transfer. As mentioned, the challenge of lack of resources and time, known as 'process issue' in the context under study (Hubbard, 2013, p. 107), was solved by having lower speed in the integration process and through priority management. Another process issue was found to be the misalignment of e-HRM and other IT-based systems, since having access to the case organization's systems and information platforms have found to enhance HRM integration. To solve this issue, the case organization must, most probably, find an innovative solution because costly systems might not serve the uses of an SME.

Another fit issue was found to be the dissimilarity of the organizational cultures, and most of all, the informal approach to management of the acquired organization. On the contrary, the case organization has more formal approach to management due to its size and the nature of its business. This dissimilarity of the organizational cultures was already seen to cause people issues such as confusion and fear against the acquiring organization, which is why this challenge needs to be solved. However, as the researcher interprets, the establishment of formal structures will also solve this issue.

6.1.2 Recommendations

Although the researcher found that the process of HRM practice transfer was well-managed in the case organization, there were also couple of improvement points to offer.

To enhance the collaboration between the involved organizations, the researcher suggests the case organization to establish more interpersonal networks, which are not limited to the HR function. These interpersonal networks would enable the employees to get to know the other nationalities and cultures as well to facilitate open communication. Although the case organization and its employees have the cross-cultural capabilities due to the nature of the firm, but the acquired personnel, most probably, have not developed these skills. The acquired organization was described to be a very national company, which is why the employees and line managers might not possess the required cross-cultural skills for solid collaboration and effective interaction. Therefore, the researcher suggests the case organization to emphasize the importance of cross-cultural training in order to avoid cultural clashes.

Secondly, even though there were many change management practices in place, was there one quite important aspect missing – performance evaluation criterion. The case organization could enhance and stimulate the proactive behavior and performance through various forms of recognition, including financial incentives (Björkman & Lervik, 2007, p. 325; Edwards & Ferner, 2004, as cited in Chiang et., 2017, p. 243). As the integration manager mentioned, none of the employees of the acquiring organization was so far recognized from their work, even though he is about to do that. In the eyes of the researcher, it is good that the involved participants will be recognized, but she would suggest having a well-informed and established performance evaluation criterion in place right from the beginning. And at this point, when almost one year has passed, it is still not too late for that, because the HRM integration is still an ongoing process. Other aspect related to change management, is that the case organization could emphasize even more the rationale why some practices are to be transferred and to explain the motivations in order to gain the support from the employees and from the line-managers. The perceived fairness and equal treatment is very important aspect in terms of international management and in the success of HRM integration (Morschett et al., 2015, p. 510). As studied, Schweizer and Patzelt (2012, p. 307) show that, in particular, the middle managers may have a strong impact on the success of the overall post-acquisition integration, which is why their role should be well thought. Lastly, as it was noticed in the analysis part of the paper, it might take a while before the benefits or added-value is realized in terms of some of the HRM practices which are rarely performed, which is why the researcher emphasizes the importance of small wins during the process in order to communicate the progress being made and to maintain the momentum of change.

Lastly, the researcher emphasizes the essential role of the IT-based systems and e-HRM alignments. “This technology-based approach is relevant particularly to the context of MNEs as a way to overcome geographical

distances in conducting HRM activities across global organizations”, as Sparrow et al. advise (2017, p. 264). The web-based systems would not only be important for the coordination but also for social networking and collaboration through different platforms such as Intranet or any other informative platform or platforms for enhancing informal communication. In the eyes of the researcher, these platforms would also facilitate the normative integration by creating a feeling of connectivity between the employees in different countries. However, the establishment should be well-thought through the perspectives of the local employees, because, in the end, they are still working in a small and medium-sized firm.

6.1.3 An Integrative Model for HRM Practice Transfer

Here the research results have been compared to the conceptive model created by the researcher built on the theoretical framework in subchapter 2.3.2.3. With the research results, the researcher means the revealed themes and their inter-relations. At first, the researcher emphasizes the necessity to understand the HRM practice transfer as a multistage process, as shown in the figure below.

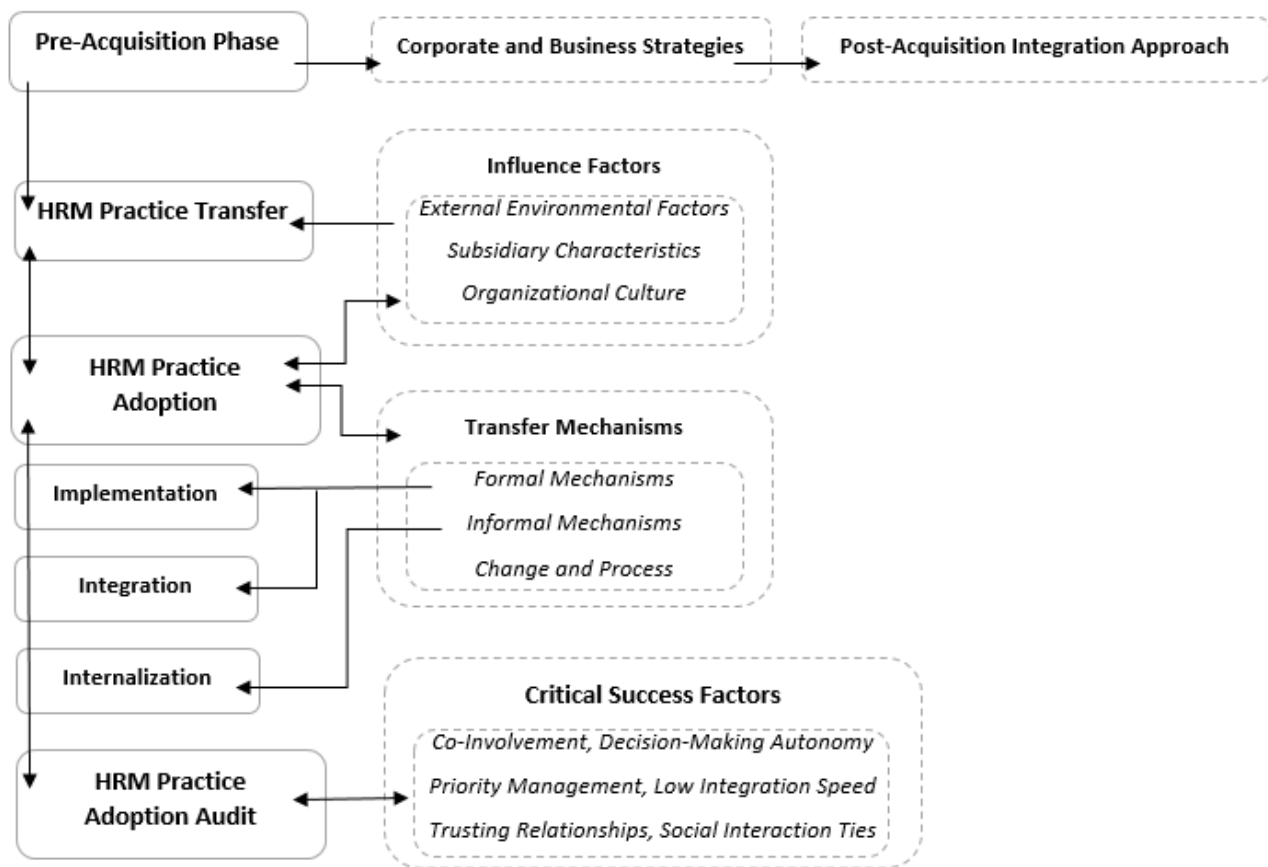


Figure 5. HRM Practice as a Multistage Process

After understanding the HRM practice transfer as a multistage process, the case organization could evaluate how the different influence factors might impact to each stage on the process. This would also allow the case organization to tailor right mixes of transferring mechanisms for the each HRM practice desired to be transferred. Next, the researcher advises the case organization reconsider whether some supplementary mechanisms would be required in order to achieve the level of internalization and active adoption, which emphasizes the importance of HRM practice adoption audit.

6.2 Practical Implications and Knowledge Contribution

This study has scientific relevance for the specific field of HRM as well as managerial relevance for the case organization. The practical implications and knowledge contribution has been divided into the aforementioned categories.

This study addresses the recall of scholars for further research relevant to managerial practice in the field of HRM practice transfer. In this study, the researcher was able to examine the potential relationship between the contextual and process factors in the context of post-acquisition integration, which was stated to lack research attention (Chiang et al., 2017, p. 235; Weber, 2012). More closely, the researcher included various levels of analysis (external environmental and organizational factors) in this research, as well as various dimensions of the transfer and adaption of HRM practices, starting from the broader context in which the HRM practice transfer took place and the discussion of the rationale for transferring these practices to the acquired foreign subsidiary. After that, the researcher proceeded examining the different transfer mechanisms and tools. This holistic approach to the topic of HRM practice transfer enabled the researcher to reveal the interdependencies between the different factors and dimensions being studied, and finally she was able to contribute a conceptual model for the scientific literature. With this holistic approach, she did not adopt any specific theory, such as resource-based, agency or institutional theory. Instead, she combined and integrated these different perspectives in her study. In addition, this study created valuable information in and for the field of HRM in small and medium-sized enterprises, which has been also stated to receive less attention than devoted to larger organizations (Burke, 2011, p. 10). Finally, although none of the research results of this study cannot be generalized out of their specific context, this provides interesting information for future studies and research in this field of IHRM.

For the case organization, this study gives valuable information about their activities in the post-acquisition integration phase. Moreover, this study could be seen as an outlook for the current situation and act as a measurement of the effectiveness of the post-acquisition integration phase, in terms of HRM practice transfer and adoption, helping the case organization to correct its current course if necessary. In addition, through the

adopted holistic approach for the topic, the researcher was able to create a guiding, integrative model of the process of HRM practice transfer and adoption for the case organization. Hopefully, the study empowers the research participants in the acquired subsidiary to act for the change and potentially act as change agents, decreasing the uncertainties prevailing in the acquired organization and, therefore, multiplying the potential benefits of this research. With the given research results and the further recommendations, the case organization is able to enhance the absorptive learning and build the post-acquisition integrative capabilities as one of its core competences. Plus, these best practices could be utilized, to some extent, in the future in similar situations as this cross-border acquisition.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

The main limitation of the study focus itself is the limited resources for studying the acquisition process comprehensively; the research was conducted as a single stage study, focusing only on the post-acquisition integration phase and therefore not including all the stages of the acquisition process (Figure 1), with the given topic of HRM practice transfer. According to Weber (2012) the acquisition process is multilayered and multi-staged, as well as multi-disciplinary. On that account, this research might be seen to lack all-encompassing understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, in future studies and research, it might be useful to study HRM practice transfer, from a multinational parent firm across its international operations and subsidiaries, with longitudinal methods in order to increase the in-depth data available in each stage and providing a richer and more comprehensive outlook. Secondly, the study was not only limited to the post-acquisition integration phase, but also to the transfer and adoption of HRM practices and not, for example, other business practices transferred simultaneously. Besides, the research focus was formulated to examine only the forward direction of HRM practice transfer, and not including any other type or direction (e.g., horizontal or reverse) which might occur (Chiang et al., 2017, p. 237).

Furthermore, regardless of the case organization's interest toward the research, the researcher found it very difficult to get access to the data during the data collection phase. The difficulties faced in the fieldwork hindered the overall research work which, ultimately, resulted in a smaller and narrower sample size to the initial plan. Besides that, it might have impacted on the quality and veritability of the collected data. The reasons why the researcher was excluded from getting data access might have derived from the concerns of data protection and from the fear for exposing undesired information for third parties. The researcher's concerns about the quality and veritability of the collected data are rooted in the prior research findings, which revealed that employees

face high levels of uncertainty when they do not know what outcomes the post-acquisition process may yield for them and their positions (Rothlauf, 2015, p. 83; Schweizer & Patzelt, 2012, p. 299).

In the end, because of the limited access to data, the research could be seen lacking breadth, which is why this study offers many possibilities for future research. The research and topic under study could be extended by recruiting more research participants and involving participants from different key groups, such as key employees and line managers in the parent, as well as in the foreign subsidiary firm. Because the ultimate goal of HRM is to develop systems of practice that create synergistic effects, rather than to develop independent sets of best practices, the levels of integration and internalization of HRM practice adoption could be further studied in and for the case organization or for any other, as well as studying more in-depth the actual levels of HRM practice adoption. An interesting topic for further research would be to study if those transferred HRM practices had given any added-value for the organization or impacted on its business performance. Another topic for future research could be not only to study the forward HRM practice transfer from the parent to subsidiary, but also the reverse HRM practice transfer from the subsidiary to parent.

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8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: An Interview Introduction

Steps	Text
Introducing the Researcher	My Name is Jenni Nuutinen and I am a master student studying International Management at University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland. At the moment, I am in my final semester of the studies and writing Master Thesis research. Besides, my full-time studies, I work 60% in Global Marketing, located in Schaffhausen, Switzerland. Although, I work here in global marketing, I have chosen a topic in related to HR, because of my previous studies and working experience.
Introducing the Research	I have chosen a topic of: The process of transfer and adaptation of the corporation's global HRM practices in a cross-border post-acquisition integration phase in a context of a small and medium-sized enterprise. There I aim to study and find out how the case organization could approach the post-acquisition stage in terms of transferring the global HRM practices in to the newly acquired small and medium-sized firm. My research method is a single case study.
Clarifying confidentiality and audio-recording	The collected data will be used for the analysis in the Master's thesis, which will be finally handed in to FHNW for grading. The tape recordings of the interviews will be kept in order to write a transcript of the interview and will be deleted afterwards. The case organization and the names of the interview partners will not be exposed in the final Master thesis paper. In addition, the Master thesis paper won't be published.

8.2 Appendix B: Interview Guides

Parent Organization, M&A Team (1) UK

Starting Questions

Name:

Title:

Theme: General, Organizational Factors

1. Can you describe what is your role in this acquisition or how you are involved in?
2. What are the core values of the organization, and how would you describe the organization's culture?

Theme: General M&A, Pre- and Post-Acquisition Activities

3. Can you describe what are the specific business objectives for this acquisition?
4. Have these objectives been reached (so far) or at least measured? How?
5. What have been taken into consideration when planning the acquisition and the post-acquisition activities?
(e.g., including external environmental and organizational factors)
6. Is there an executive leadership team, including participants from the acquired organization's senior leadership team, visible leading the general change process?
7. Are you using some process management and/or change management tools in the post-acquisition integration supporting the progress? How?
8. Is there a link between the business strategy and the quality, skills, and number of people to achieve the business plan?
9. What are/were the biggest challenges, so far, in the post-acquisition integration phase?
 - a. How these are/were managed?
10. What would be the ideal level of integration?
 - a. Does it follow the organization's overall business strategy and the state of mind?
11. How do you think the dependency level of the acquired organization will evolve in the future?
 - a. What are the potential consequences of that?

Theme: HRM Practice Transfer & Mechanisms

12. Have you been involved in the initiative of HRM practice transfer? How?

Theme: Other

13. How (channel) and how often you are in contact with the personnel of the acquired organization?
14. How would you describe your relationship with the personnel of the acquired organization?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add or something we did not cover?

Parent Organization, Regional HR (1), Switzerland

Starting Questions

Name:

Title:

Theme: General M&A, Organizational Factors

1. Can you describe what is your role in this acquisition or how you are involved in?
2. What are the core values of the organization, and how would you describe the organization's culture?

Theme: Post-Acquisition Integration in terms of HR

3. Can you tell about the HRM activities that have taken place so far (in the initial planning stage or after the acquisition deal was closed)?
4. How much time and resources have you planned for the post-acquisition integration in terms of the HRM activities?
5. How the communications about the post-acquisition integration in terms of HRM activities are managed and delivered?
e.g., Channels, segmentation, nature of the communication (ad hoc vs. planned)
6. Are you using some process management and/or change management tools in the post-acquisition integration supporting the process of HRM practice transfer? How?
e.g., E-HRM, check lists, shared vision, change agents

Theme: HRM Practice Transfer & Mechanisms

7. Which HRM practices you are planning to transfer to the acquired organization? Why?
8. How are you planning to transfer these HRM practices to the acquired organization?
 - a. If you have already transferred some of the HRM practices, could you describe the process?
 - b. If you have already transferred some of the HRM practices, have you already checked up on how the HRM practices are adopted in the acquired organization? How?
9. What have you taken into consideration when planning the HRM practice transfer?
e.g., External environmental factors, organizational factors
10. How these factors have had influence on the process of HRM practice transfer?
 - a. In the decision-making phase?
 - b. In the post-acquisition integration phase?
11. How much you have involved the (HR) personnel of the acquired organization in the process of HRM practice transfer? (input, participation, decision-making)
12. What are/were the biggest challenges in the post-acquisition integration phase in terms of the HRM practice transfer and adoption?
 - a. How these challenges are/were managed?
13. Do the HR professionals of the acquired organization have the required capabilities and resources to implement the transferred HRM practices?

Theme: Other

14. How do you think the dependency level of the acquired organization will evolve in the future?
 - a. What are the potential consequences of that?
15. How (channel) and how often you are in contact with the personnel of the acquired organization?
16. How would you describe your relationship with the personnel of the acquired organization?
17. Is there anything else you would like to add or something we did not cover?

Subsidiary HR Representative (1) Netherlands

Starting Questions:

Name:

Title:

Theme: Organizational Factors

1. What are the core values of the organization, and how would you describe the organization's culture?
2. What is your role in the HR function?
3. How would you describe the HR function of the organization?
e.g., Resources, capabilities, team
4. How much of the HR responsibilities are owned by the line managers?

Theme: HRM Practice Transfer and Adoption

5. In general, how would you describe the local HRM practices held by the organization before the acquisition?
6. How much influence you have had on the process of HRM practice transfer?
(input, participation, decision-making)
7. Do you feel that you have been involved enough on the process of HRM practice transfer?
8. Have you already implemented some of the new practices introduced by the acquiring organization?
 - a. Could you describe the process of how the specific HRM practice was implemented in the organization?
9. Have you also adjusted somehow your current local practices to the global standard of the acquiring organization?
10. In your opinion, do these new practices/processes bring any added value for your organization?
11. What are/were the biggest challenges in the post-acquisition integration phase in terms of the HRM practice transfer and adoption?
 - a. How these challenges are/were managed?
12. Do you think you have enough time and resources for the process of HRM practice transfer and adoption?
13. Do you think you have enough decision-making autonomy over the HRM practice adoption process?
14. Do you feel that you have got enough support in the process of HRM practice transfer and adoption within your organization or from the acquiring organization?
15. What are, in general, your expectations or desires towards the initiative of HRM practice transfer?

Theme: Other

16. How (channel) and how often you are in contact with the personnel of the acquiring organization?
17. How would you describe your relationship with the personnel of the acquiring organization?
18. Is there anything else you would like to add or something we did not cover?

Subsidiary General Manager (1), Netherlands

Starting Questions:

Name:

Title:

Theme: Organizational Factors

1. What are the core values of the organization and how would you describe the organization's culture?
2. What is the role and importance of the HR function in and for the organization?
 - a. Do you think it will change in the future? How?
3. Can you describe what is your role in the HR function?

Theme: General M&A

4. Do you feel that you been well-informed about the acquisition deal and related post-acquisition integration activities?
5. Have you been involved in some pre- or post-acquisition activities? How?
6. Have you been involved in some cross-unit teams, task forces or committees by the acquiring organization?

Theme: HRM Practice Transfer and Adoption

7. Have you been involved on the process of HRM practice transfer and adoption? How?
(input, participation, decision-making)
8. In general, how would you describe the local HRM practices hold by the organization before the acquisition?
 - a. Do you think that new HRM practices could positively impact on the organization's performance?
9. What are/were the biggest challenges in the post-acquisition integration process and in the process of HRM practice transfer and adoption?
 - a. What is the impact of these challenges in terms of the post-acquisition integration and HRM practice transfer?
 - b. How these challenges are/were managed?
 - c. Do you feel that you have got enough support within your organization or from the acquiring organization to be able to solve people issues?
10. What are, in general, your expectations or desires towards the acquisition and the initiative of HRM practice transfer?

Theme: Other

11. How do you think the acquisition deal will affect your work or to the organization now and in the future?
12. Do you have any contacts with the personnel of the acquired company?
 - a. How (channel) and how often you are in contact with the personnel of the acquirer organization?

8.3 Appendix C: Transcribed Interviews

8.3.1 Interview 1

16.11.2017 14:00-14:45

JN: Jenni Nuutinen (Interviewer)

I: Interview Participant (Regional HR Manager, Acquiring Organization)

- (.) = A full stop inside brackets denotes a micro pause, a notable pause but no significant length
- = An arrow like this denotes a particular sentence of interest to the analyst
- (h) = When a bracket 'h' appears, means it that there was laughter within the talk
- [= Square brackets denote a point where overlapping speech occurs
- = A line like this denotes that there were spoken words that were not understandable

- 1 *JN: Name and title? These are just for myself. #00:00:17-3#*
- 2 I: So, it is (.) _____. #00:00:22-7#
- 3 *JN: And title? #00:00:26-6#*
- 4 I: Human Resources Manager. #00:00:26-6#
- 5 *JN: Yes, thank you. (.) Okay, and the first question is can you describe what is the role in this acquisition*
6 *or how you are involved in? #00:00:42-4#*
- 7 I: So, in this acquisition, my role as a HR manager is to be a mentor and a dotted line manager for Lenny
8 Musters who is based in EuroTec. My role is to inform, support, listen, advise and share. And monitor
9 processes what we have in ConvaTec in place, any changes, any news. And inform her how we are
10 doing in the business. #00:01:15-1#
- 11 *JN: Yes (.) That is all? #00:01:20-1#*
- 12 I: Yes, that is all. #00:01:20-1#
- 13 *JN: Okay. (.) And (.) the next question is a little bit different; what are the core values of the*
14 *organization? And how would you describe the organization's culture? #00:01:33-7#*
- 15 I: So, when we talk about ConvaTec, the first thing what we look is of course our values and behaviors
16 card. #00:01:41-8#
- 17 *JN: Yes. [#00:01:41-8#*
- 18 I: → So, this is defined (.), so from our CEO, he is being driving the culture and culture transformation.
19 Where we want to be performance-driven, and values and behaviors led. (.) So, caring for people,
20 driving innovation and excellence and earning trust. So, we say what we do, we work together, we act
21 as a team. Everybody gets listened and there are no any hidden agendas. (.) Our culture is fast-moving,
22 hardly ad hoc, continuous change. So, it is driving change all the time. We do not have situation where
23 situations remain solid or steady for long periods of time. We tend to have (.) fast-moving organization.
24 (.) But of course, culture, the solid base of the culture it is quite more inflexible as the processes
25 themselves. (.) So culture (.) it's fast, flexible, changing and very good. Good and for patient and human,
26 caring for people. That is a very central stage. #00:03:03-2#
- 27 *JN: Okay. (.) Okay and then (.) moving forward to the theme of post-acquisition integration phase in*
28 *terms of HR, in general, what kind of activities you have so far done for example. So, the third question*
29 *is (.): Can you tell about the HRM activities that have taken place so far in the initial planning phase or*
30 *after the acquisition deal was closed? So, so far (.) #00:03:34-1#*
- 31 I: → [So, the whole range. We start in a strategic, so there have been strategic decisions. There is also
32 like day-to-day operations (.) of types. (.) We also the third step would be the future; how much do we
33 want to have different processes integrated into EuroTec from ConvaTec. For the strategic ones had
34 been something like implementing ConvaTec awards, recognitions, processes, which have not been
35 used in EuroTec, but that it is in place. We are also in a phase of integrating (.) or bringing our global

36 GIP plan, global incentive plan to EuroTec. → And, at the same time (.) removing (.), next year will be
37 the first year when we will remove EuroTec's annual business trip, which has been incentive for whole
38 of the organization. (.) So, on more like global level, also on comparing the benefits on a level of
39 pension plan. So, we have been checking what are the pension plan (.) of (.) of EuroTec employees
40 compared to our present employees in Netherlands. → On a more day-to-day, and on an operative
41 task, we have also compared our employee handbooks. We have compared our employment
42 contracts. (.) And various, (.) it is an on-going process. #00:05:23-5#

43 *JN: Yes (.). So, how much time and resources have you planned for the post-acquisition integration*
44 *phase in terms of HRM activities? #00:05:35-2#*

45 I: So, I have not planned time (h). So, I have no planned time, I was invited to join to the function. As
46 we went along in January, we did not have resource plan for this work. Presently, my workload is
47 allowing me to spend 4 hours per a week with EuroTec topics. So, thinking of resource side, we have
48 Lenny who works in EuroTec three days per a week, so it is a 60 % contract. And what happens for the
49 HR tasks, it is not that you have dedicated only HR employees and that's it, but you have also
50 employees who are the general managers or the quality or auditors and other areas of business who
51 will be looking into the integration - also for the HR processes. (.) So, we could, we could invest more
52 on HR resources, but at the same time, if we go back to the culture ConvaTec. We do tend to have very
53 thin organization for HR. We do not have resources in any size of EMEA, which have exceeding some
54 kind of level of having head account on working out topics. We need to prioritize then with ad hoc and
55 what is possible with the given resources and what it is required from global as priorities at the
56 moment. #00:07:12-3#

57 *JN: Okay. (.) When you are communicating (.) for example with Lenny, how these communications*
58 *about the post-acquisition integration in terms of HR activities are managed and delivered? #00:07:26-*
59 *5#*

60 I: [So. We use email and we use phone (.), phone one to one calls on weekly or biweekly basis. And
61 that is the tools. We have been looking into share drives, also on (.) ideally, we would have share drive
62 on place where we could share documents directly where we both have an access. That is again one
63 of the task we most solve. We have been within data security phase where we have not been able to
64 identify how to have data shared in a way that nobody else has access. So that is one of the key
65 important tasks for HR and of course keep the data secured. So, it is email, personal email, personal
66 phone. #00:08:17-7#

67 *JN: Okay (.). And then (.), are you using some kind of process management or change management*
68 *tools (.). #00:08:27-6#*

69 I: No. (h) #00:08:27-6#

70 *JN: No? (h) #00:08:28-3#*

71 I: (h) No. #00:08:31-5#

72 JN: (.) Yes, but what about, for example, process management, check lists or at least I have seen this
73 kind of chart. #00:08:40-3#

74 I: [Outlook, outlook, excel. #00:08:47-0#

75 JN: So, these are tools. So, you are kind tracking the process? #00:08:50-8#

76 I: Yes (.), these are manual tools. Would be nice to have great software specifically for this. But no, it
77 is a (.), yeah. Outlook, outlook tasks, excel. #00:09:02-9#

78 JN: Yes. (.) So then moving on to the theme of HR practice transfer and the transferring mechanisms.
79 Which HRM practices you are planning to transfer to the acquired organization? And most importantly,
80 why? #00:09:20-0#

81 I: → So, merit review process, the timing of the merit review process, the GIP, the whole awards, town
82 halls, and the HR system, which is the Workday, in order to have more access and visibility for the
83 organization. (.) The merit review process and GIP that is more also like having the same rhythm within
84 the planning on the daily tasks. The GIP, the plan there is (.), previously EuroTec did not have GIP, they
85 had a company weekend together. So, they would award, instead of giving a bonus kind of type, they
86 would go together on a group field trip as a company. → And now the idea there is that we want to
87 harmonize our (.) packages across globe. #00:10:18-2#

88 JN: Yes. (.) Okay (.). How you are planning to transfer these practices, to the acquired organization, to
89 EuroTec? #00:10:29-3#

90 I: So, merit review will be conducted manually. So, we will be using excel, and, and sending those back
91 and forth. (.) From the timing wise that will be then in April (.). Information and all the work around it,
92 will happen now. Between now and March. (.) And what about else? (.) Town halls. Town halls we have
93 just implemented then. So, we have had like regular town halls hold. And that's been like connected
94 into what's been the topics. Just also to take some uncertainties away from EuroTec's side, so that the
95 employees have had the possibilities to ask questions and have had platform to come forward.
96 #00:11:23-7#

97 JN: Yes. Okay, the next question would have been if you have already transferred some of the HR
98 practices, could you describe the process? Actually, you have kind of already answered to that question.
99 #00:11:37-0#

100 I: Yes, [already answered. (h) #00:11:40-9#

101 JN: And, okay. If you have already transferred some of the HRM practices, have you checked up on how
102 the specific HRM practices are adopted in the acquired organization (EuroTec)? #00:11:53-4#

103 I: We did. So, one of the examples was the awards. #00:11:56-4#

104 JN: Yes. #00:11:57-7#

105 I: So, we have informed that you have awards on place. You can award for particularly good work, well
106 done. And that was so far not used. (h) So, what I have done? I have asked. I have asked, have you

107 used any of these awards and the answers have been no. → And then again (.), sometimes when you
108 are introducing new tools, you need to have somebody in the organization who buys in and who finds
109 it good tool to use. Whereas, like for example a line manager who says "Yes, exactly, this kind of tool I
110 have been waiting for". And therefore, immediately sees the advantage. Partly also, you need have
111 new tools, you need to have the buy in from the top management. So, the general manager is ready
112 to say "Yes, this is a good idea". (.) When it comes to awarding somebody and budget it is not defined
113 and the which cost center will be used. That would be an obstacle for implementing something like (.)
114 award. If it is not quite clear from which cost center it will be taken. (.) Around communication also,
115 how to employees feel if they have been nominated to receive an award which has been never taken
116 a place before. And do they feel put on platform or do they feel (.) evaluated. Or (.) do you want to
117 have team awards or would you like to pick individual on a platform. (.) How does it come across in the
118 organization? So, when you are doing something new, you normally you want to have somebody in
119 the organization stating: "Yes exactly, this is something what I want and implement". #00:13:40-5#

120 *JN: Yes. That goes also (.) or is related to this change agents, for example. So, they are driving the*
121 *change then? #00:13:49-7#*

122 *I: Yes. #00:13:49-6# #00:13:52-3#*

123 *JN: We also (.) kind of answered already to this (.) a little bit, to the next question: What have you taking*
124 *into consideration when planning the HRM practice transfer? For example, you were now describing (.)*
125 *what you have to take into consideration when you are (.) planning this award system. So, for example,*
126 *you mentioned that you have to think how the employees would feel. #00:14:17-7#*

127 *I: → [Timing. Yes, correct. Timing. Timing. Timing and resources. When you do something new, you do*
128 *also need to particularly if it is admin involvement. You can do changes but if you do not have time to*
129 *do then (h), you will not implement them before you will find a time slot to do something. So, time is*
130 *one. Knowledge, can I do it. (.) Do we have the right system to monitor them. (.) Sometimes even data*
131 *protection. If we are transferring employee data to central ConvaTec data bank. Do we need to go back*
132 *to the employees and ask for their permission? (.) Are we allowed collect data in various systems? Can*
133 *we collect the data in the Netherlands and can we collect them in globally in the Workday? And the*
134 *also changing data protection environment on a level of EMEA where we have a new legislation hitting*
135 *in 2018 that our global team from the Workday are also (.) evaluating. How much centralized data is*
136 *allowed to collect in an organization like ours without that becoming violating against European Union*
137 *data protection laws or any local laws? (.) And, what are the ways of getting the right approvals to get*
138 *from the employees to implement subsystems. So, it is a lot of consideration that come also (.)*
139 *something surprisingly when you are digging to more in detail that you need to actually take more*
140 *consideration than originally thought. #00:16:11-4#*

141 *JN: Yes. (.) Yes. Okay. We also little bit discussed this or you answered how these factors have had*
142 *influence on the process of HRM practice transfer. (.) So, in the decision-making phase, or in the post-*
143 *acquisition integration phase, so at the moment. #00:16:36-1#*

144 I: [So they might make things slower (h). So, decision-making phase is like (.) example pension plan,
145 let's make one pension plan (for both organizations). It sounds that it makes sense, it sounds that it is
146 fair. It sounds a good idea. And at the same time when you look back and say (.) "Hmm, the employees
147 of the EuroTec (.) are very often in the production side, if you increase the benefit package of the
148 employee in the production, then the product becomes more expensive on the side of the production
149 costs and labor costs". So, is that attractive and is that desirable? (.) So, it is like (.) on the decision-
150 making side, it is like okay you need to collect and you need to spend sometimes more time to
151 collecting facts. (.) → And again, digging into detail and see (.) then when you have the complete
152 picture, can it be (.) or does it or not make sense. (.) Or it's better to keep them separate. So (.).
153 #00:17:53-8#

154 *JN: Okay, yes. And in the post-acquisition integration phase, for example, in this phase at the moment,*
155 *it could be if something new comes up. Or what you have not considered. How it affects then?*
156 *#00:18:18-6#*

157 I: So, you need to find time. So, it is actually what happens. Post-acquisition integration phase is time
158 (h). It is all about managing time. Do you want to do things faster or would it be useful to add in more
159 resources? Or are you happy with the phases how things are moving. (.) And then you can carry on as
160 it is. Or you could do, you could maybe implement somebody in the project management type of a
161 role. Who would be looking at individual processes, such as productions or warehouse or HR or
162 finance? Each on a silo on one area of business. But you would say now we have a person who is for
163 limited time of period also doing like an overall project management role and coordinating the whole.
164 (.) As an example, IT. (.) Somebody from not from finance or not from production is doing the IT plan.
165 How everybody would get an access, so then you would solve for everybody. And not each business
166 area solving some topics themselves. #00:19:39-4#

167 *JN: Yes (.). And then (.), how much you have involved the HR personnel or non-HR personnel of the*
168 *acquired organization in the process of HRM practice transfer? #00:19:54-6#*

169 I: So, it is Lenny. So, the key contact is of course Lenny and it is on biweekly basis. And it is calls, it is
170 phone, it is emails. We (.) try to talk more and have less emails. (h) #00:20:14-0#

171 *JN: Yes. And, is this communication more that you are requesting some kind of contribution, or some*
172 *kind of information from her. Or you are asking (.) for example, her opinions also? #00:20:34-2#*

173 I: It is (.), so, how it works, is that we have the standing list of tasks that are to do's and then there is
174 the daily business. And then (.) the key message is from me is like her where are you now? Where do
175 you need support? So, what is the topic at this week or in upcoming days that you are working on?
176 And (.) that normally we share. So, we share; she is telling what is going on and then it is like sparring
177 partner okay like ConvaTec world we would do it this way. So, it is not like I would say you would need
178 to do it in this way or it is more like let me clarify. Also on a sense (.), ConvaTec has more resources
179 than EuroTec on HR support on global roles. So (.) for Lenny, it is sometimes very useful to have access
180 via myself to material that it is available to some process. But sometimes it is also for Lenny not very

181 useful, because she is missing the platform where she has could access the drives. Or she hasn't got
182 software yet or she has not get an access to the software. So, (.) and then again it is the organization
183 in EuroTec with the employees is that so half of the employees do not have their own email. And they
184 do not need it for their work where we do not want to have it because it is more admin work. And also
185 (.) other production sides have the same situation, not all employees have the emails. So (.) sometimes,
186 you have this differentiation that certain tasks are not needed for production. So, you would have it
187 only for the officer/admin based employees. So (.) the way how I see it is, I am there to support, and I
188 am there to guide, and I am there to flag for my line if I am seeing there things that my line should
189 know it, where there is recruiting process where I want to have the approval process of the recruiting
190 flagged on a same way as if we would recruit here. Or anything that involves costs that it is like hey
191 this is flagged and then the question is like, where do the costs go. Do the invoices go directly in
192 EuroTec or is someone in ConvaTec's side then becoming the cost receiver for task that is open. And
193 then it is always this question, can it be done locally? So (.) #00:23:17-3#

194 *JN: [Okay. What about then if you are thinking to transfer a practice which is not transferred or not yet*
195 *in place (.) at EuroTec, what do you do then, are you like you involving Lenny at this point and like trying*
196 *to get the access if it necessary for the organization or. #00:23:42-4#*

197 I: [So, yes. (.) For example, we have our performance reviews taking place right now. (.) So, I have asked
198 Lenny to take care of the performance reviews. (.) Lenny has not go the access to the system, so I can
199 provide our templates what we use and she is got like on my view freedom to pick up some of the
200 templates that makes sense to her at this stage. (.) And then we go forwards, she can implement more
201 and more of the ones that she sees are useful for her purposes. So, it is a dialog. I would not push her
202 to take something over from ConvaTec that does not work for her. #00:24:26-4#

203 *JN: Yes. #00:24:27-3#*

204 I: Because it is too complex, or she does not have access, or the employees do not have access to
205 systems. #00:24:35-3#

206 *JN: Yes. #00:24:36-3#*

207 I: What happens if we go back to ConvaTec, we have had in previous years we have had many manual
208 processes, we have had many manual templates. And today we are going more and more into IT based
209 HR management. So (.) if we had done this acquisition few years ago when the systems mainly manual
210 based. We could have just said, please do this as we do it. And here are the forms you can use. But as
211 soon as we are more (.) IT (.) structured HR (.) processes, if you don't have access to the HR IT systems,
212 you cannot use them. → So, the adaptation becomes more, more IT processes in the acquisition phase
213 of the post side, case you cannot use systems without having the access (h). #00:25:33-8#

214 *JN: Yes, true. (.) So, the next would be little about challenges (.); what are or what were the biggest*
215 *challenges in the post-acquisition integration phase in terms of HRM practice transfer and adoption?*
216 *So, transfer side or if there has been already some (.) challenges on the adoption side? #00:26:00-8#*

217 I: It is IT. #00:26:03-0#

218 JN: *[Okay. #00:26:03-0#*

219 I: [So, IT infrastructure and we work more and more with IT driven systems whether that is
220 performance management, it is our payroll's systems, it is our Workday system (.). It is gonna be our
221 recruiting system, since it is going to Workday based. And (.) it is a challenge to have infrastructure in
222 place. #00:26:32-9#

223 JN: *Yes #00:26:33-6#*

224 I: Cause what we also have to have is like in ConvaTec world each employee is (.) not only (.) on a level
225 of what is your role and what is your title, but for each employee you have an individual, unique,
226 ConvaTec ID. And your whole data is connected to this ID, ID number. And as long as the EuroTec
227 employees do not have an individual ConvaTec ID (h), they do not have access. Creating an ID that is
228 matching ConvaTec IT structure means that you have to have high level basic information of the
229 employees of EuroTec gathered in a form so that it can be put in Workday. And then we hit in the
230 ground of data protection (.), how much of that do we want to have copied in various systems, and the
231 next step what we are also there hitting is resources of Lenny on the other side if she is got system
232 which is called Dyflexis at ConvaTec that she takes care. And if then there is no any interface between
233 the Workday employee system and Dyflexis that would lead into Lenny needing to take care of two
234 separate systems, which then would add her workload, which is duplication of work what we do not
235 want to have. #00:28:16-8#

236 JN: *Yes. #00:28:18-0#*

237 I: So, to add systems. The systems should be useful and helpful and not generating further tasks that
238 are duplications. #00:28:27-7#

239 JN: *Yes. (.) And if you look now how this IT related challenge is managed? #00:28:38-7#*

240 I: So now we are having the support and testing. We have done testing environment, which we call as
241 Sandbox in Workday. And then in the testing environment we hit ground into ideas like the Workday
242 infrastructure for each employee is (.) supervisory organizations. We need to invent supervisory
243 organizations per EuroTec employees. The Workday environment is connected to cost centers. We
244 need to coordinate and exchange with finance that which cost centers are used in EuroTec and which
245 employees and which supervisory organizations. So, we have the IT support to get it done, but we are
246 actually missing some data to add those employees, EuroTec employees to Workday. #00:29:35-8#

247 JN: *Yes. (.) And, the next question we have touched a little bit (.); do the HR professionals of the acquired*
248 *organization have the required capabilities and resources to implement the transferred HRM practices?*
249 *#00:29:54-2#*

250 I: Capabilities (.) yes, Time (.) no. (h) So, (h). #00:30:02-0#

251 JN: *So that is how we have already discussed? #00:30:04-0#*

252 I: Yes (h). So, time (.) again (.) it depends how much time is given. So, if we say that this is not time

critical, we can do it later, then we are fine. But if we say, all these tasks would need to be done till by end of December, then that is not realistic. Or if you want to have fast-moving integration phase, then you need to add more resources. Or (.) add change agent or somebody who is fully dedicated to this. (.) → And then (.) I would question back, if you want to change to organization faster than you think, you might get more resistance. Because if somebody is fast asking you to change everything on by tomorrow, you will have more resistance as if you are invited to choose new tools that might be useful for you, where you have more freedom to pick up things that are useful. So (.) even if you added resources, it could be felt as a not part of the organization and as somebody who is just always right which is maybe causing more issues than increasing the speed of implementation. So maybe it is correct speed. #00:31:30-6#

JN: *With more involvement?* #00:31:33-6#

I: Yes, correct, yes. #00:31:53-5#

JN: *Okay (.), then we go a little bit further (.); how do you think that dependency level of the acquired organization will evolve in the future? And how you see it at the moment?* #00:32:05-3#

I: I would imagine that there would be more approval and cost-related process dependency. So, it depends (.) how the approval levels, how much freedom are you given to work locally within your organization without needing to come back, asking back for approvals. (.) If the system, if the Workday system is fast implemented for EuroTec, then as soon as global reporting has more access to the data, then the dependency to the ConvaTec organization increases cause the visibility for EuroTec employees will be (.) further. And (.) seen. But then again on the financials side, there is the question like (.) volume, and how interesting is the close monitoring of the performance of EuroTec. I would imagine (.) (h) if the numbers are good, they have more freedom. #00:33:19-2#

JN: *Yes.* #00:33:20-0#

I: But if things are going wrong and there were indications of that we not making the profit what we expected or so. (.) So then then the dependency level will always lead increase. But if it is a smooth ride and the organization is making the numbers that have been expected, they will have more freedom. (.) Dependency, (.) so what is the dependency level, maybe decision-making, (.) R&D, (.) yes. (.) To be honest, this could be also if you are from the marketing perspective clearly two separate entities and the customer does not have the vision or the (.) situation seen that this is the same company, (.) you are easier to drive with different price levels or product ranges. So, (.) for the outside word, it could be a big advantage for not being the one organization. #00:34:29-8#

JN: *Yes. (.) And (.) yes, this communication, the question related to the communication we also little bit discussed; so, how and how often you are in contact with personnel of the acquired organization? So, you have said earlier that biweekly, is that correct?* #00:34:48-8#

I: Yes, biweekly, weekly, biweekly. #00:34:51-7#

JN: *Okay, and are you in contact with some other employees than Lenny?* #00:34:55-8#

289 I: No, presently no. (.) But sometimes, Peter but basically Lenny is the main contact. In a more operative
290 level it is Lenny. #00:35:09-0#

291 *JN: Yes, and how would you describe in general your relationship with the personnel of the acquired*
292 *organization, so in this case with Lenny? #00:35:20-5#*

293 I: Oh, she is lovely (.). (h) #00:35:23-6#

294 *JN: So, good (h). #00:35:26-2#*

295 I: So, yes. We could bring her over here. #00:35:28-0#

296 *JN: Yes, that is nice to hear. (.) Is there anything else you would like to add at this point? Or something*
297 *we did not cover in our discussion? #00:35:36-8#*

298 I: I would like to see the results of everybody (h). Who is answering how and yes. That is exciting.
299 #00:35:47-7#

300 *JN: Yes (h). But nothing related to the content or is there anything you feel you would like to add?*
301 *#00:35:52-8#*

302 I: (.) Hmm, no right now (h). I am just losing my voice right now (h). But at this moment I am very happy,
303 good questions, thank you very much for the time spent on us and (.) finding where we are. (.) I am
304 happy to carry on. #00:36:09-6#

305 *JN: Yes. Thank you for yourself. #00:36:14-4*

8.3.2 Interview 2

22.11.2017 09:00-10:00

JN: Jenni Nuutinen (Interviewer)

I: Interview Participant (HR Representative, Acquired Organization)

HR: HR Manager (HR Representative, Acquiring Organization)

(.) = A full stop inside brackets denotes a micro pause, a notable pause but no significant length

→ = An arrow like this denotes a particular sentence of interest to the analyst

(h) = When a bracket 'h' appears, means it that there was laughter within the talk

[= Square brackets denote a point where overlapping speech occurs

— = A line like this denotes that there were spoken words that were not understandable

- 1 I: I had a look on her questions yesterday. #00:00:11-4# #00:00:12-1#
- 2 JN: *Ah yes, good.* #00:00:11-6#
- 3 HR: [Very good. #00:00:12-5#
- 4 I: When you need the all the answers? #00:00:15-0#
- 5 HR: So, the ideal would be that I leave the room and I leave you with Jenni. #00:00:20-7#
- 6 I: Okay, okay. Okay, that's fine. #00:00:23-7#
- 7 HR: So, anything you say I will not hear it and please be free to talk openly and if you don't answer
- 8 something, don't give answers. (h) #00:00:33-8#
- 9 I: Okay. Okay. (h) #00:00:35-6#
- 10 JN: *Or, if you don't know now all the questions, so if you haven't had the time to get to (.) all the*
- 11 *answers, it is totally fine. We just now have a look the questions (.) and see, (.) see to the ones, what*
- 12 *you could maybe now answer. (.) Is that fine for you? (.)* #00:01:10-6#
- 13 I: Yes, that's fine, that's great. #00:01:10-6#
- 14 JN: *Okay, great.* #00:01:11-2#
- 15 HR: [Okay, then now I will leave you too and Lenny pleas flag me if you need me later today because I
- 16 am in house. #00:01:17-2#
- 17 I: Okay, that's great. #00:01:19-5#
- 18 HR: [Super. #00:01:19-1#
- 19 HR: Enjoy, bye. Enjoy. #00:01:23-0#
- 20 I: Okay, thank you, thank you. Okay. #00:01:23-7#
- 21 I: *So, let's wait that Niina is out (h).* #00:01:28-7#
- 22 HR: Bye (h). #00:01:28-6#
- 23 I: (h)(h). So, all the questions (.). #00:01:35-9#
- 24 JN: *[So yes.* #00:01:37-5#
- 25 I: So, I had a look on this yesterday evening when I was at home. #00:01:41-7#
- 26 JN: *Yes.* #00:01:45-3#
- 27 I: [There are lots of questions (.). So, I will try to answer. #00:01:49-4#
- 28 JN: *Yes, I know, I know. (.) (h). Like I would like to introduce myself now more closely since I did not have*
- 29 *the opportunity yet. Besides, it might a little bit confusing since I am working here in marketing at*
- 30 *ConvaTec. I have been working here now for one year and I also working as part-time 60%. Because I*
- 31 *am completing my master studies meanwhile and this (.) research is a part of my studies and it is HR*

32 *related, as you have seen. (.) But (.), but (.) it is because previous working experiences and (.) studies*
 33 *have been HR related. So, this (.) topic felt kind of natural for me. (.) And I am very interested of change*
 34 *management and have things are done in these kinds of situations. (.) So, for now (.), my aim is to study*
 35 *and find out how ConvaTec approach the post-acquisition stage in terms of transferring some of the*
 36 *global HRM practices (.) into EutoTec (.). And that's why I have created different kind of interview guides*
 37 *and yesterday I provided yours to you. So (.), now (.) Niina kindly took this time for us to discuss about*
 38 *it. And like I said, if you do not have all the answers because I did not the time to have more in-depth*
 39 *look on them. It is totally fine. #00:03:33-9#*

40 I: Okay. #00:03:34-9#

41 JN: So, would you have questions before we start (.) now? #00:03:39-7#

42 I: No, no, no. No. #00:03:42-7#

43 JN: Okay. #00:03:46-5#

44 I: No, I don't have any questions now, not at this moment. #00:03:49-7#

45 JN: Okay (.), great. (.) So would you like to start? #00:03:53-8#

46 I: Yes, of course. I have the question here, right in front of me. (.) Because you asked the core values
 47 of the organization. (.) Yes, (.). I do not know if that is what you mean, but I had a look yesterday. The
 48 mission of EuroTec is to improve the life of people with stoma. And that is the core of EuroTec. And
 49 we try to achieve that by offering qualitative products and, and support services. (.) #00:04:30-1#

50 JN: Okay. #00:04:31-2#

51 I: [We keep an open mind when it comes to the experiences and needs of stoma patients, patients and
 52 the nurses. So, (.) these are our core. #00:04:43-4#

53 JN: Yes. (.) And, how about the organization culture now when you are working there, how things are
 54 done and which kind of relations you have with your colleagues or your supervisors? Or with the
 55 customers? #00:05:01-3#

56 I: [We have been always a small company and now we have grown over to 60 people but (.) we started,
 57 when I started to work here 12 years ago, there was only 15 people. (.) So we have grown (.). So the
 58 lines of communication have been always being short and you just walk into somebody's office when
 59 you want to know something. So, the communications are short. And the atmosphere is familiar and
 60 informal. #00:05:32-4#

61 JN: Yes #00:05:34-0#

62 I: Yes. #00:05:34-7#

63 JN: And you feel that its, even though you have grown (.) in the recent years, (.) you feel that the
 64 atmosphere, it remains the same? That you have been able to keep this informal atmosphere?
 65 #00:05:51-1#

66 I: Yes, we trying to do. We trying to do that. Of course, things are changing a bit, and now of course
67 also because ConvaTec has bought us. We try to keep here in EuroTec the same. (.) Yes, informal.
68 #00:06:13-7#

69 JN: Yes, okay. #00:06:17-5#

70 I: [Yes. #00:06:17-5#

71 JN: And what about, your role in HR function. How would you describe your role and as you mentioned
72 you have been already working there many years, have you always been working in HR? #00:06:30-6#

73 I: No, no. I started in the administration. (.) I have done lots of things. (.) (.) The order administration,
74 financial admin, (.) I worked a bit before for the general manager. (.) I have done lots of things. And
75 also, a little bit of HR. (.) So I (.) have made contracts and everything. (.) We didn't have (.) one person
76 for HR. #00:07:01-5#

77 JN: Yes #00:07:00-9#

78 I: We all did parts of it. Cause now ConvaTec came, they wanted that there was one person, who is
79 responsible for the HR. And that's (.) became me. (h). #00:07:18-7#

80 JN: [And how this new role (.) how you feel about the new role? #00:07:22-9#

81 I: Sometimes it's a bit (.), it's a lot (.). Because I only work three days at the office and half day at home.
82 And sometimes it's a too much. It's a bit too much because (.), we have to (.) start somethings from
83 the beginning, like we have to introduce Workday, and (.) PTD plan and everything we have to set them
84 up. Of course, I am getting lot of help from Niina. And there is also lots of things going-on here at
85 EuroTec. (.) People are a bit (.), the people don't like changes so they are a bit scared of the changes
86 and then they all want to talk with me about this and it takes time. So sometimes (.) it is a bit (.) (.) too
87 much. Because, actually, I do everything here at EuroTec, also the administration part. #00:08:18-7#

88 JN: Yes. #00:08:21-3#

89 I: Yes, so the salaries (.), and the station for the salaries (.) and the pension check for the pensions. So
90 (.), yes (.). #00:08:31-3#

91 JN: Okay, I can imagine that. That at this moment. And (.), we already discussed about this about this,
92 but how would you describe the HR function of the organization. So (.) as you have said, it is really thin
93 (.). And (.), maybe with limited with resources? #00:08:58-5#

94 I: I am sorry, I did not hear that. #00:08:57-2#

95 JN: Okay, the question number three. (.) How would describe the HR function? #00:09:03-4#

96 I: Yes, of the organization. #00:09:05-6#

97 JN: Yes. #00:09:07-1#

98 I: How my function is (.). It is a like, I have told, it is all in one. (.) Yes, so I am the administration part,

99 so I make the contracts, I make the, I keep the holidays hours, (.) the salaries, for the pension plans. I
100 also work together with our general manager. PTD plan, bonus plan (.), we will introduce the Workday
101 (.). It hasn't been introduced yet. So, actually the HR function in this organization is so in one person,
102 actually I do everything. Is that what you mean? #00:09:58-7#

103 *JN: Yes, that is exactly what I mean, or what I wanted to know or what I aimed with this question.*
104 *#00:10:03-0#*

105 I: Okay. #00:10:05-4#

106 *JN: Yes (.). And the question four; how much of the HR responsibilities are owned by the line managers?*
107 *#00:10:16-1#*

108 I: (.) The line managers, they make (.) (.) mid-reviews. So, they (.) have to do mid-reviews with the
109 people (.). Also, the (.) the merit review, I think you called like that, (.). They holiday hours, they say
110 okay it is okay that you take a day off and then I (.) put that in the system. (.) They, of course, you can
111 have a day off or something. #00:10:50-5#

112 *JN: And what about are they, are they (.) closely working with you if you recruiting new people? I heard*
113 *that in this year, you have recruited more people as usual. #00:11:06-6#*

114 I: Yes. #00:11:07-7#

115 *JN: Okay. #00:11:09-1#*

116 I: We work as a team to recruit people. Yes (.), yes. #00:11:15-1#

117 *JN: Okay, that's all. And, (.) what about the question five; how would you describe the local HRM*
118 *practices hold by the organization before the acquisition? As we already discussed a little bit that it has*
119 *been more informal and? #00:11:40-7#*

120 I: Yes, it is a bit informal. We all did parts of it. So (.), (.) we did too merit interviews at the end of the
121 year. We only had one interview per year, so not two. (.) We didn't have mid-reviews. So that is what
122 ConvaTec wanted and we didn't do that before. (.) And, (.) there wasn't just one HR manager, so we
123 all did of parts of it. Yes. #00:12:15-8#

124 *JN: Yes, okay. #00:12:16-8#*

125 I: And within the administry and (.) the administration we were with five people. #00:12:22-7#

126 *JN: Yes. #00:12:24-1#*

127 I: And (.), yes there were three people who did, we all did parts, we did contracts and (.) We were all
128 there. #00:12:38-8#

129 *JN: Okay, and (.) do you have at the moment like written guidelines or is the processes more in your*
130 *head that I mean you have the knowledge and the people come to ask from you or do you have also*
131 *like written policies on intranet or do you have intranet? #00:13:05-0#*

132 I: We do not have intranet, no, no, no. We don't have intranet. (.) here at EuroTec. #00:13:18-2#

133 *JN: How you communicate policies of practices related to HR? #00:13:29-0#*

134 I: We have town hall meetings in few times of the year. And we can tell about big changes there and
135 then we have memo board in the canteen. Where we eat. We can inform there. And we can email. It
136 depends about how important the message is. (.) So we have different tools. (.) We have also this
137 Dyflexis that were all the (.) (.) were we put the names of the employees and all the addresses and
138 everything and all the holiday hours. And there we can also put messages. So, we have different tools
139 how to deliver the message. But now it is sometimes a bit of a mess, sometimes we do it like this and
140 sometimes we do it like that. So, we have to think about how we can do it in a way that we do it always
141 in the same manner. #00:14:27-6#

142 *JN: In a more consistent way? #00:14:29-8#*

143 I: Yes, more consistent. But of course, some meetings here are good for tell changes or to say how and
144 where we are at this moment (.) . #00:14:55-4# #00:14:57-5#

145 *JN: And what about (.), the question six; how much influence you have had on the process of HRM*
146 *practice transfer? So, I have put here input, participation and decision-making. These are the three*
147 *different levels. If Niina is asking from you some information, it is the level of input, but if you are giving*
148 *opinions or your insights how things going at EuroTec and you would like to participate to the process.*
149 *And the decision-making level is more that you are independently making decisions. #00:15:52-1#*

150 I: No, of course. (.) I can, I have (.) . I talk with Niina every two weeks on a phone when I have questions
151 and of course I always contact her, I don't have to wait two weeks for that. (.) And, sometimes,
152 ConvaTec wants us to go in a certain direction. They want us to implement certain things and Niina
153 sometimes ideas like you can do it like this or you can do it like that. And sometimes (.), like she told,
154 what was the example (.) (.) . Ah yes, she wanted us to (.) give people questions about how they feel
155 like now in the organization. And (.) then I told Niina that I don't think that is a good idea to do it at
156 this moment. Because people are a bit nervous and afraid and I don't think that is a good idea. And
157 then she didn't do it. (.) So okay (.), when you don't want to do it, it is okay. I (.), in big decision-making,
158 I don't do that (.) . That comes from ConvaTec, from Niina and from Rachel of course. And from our
159 general manager, Peter. So (.) . I don't. And that's also because I am in the beginning, I am just starting
160 as an HR, in the HR role. (.) So, I am not (.), I am not the person at this moment to make great decisions
161 (.), big decisions, no. #00:17:39-4#

162 *JN: Yes, I think this is very intense now and you are getting really, you are learning a lot now, I would*
163 *say. #00:17:48-4#*

164 I: Yes (h), I am learning a lot (h). Sometimes, it is like (h). I am learning, but it is a bit overwhelming and
165 you want to do everything right. I want to right certain processes that I have put on paper, (.) like I am
166 just like, (.) I don't have enough time. #00:18:11-9#

167 *JN: [I can understand that. Okay, the next question (.), question number seven. Do you feel that you*

168 *have been involved enough on the process of HRM practice transfer? #00:18:29-9#*

169 I: For (.) yes, like I told you. I am very glad that Niina is here to help me (.) Yes (.) and to listen what I
170 have to say and when I say that something is just not right at this moment, she listens to that. So, for
171 me, I think I have been involved enough, yes. #00:18:56-7#

172 *JN: Okay, great. (.) So, number eight; have you already implemented some of the new practices*
173 *introduced acquiring organization? #00:19:15-2#*

174 I: I have to check, (.) I have got an overview from Niina with all the things we have done. (.) I have to
175 check. Like, sometimes I forget things what we have done. #00:19:45-3#

176 *JN: Yes, I can understand that with all the things that are going-on at the moment. #00:19:45-3#*

177 I: Yes, exactly (h). (.) We had a look on the payroll cycle, because she (.) (.), I do the payrolls, so (.), I say
178 the all the slips are okay and then I sent those to Niina and okay we have that much persons in our
179 organization that is the total amount of salaries and she checked that. And she acts as a second person
180 for the payroll, because we didn't have that. (.) So, she supports me on that. So, this is one thing what
181 is (.) done, the second HR control for this. (.) The share stage plans we have introduced, so we are
182 aware of that. #00:20:53-0#

183 *JN: And, did you introduce it in a same way than we have it here at ConvaTec? #00:20:55-8#*

184 I: Yes, yes. #00:20:57-3#

185 *JN: Okay, okay. #00:20:59-9#*

186 I: Yes, exactly in the same way. #00:21:02-0#

187 *JN: Nothing else, do you have anything else on your list there? #00:21:13-1#*

188 I: We have discussed lots of things (.) We have look to the contracts, our contracts and the contracts
189 of ConvaTec. (.) And we (.) We have compared them to ConvaTec, to the ConvaTec contracts.
190 #00:21:48-5#

191 *JN: Have you adjusted the contacts after you did the comparison? #00:21:56-7#*

192 I: Yes, it's for new employees. The employees who are now here, they didn't receive new contracts. (.)
193 So it is just for new employees. It is not modified, it is just more up to date. (.) And employee files and
194 administration is more (.), I have received all the files from Niina, (.) so that is more (.) yes, that I can
195 keep in a good way, in good way in our system. (.) #00:22:37-7#

196 *JN: So, kind of many, many small changes and things. And, yes (.), okay. How you feel that you have*
197 *managed to do those, or implement those changes at EuroTec's side? Have you faced any challenges*
198 *or it was smooth? #00:23:16-9#*

199 I: (.) Yes at this point there has not been any big challenges. Lot of things are still going-on (.), like (.)
200 EuroTec introducing to Workday like (.) the PDT that has to be introduced and the bonus plans. It's all
201 still (.), hasn't been implemented yet. So (.), so there are lots of things going-on (.) which we have to

202 do next year. #00:23:51-2#

203 *JN: And at the moment you are gathering the data? #00:23:58-3#*

204 I: Yes, we do it with Niina together. But we have some problems because our (.) manager for the
205 production employees, he is on sick leave. So (.), that is a problem, because he was leading almost 35
206 people. So, (.) now we have to find somebody who can with short time (.) replace him. But there are
207 big changes, and those are things that are just happening here at EuroTec. All things that you do not
208 have long time for to do that. (.) Of course we are working with ConvaTec with new things that we can
209 implement from ConvaTec to EuroTec, (.) but we also have our own things that we have to do and
210 solve. So, that is all together and like (.) and also I have, have to work with our general manager and
211 he is also very occupied with other things. And we are trying to do (.), I think lots of things we have to
212 do next year of course. #00:25:14-6#

213 *JN: I can understand with all these changes and then you have your daily business going-on there.*
214 *#00:25:23-0#*

215 I: Yes, yes, of course. Also, the case. #00:25:28-2#

216 *JN: The next question, we already discussed a bit, so have you adjusted somehow your current local*
217 *practices to the global standard of the acquiring organization? Here about the contracts for example.*
218 *#00:25:59-6#*

219 I: But then still, it is just, it is not really global standard because we have to deal with Dutch and Dutch
220 laws. (.) So the contracts are not global contracts, it a really (.) Dutch contract. #00:26:19-2#

221 *JN: Yes, that's true. #00:26:19-2#*

222 I: So, maybe for example the share stage plan that is global. So that is what we have introduced. (.)
223 And then (.), the again, the PTD plan and everything, that is also global. (.) Then the bonus plan. Yes,
224 we have to work on that. #00:26:39-9#

225 *JN: Of course, there must be a balance with local and global, because you need to meet the local norms*
226 *and laws. #00:26:50-1#*

227 I: That is exactly, in every country different. And in our, the people, the employees are very protected
228 by law. That is something we have to, (.) we have, (.) of course that is good but sometimes it is (.) a bit
229 (.), they are really protective. That is in every country different. #00:27:21-3#

230 *JN: From my own experience, (.) I must say I have noticed. (.) It is lots of things to take care. #00:27:43-*
231 *1#*

232 I: Yes, (.). #00:27:54-0#

233 *JN: But okay, back to the questions, the number ten; in your opinion, do these new practices and*
234 *processes bring any added value for your organization? #00:28:07-9#*

235 I: Yes, I think. (.) It is a good, that we (.) are (.), that sometimes, now, (.) that some things are written

236 down. So that we describe the processes and (.) that it is clear for all people what (.) we are expecting
237 from them and what they can expect from us. (.) So, and of course, (.) also for yourself, that you put
238 certain things, processes, on paper. So when it comes, (.) when you have to do it, that you can see that
239 we have to do, this, this, and this like this and that. You cannot forget things and (.), so yes, it is a (.). It
240 is more (.) professional then. So, it is, yes, yes. yes (h). #00:29:15-6#

241 *JN: Okay (h). And do you still have time since Niina booked us 30 minutes for us, but I have still some*
242 *questions left? #00:29:23-5#*

243 I: That is no problem, I have one hour booked for this. I took one hour, so for me it is not a problem.
244 #00:29:31-2#

245 *JN: Okay, thank you, thank you. I have time too. So (.), then the next question is about challenges. So*
246 *what are or what were the biggest challenges in the post-acquisition integration phase in terms of HRM*
247 *practice transfer and adoption? What would you say that you have had? #00:30:22-9#*

248 I: Yes, I think that we are used to do at EuroTec with a small team. And (.) now we have to deal with
249 other. (.) Now we have discussed with ConvaTec, we just can't make our own decisions anymore. (.)
250 We have to. (.) So for example, now when we would like to hire new people, we have to remembered
251 that we have to talk about this with ConvaTec. We have to get an approval for it. (.) And that is
252 something that we have to get used to. Because that is just not for me, but that is also for our older
253 managers here at EuroTec. #00:31:10-7#

254 *JN: How would you think the line managers feel about this change? #00:31:17-6#*

255 I: Yes (.), it is (.) actually, the same (.). It is a big change for all of us. We were just a small company in
256 Holland and now we a part of a great, global organization. And sometimes it is difficult to know which
257 person you need for which, for certain subject. (.) And there are lots of new people, for example, you
258 send an email and then you receive it back with all different, lot of people in the cc that I am who are
259 all those people. (h). That is a change for all of us. For me (.), it is okay, I have Niina, I can always, (.) I
260 can always talk to Niina and she is always kind to me and she is always supportive and ready to help
261 me in all way. (.) I think that is a big challenge that comes with a big organization, who you meet, from
262 who you need to get approvals. (.) Yes. #00:32:23-0#

263 *JN: Yes, great. (.) So, the next question would be; do you think that you have enough time and resources*
264 *for the process of HRM practice transfer and adoption? #00:32:33-7#*

265 I: I already told you. (.) I think it is a bit, yes, as I have told you (.). I think this would be a full-time job.
266 #00:32:49-8#

267 *JN: Yes, yes. (.) Okay. (.) And the next question is; do you think you have enough decision-making*
268 *autonomy over the HRM practice adoption process, implemented at EuroTec? I think we have discussed*
269 *about this. Do you feel that you have decision-making autonomy and power what comes to the*
270 *EuroTec's side? #00:33:57-4#*

271 I: That I can say, no, I don't do that? #00:34:00-7#

272 *JN: Yes, for example. If it feels too incorrect. #00:34:03-1#*

273 I: Yes. I think it is really, in certain, I don't think we have choice (.) and we have to do and we have to
274 go with the organization. But with small things, I can say (.), okay at this moment we are not doing that
275 or (.) like (.). Merit reviews, we didn't go through that because the production manager is on sick leave.
276 And the person who (.), now the new people would not know the people at all. So that is just what we
277 are not doing those reviews this year. (.) Then she (Niina) is okay with that. In small things, I have, of
278 course, this (.), I can make decisions, also together with our general manager, I don't make them on
279 my own, but I do it with our general manager. (.) But in big, big decision, how ConvaTec works, I don't
280 think, I cannot say to that I am not willing to go on in Workday or I am not doing PDT plan or something.
281 (h). But in small things, I can say (.). #00:35:19-7#

282 *JN: Okay, and (.), do you feel that you have got enough support from Niina, from our side or in your*
283 *organization at EuroTec? #00:35:33-1#*

284 I: Yes. I have got lot a support from Niina and (.), she is always helping me, I can always ask from her.
285 (.) And in EuroTec, I can also have the general manager, Peter, who supports. (.) So that is okay.
286 #00:35:52-4#

287 *JN: Okay, okay (.). And in general, what are your expectations towards the initiative of HRM practice*
288 *transfer, like what do you expect from this initiative? #00:36:09-7#*

289 I: I hope that it all becomes, a lot more professional. (.) I think the PTD plan is very good for people.
290 We didn't do a lot of that, we didn't do for our people. (.) And I think it can be very motivating (.). That
291 it can motivate people more and that (.) they are visible what they want to achieve here at the
292 organization or maybe this can get, (.) they can say what they want to. (.) And it is also good to describe
293 processes and that everything in on paper, and you know what is you are doing. It is good to make all
294 more professional, (.) we just didn't have that because we were really small company and we have
295 grown. 60 people is still not a lot of people, but it is a lot because we started at 15. (.) And not all the
296 processes have grown with us. (.) So it is a good that some things are, like it becomes more
297 professional. #00:37:29-1#

298 *JN: Okay (.). So, the question number sixteen; how and how often you are in contact with the personnel*
299 *of the acquiring organization? So, with ConvaTec. I think you mentioned, biweekly, like once in a two*
300 *week. #00:37:51-2#*

301 I: [Yes, every two weeks, once in a two week I talk to Niina and sometimes (.) more when it comes to
302 implementing like (.) Workday. (.) If I have concerns for certain projects, then I talk her (.) more. I talk
303 to Niina every two weeks. #00:38:12-7#

304 *JN: Do you have like regular meetings for this in your calendar? #00:38:16-8#*

305 I: Yes, with Niina, yes. #00:38:18-8#

306 *JN: And, you talk on the phone or you send emails, or how you communicate? #00:38:25-6#*

307 I: [Yes, no. Then we really talk on the phone half an hour and sometimes it is more. It depends what is
308 going more. (.) Sometimes we are just talking about (.) what is, yes, going-on. #00:38:38-4#

309 *JN: And how would you describe your relationship with the personnel of the acquiring organization? So*
310 *ConvaTec. #00:38:47-5#*

311 I: That is good, friendly. (.) Everybody is very supportive, friendly and kind and (.), yes. Good. #00:38:58-
312 5#

313 *JN: And, (.) yes. (.) Do you, my last question is that is there anything else you would like to add or*
314 *something we did not cover about this topic? Or do you feel that you would have something to say still?*
315 *#00:39:15-3#*

316 I: (.) (.), No (.) (.). #00:39:20-5#

317 *JN: Okay. #00:39:22-9#*

318 I: Not, or well okay (.). Sometimes it is just (.) a bit (.) (.). ConvaTec has hired (.) (.) two persons for us,
319 financial manager and (.) quality manager. So, we weren't (.) (.), with the quality manager we weren't
320 there when they were recruiting them. (.) EuroTec was not involved in this. So, they recruited people
321 for us (.). And then they (.) (.), suggested contract, we haven't made a contract, and then they said.
322 They weren't aware of the Dutch laws. So (.) then they suggested, we actually, they actually offered
323 the person immediately a contract for indefinite period. (.) So yes, for us that is a bit strange that then
324 they already offered this. So, we had to do it in that. (.) And, like prohibition period (.), so they did a,
325 okay prohibition from one to two months, but the contact is with indefinite time (.). And then we
326 weren't sure if we (.), okay, we said that we are not really happy with the person. And then they said,
327 we just prolonged the prohibition period, but then we said that we can't do that, that is not the Dutch
328 law, we can't prolong that, we can't. (.) So that is also a bit strange thing. That now we are aware, okay
329 (.), we have to keep that in our own hands when those kinds of things happen. Because then (.), when
330 you offer a somebody a good contract for indefinite time. Yes. (.). Yes, that is also a bit strange. (.). So
331 then something, we have to think that it is not going to happen again, because that was a bit strange
332 way that was. #00:41:30-1#

333 *JN: Yes, I can understand. What about, how do you think that (.) those two (.) employees (.). Are they*
334 *now working at EuroTec in the Netherlands? #00:41:41-8#*

335 I: Yes, they are working here. #00:41:40-5#

336 *JN: How do you think have integrated to EuroTec? And do the other people, the other employees, what*
337 *they think about these new employees? #00:41:54-5#*

338 I: (.). One person, yes. (.). Then (.), one person is well-integrated, and one person comes from a great,
339 big organization, so he is used to work in different ways and rhythms too. (.). So, that is a bit (.), we
340 have to (.), I think we have, I think we still have to get used to each other, but that would be okay. (.)
341 That was just one strange thing that happened and okay that does not have to do this anymore.
342 because that is a strange way to do, make contracts and like (.) and the Dutch laws. #00:42:36-7#

343 JN: Yes, I think that is good that how you are noticing it now and you know how to do it in the future.
344 Okay, I am really grateful that you participated to my research with such a short notice. #00:43:07-5#

345 I: No problem. I hope, you got something about it. (.) I hope you can use it for your research. #00:43:14-
346 0#

347 JN: Yes, definitely, I can. And just for your information (.), this (.) collected data from our interview (.)
348 will be used for my Master thesis analysis part. And it will be handed for my university, which is
349 University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland. And (.), this tape, since I have
350 recorded this interview, as I told in the beginning, I will keep it for the transcript and I have to write all
351 down for the analysis part. And your name or organization won't be exposed in the final paper, Master
352 Thesis paper. Just for your information. #00:44:32-2#

353 I: Okay, thank you. #00:44:34-7#

354 JN: I think you (.), you (.) responded to the questions as I aimed, as I thought, which is really great,
355 because you just received the questions yesterday. So, I really appreciate that, I appreciate attitude and
356 I believe that you will have great future in EuroTec as well as in ConvaTec. #00:45:07-0#

357 I: Thank you, thank you (h). I hope so (h). Thank you. #00:45:13-6#

358 JN: So, thank you for all this. At this moment, I (.) wish you have a nice day, and I will contact you later
359 on with the analysis part, you can see how your interview was part of the bigger part of the research. I
360 definitely will contact you at some later point. #00:46:01-0#

361 I: That is great, that's all great. I am glad I could do this via phone. #00:46:25-4#

362 JN: Yes, at first, I was thinking that I could come over to Netherlands because I would have preferred to
363 conduct the interview as face-to-face. But I think this worked out pretty well like this. #00:46:41-9#

364 I: Yes. #00:46:43-3#

365 JN: Yes. #00:46:48-3#

366 I: So, I wish you all the best, good luck with your thesis and work. Okay, we talk each other at later
367 point. #00:47:03-3#

368 JN: Thank you. #00:47:05-5#

369 I: Your welcome. Bye. #00:47:09-6#

370 JN: Bye. #00:47:12-0#

8.3.3 Interview 3

22.11.2017 14:00-14:45

JN: Jenni Nuutinen (Interviewer)

I: Interview Participant (EMEA Commercial Operations Director, Acquiring Organization)

- (.) = A full stop inside brackets denotes a micro pause, a notable pause but no significant length
- = An arrow like this denotes a particular sentence of interest to the analyst
- (h) = When a bracket 'h' appears, means it that there was laughter within the talk
- [= Square brackets denote a point where overlapping speech occurs
- = A line like this denotes that there were spoken words that were not understandable

1 *JN: It won't take that long (.). #00:00:05-3#*

2 *I: Okay. #00:00:05-8#*

3 *JN: I have already conducted some of the interviews and it has been always like 20 minutes to 40*
4 *minutes and here we have less questions (.), so I think we will be on time. (.) and I am sorry that you*
5 *didn't find or find here or (.) I have been trying to search you but I didn't find you #00:00:27-9#*

6 *I: I am sorry I have got delayed with the colleague. (.) So I was in a meeting (.). #00:00:31-7#*

7 *JN: Yes(.) No worries. So, my name is Jenni and I work here in global marketing and I am a part-time*
8 *worker and I am here three days per week 60% (.) and then I am full-time student, studying*
9 *International Business at University in Basel/Olten (.), at University of Applied Sciences and Arts*
10 *Northwestern Switzerland and that's why I contacted you, because now I'm in the phase of writing my*
11 *master thesis and the topic is "the process of transfer adaptation of (.) ConvaTec's HRM practices to*
12 *EuroTec, (.) basically. And I heard from Rachel that you would be a good (.) interview-partner to contact.*
13 *#00:01:22-6#*

14 *I: Sure. Should we start? #00:01:23-4#*

15 *JN: Yes. #00:01:24-2#*

16 *I: Okay. #00:01:24-2#*

17 *JN: That's the introduction. Yes. #00:01:27-7#*

18 *I: Okay. (.) So, I was the (.) project manager, overall for the complete integration and remediation of*
19 *EuroTec into the ConvaTec group. So that includes I would say everything pre-acquisition, ___ and*
20 *some planning, and evaluation, building up the relationship, planning, first 100 days post-acquisition.*
21 *#00:02:00-8#*

22 *JN: Yes. #00:02:00-8#*

23 *I: ..building a team, building relationships with EuroTec's people, culture change and imagine all*
24 *projects of (.) fixing the company. So, the company was (.) a traditional company(.). No systems, no*
25 *financials, no HR, nothing. #00:02:26-2#*

26 *JN: Yes. #00:02:26-2# #00:02:30-5#*

27 *I: Did not know how much it would cost a make a product, did not know how profitable he was. (.) He*
28 *just managed this company by looking his cash balance in a bank and _____. #00:02:42-1#*

29 *JN: Yes. #00:02:44-3#*

30 *I: So, yes. He did not have no processes. (.) So, my job over here has been to slowly, in a structured*
31 *way to introduce all those processes and systems that you would take for granted, you know. Okay.*
32 *#00:02:58-6#*

33 *JN: [Okay. #00:02:58-6#*

34 I: Great. (.) Number two. #00:03:03-0#

35 JN: Yes (.). This is like that in your opinion (starting to ask the second question) #00:03:07-5#

36 I: Not (.). #00:03:07-4#

37 JN: [So no? #00:03:07-6#

38 I: So, you can just look on the wall, cause that why it is there (meaning to tables of values and behaviors
39 cards of ConvaTec hanging on the wall). #00:03:14-7#

40 JN: And you believe in these? #00:03:16-9#

41 I: Yes, of course I do. #00:03:17-7#

42 JN: Okay, yes. And (.) can you describe what are the specific business objectives for this acquisition? Or
43 why EuroTec was acquired, in the first place, by ConvaTec? #00:03:29-6#

44 I: Yes, okay. ConvaTec has been struggling in one business division, ostomy, for many years. In some
45 markets we are strong, but most of the markets are weak. (.) Now, the Benelux area, Netherlands,
46 especially, was one of those countries. No market share _____. (.) We saw EuroTec as having a product
47 portfolio, so EuroTec is not only a Dutch company, which brings a lot of goodwill with it _____. The unique
48 consumer experience (.) work like to give the patients to decide, to give them tool, videos, educational
49 videos. _____. To give them lunch, (.) to have a nice day together. (.) Besides, for many reasons, they had
50 a great product portfolio, which we thought we could (.), number one, not only become leading player
51 in the Netherlands, because ConvaTec and EuroTec was combined, that was an acquisition rule number
52 one. (.) Then we can take that product portfolio (.) and sell it to other ConvaTec markets worldwide.
53 (.) But at first to the markets near, France, Belgium and steadily go over from there. (.) So that were
54 the reasons why we bought it. And they have products in their portfolio, where we had gaps in our
55 portfolios. So, we thought, we take that, we stick it into there and then we have, have a complete
56 product portfolio. Okay? #00:05:27-0#

57 JN: Okay. #00:05:30-6#

58 I: Okay, next one. Have these objectives been reached so far or at least measured. (.) #00:05:37-9#

59 JN: Yes, or the (.) the progress, the integration progress been measured in general. #00:05:39-6#

60 I: So, (.) things have changed a lot since. So, the EMEA president was Antonio before, and I worked for
61 him. (.) And he is no longer here, as you know. So, the objectives for that business have been changed
62 through that change of leadership, of course. So, he was for very much for integrated, that was the
63 long-term plan. (.) And now (.) it is very much that keep them separately. So (.), it is too early for
64 (measuring) the objectives. The year one was for building processes and fixing things that don't work.
65 So (.) for example, there is no HR department, we put one of those, there is no finance department,
66 we have put that there. We have put pieces together and it has taken 9 months. We have bought them
67 at first of January. So that is all what we have done. (.) Policies, procedures, processes there, efficiency
68 improvements, we have done things like that. Helping safety, we have done things like that. (.) So, all

these things what they never had. So that is what year one has been all about. So, to answer to your question, the objectives, that is really more to years two and three. And we are not there yet.
#00:07:03-0#

JN: Okay. (.) If you think acquisition, what did you take into consideration when acquiring? Do you have prior guidelines what you are using? #00:07:25-5#

I: [No, yes. Well (.), you have your textbook and then you have what you see in front of you. (.) So, for me, as finance director from my background, but I don't do that anymore. (.) But I will see things with the financial eye. Then I go all the disciplines to do an assessment (.), so quality and regulatory, how that is looking for you, they don't do this, they don't do that, they do that badly, ___. So, production, (.) this pre-acquisition, I have been thinking surveys, as much as they would let you, because you still haven't paid for the owner shares. So, (.) they could still say no. So before, we actually acquired the business, I had a very good idea how each function, what the gap was. So, for example finance was easy, they didn't have one. So (h), yes there is a gap. Okay (.). So, when we started to put all that together and building it up, so okay, I have some recruitment to do. (.) What I would do as short-term basis, oh I know, I will use a consultant from one of those leading accountancy firms, but okay, I would pay a lot of money for it, but get some money straight away. If I have to do a recruitment in months. So, you are making a judgement and assessment what is required. Quality and regulatory, no expertise at all, we need to recruit two people, we need to recruit the right people. Okay (.), so that's take us five months. (.) The very first deadline we have report numbers in three months what they don't know before. Okay? We need to build the plan which maximizes every single day (.), we only got 60 days to do it as build a plan that would generates the objectives. So, we need to bring a new RP (?) system into the company. We need to select the provider, we need to say how much it costs, we have to attend to a beauty parade, if you know what that means. Okay, how long it takes to implement, and where do we get that money. (.) So then I need a project team within the project team to do that. ___ Your inventory, production forecasting, working hours and materials you need to run that production line every day. So, I was like (.), I need ten people on that team, where do I get those people from. You know, so (.) it was as much planning as possible, however on day one I started learning things that however of all that planning I didn't have no idea it was that bad. #00:10:44-1#

JN: Because you didn't have the access before? #00:10:44-3#

I: [Yes, because you could not have the access before. But then just (.) you know blend in, and you got to be flexible and from day one, you are constantly smiling because you just try to be nice with everyone. Because you don't want to get a lot of.. #00:11:00-9#

JN: Resistance? #00:11:00-0#

I: Yes. Resistance. So (.) you try to be a little bit slim because they have been going with this speed (drawing a straight line) forever, and straight away I would like to get that speed (steadily growing line) and then I would like to maintain that. And then you quickly see in the first days what the people are capable of. So (.) oh no, I cannot be too harsh there. With a person A, I need to slow there a bit, because

106 I really need that one and I don't want to lose that, let's keep them happy. Whereas person B coped
107 pretty well with that and actually wants even more responsibility. So, the first 30 days (.), is
108 concentrating on (.) looking the annual plan what you had built before and starting to refine it. And
109 then actually changing it. Because the situation was worse than you imagined or you think like oh god,
110 I cannot work with that person. (.) So, did I answer to your question? #00:12:07-9#

111 *JN: Yes. Yes. Okay, is there an executing leadership team including participants from the acquired*
112 *organization? #00:12:20-8#*

113 I: Well (.). It is just me, only. And then I have a steering committee that I am reporting. So far I have
114 reported only twice and then I need to do the final one because it is end of this phase is coming up. (.)
115 They have been just interested have it going well? Good. (.) In terms of the acquisition, key team
116 members were the general manager, Peter, production manager and then couple of other people. But
117 in terms of key people, only those two. #00:13:16-0#

118 *JN: Okay, okay. (.) Were you using, let's say in this case, some change management tools in the post-*
119 *acquisition integration phase supporting the progress? #00:13:34-5#*

120 I: (.) Not enough really (.). We did not do as much communication to the entire team as you should
121 have. We kicked off quite quickly with the town halls where the progress was reported to everyone.
122 (.) We should have done more, but we had so much to do. And the problem with EuroTec is that it is
123 so small. It is only 65 people and 90 % of those are working in production. And those 90% just come in,
124 stay, the bell rings, and they go. They are not interested in, you could talk to them about this will
125 change your life and they don't care. You know (.) they work to live as supposed to. (.) But, they all
126 have accepted the change, the change is on working fully at the moment. And by December we are
127 starting to see the true benefits. And then I think people are going to the cycle that yes it was worth
128 it, because it takes a while just for this is not working, that is not working. (.) Maybe we could have
129 done a lot more communication. (.) We did good level of training. To be honest the training was that
130 extensive, since their day-to-day work was not changing. (.) For most people. (.) I would say that only
131 time will tell. But you know, in these almost 12 months and no one is left, one person is got sick. (.) But
132 then he could not cope with the change. (.) Because he was quite high, he was the other production
133 manager. (.) But he didn't engage with it from the day one. #00:16:17-5#

134 *JN: Okay, the next one. Is there a link between the business strategy and the quality, skills and number*
135 *of people to achieve the business plan? #00:16:31-8#*

136 I: There is surely, there is completely. (.) The problem of this not enough of people. (.) Once we had
137 identified the key people, they have been doing multiple jobs. (.) They have been working extremely
138 hard, there is nothing more I could ask from them. (.) Then my job there was managing their emotional
139 states in terms of that it is worth it. Offering support where we could, finding innovative solutions to
140 reduce the workload. (.) But when you are in a restricted hiring situation, you have to work what you
141 have got. (.) We could have delayed the implementing some certain parts, but to be honest, it would
142 not have made any difference. Because they are just used to do things in a certain speed, and they

143 would have just not take it further. So, you need to try to find the balance of being hard and fair.
144 Because (.) if you don't keep the pressure, you won't get anything done. And (.) you have to find that
145 line. #00:18:02-6#

146 *JN: That it is manageable? #00:18:01-4#*

147 I: Yes, so, for me in terms of executing the strategy it all came to lack of people. And that was also the
148 biggest challenge so for the question number nine. #00:18:19-6#

149 *JN: Yes, and what about, you said that there are some key people who are working with increased*
150 *workload at the moment, are those employees rewarded somehow? #00:18:41-4#*

151 I: No. (.) I got that to do. I have rewarded one person who I hired to help the project from ConvaTec
152 and that person has been recognized. When we are actually done, I will be recommending (.) three
153 people, maybe four. #00:19:25-1#

154 *JN: And what would be the ideal level of integration? #00:19:41-7#*

155 I: The ideal situation for me is that for external world, we keep two different structures, but underneath
156 we are working together all the time. Also, simple systems, that the marketing person ConvaTec in
157 once a week to EuroTec marketing person within the same country, so could be half an hour or less.
158 But why not to discuss to each other. Because in some weeks the collaboration might be zero but in
159 some weeks, it might pop. There are in certain jobs that we would combine, makes completely sense.
160 But at first in order to do that, is to stopping fighting to each other. So, we have to get past that. And
161 we have to start to work together. (.) So, yes. It would be two different companies, two brands.
162 #00:21:04-7#

163 *JN: Okay. And you do you think it would be in the future? The dependency level, how dependent the*
164 *organization will be from ConvaTec? #00:21:25-3#*

165 I: (.) It was very profitable business, but it will highly dependent quite some time, because phase one
166 is now build the tools and the enablers and now we need to grow processes on top of those. So, the
167 phase two is about let's turn that into a process. (.) So for example, if I go somewhere and ask how
168 that is actually happening today? I don't know. Oh, simple process could be just someone taking a
169 piece of paper and putting it on a tray, and we know that nothing has been lost, when that has been
170 transferred from the person A to B. As simply as that. So that is what we need to do in a phase two. (.)
171 Because at the moment it is very much, if that person is sick, and then no one knows. (.) And if we got
172 someone new, then we would say okay, here is the training manual but you would be trained face-to-
173 face of course as well. And here are some policies you need to be aware of. So yes (.) that is where we
174 go next. (.) So, in that area in terms of dependency, that push will be still coming from the acquirer,
175 cause they would never do that on their own. #00:23:02-7#

176 *JN: What about in the future, in the next years? #00:23:07-0#*

177 I: (.) Who can tell, it is too far. #00:23:17-5#

178 *JN: Okay, so, since the topic of my research is HR related, but I do need to understand and get this kind*
179 *of information to for my broader context. So, have you been involved in the initiative of HRM practice*
180 *transfer? #00:23:41-3#*

181 I: Yes (.), in some regards (.), yes. So (.), we had in the plan, in the acquisition plan, we had no room for
182 HR specialist. (.) However, when I got there, I quickly discovered in the post-acquisition that three
183 people were doing HR administration between them. So, in terms of confidential nature skills there,
184 for example, so one does week one, the next one week two and the last person week three or month,
185 it was like that. So, it is crazy! Where is all this stuff, did you lock it. (.) So it even though it was not in
186 the plan. But we definitely had a need for HR function. (.) So we identified someone internally (.) with
187 the best skills set who could be trained. So, I helped to identify that. And then I helped to encourage
188 the general manager to his favorite person to in front of Rachel. _____. And Rachel comes only once in a
189 while to the plant and comes up with, they don't do this, they don't do that. And I was like, I know, I
190 don't care. I said you cannot change it all in one day. So, let's start with step one which is let's get
191 someone in, who is permanent. To start to build the processes and get better with time. ConvaTec
192 wants the person to be fulltime. (.) I said no, after the acquisition is, because in the population of 65,
193 you don't need fulltime HR person. (.) You need someone to manage it which is for sure, but if you
194 can't go and recruit someone, and if that person already knows all the employees, and she is trusted
195 by the general manager, who have got a good basis with the right person. The rest you can train and
196 develop. So, took it to the European president and said look, HR said no, (.) but I think this person is
197 the right person and Peter wants this person. And then she started in the position as three and half
198 days in a week basis. (.) So yes, they are slow, they don't have the training, but we just cannot go and
199 ____ what they were before. But for now for example, there is a defined HR office, which is private,
200 confidential, all the records are locked up. We have built files for each employee, we started to book
201 training in a small way. (.) The payroll we have started to organize. (.) It can only get better. So that
202 was my involvement. For now, Niina is the mentor of that person, so she gets the education. So that is
203 okay. Alright? #00:28:36-5#

204 *JN: Okay. So, at the moment, how and how often you are in contact with the personnel? #00:28:40-3#*

205 I: [Every week. #00:28:40-3#

206 *JN: Every week. Daily? #00:28:44-5#*

207 I: (.) Not daily, but let's say, (.) for the first six months it was probably daily, afterwards it was (.). No,
208 actually (.) no let's say daily. Even though I am not there, I am receiving an email. So daily. #00:29:06-
209 6#

210 *JN: So how often you actually visit there? I think in the first months you were there more? #00:29:12-
211 1#*

212 I: So, I have been on a plane every week this year. I have not been in this week, but I towards the end
213 now. But I am there next week, so at the moment every second week, I would say. #00:29:45-8#

214 *JN: Great, how would you describe your relationship with the personnel of the acquired organization?*

215 #00:29:50-9#

216 I: You have to ask that from them. Fair enough? (h) #00:29:55-0#

217 JN: Okay. (h) Anything else you would like to add? #00:29:59-8#

218 I: No, no I am good. #00:30:00-7#

219 JN: Okay. #00:30:06-1#

220 I: What I could say is that all the acquisitions come down to people, as everyone says that, but it is so

221 true. #00:30:09-6#

222 JN: Yes. What is your overall feeling now, if you think of this process? #00:30:18-9#

223 I: I have loved it from the personal side. I have loved it, the project has been great, the people are

224 wonderful, but at the moment, the potential is unfulfilled. (.) And there is a lot more work to be done.

225 That's my overall view. #00:30:37-5#

226 JN: Okay, that is everything I need to know. Thank you, it was really great to have this opportunity.

227 #00:30:41-4#

228 I: Okay, my pleasure. #00:30:50-7#

229 JN: Bye. #00:30:54-1#

230 I: Good luck! #00:30:52-6#

231 JN: Thank you #00:30:55-6#

8.3.4 Interview 4

28.11.2017 10:00-10:30

JN: Jenni Nuutinen (Interviewer)

I: Interview Participant (Managing Director, Acquired Organization)

- (.) = A full stop inside brackets denotes a micro pause, a notable pause but no significant length
- = An arrow like this denotes a particular sentence of interest to the analyst
- (h) = When a bracket 'h' appears, means it that there was laughter within the talk
- [= Square brackets denote a point where overlapping speech occurs
- = A line like this denotes that there were spoken words that were not understandable

- 1 JN: (.) I have chosen the topic the process of transfer adaptation of (.) corporate's global HRM practices
- 2 in a cross-border post-acquisition integration phase in a context of small and medium- sized enterprise.
- 3 So, it means #00:00:20-1#
- 4 I: [Okay. #00:00:20-1#
- 5 JN: that how ConvaTec is managing and approaching (.) the process of transferring some of the HRM
- 6 practices to EuroTec. #00:00:33-1#
- 7 I: [Yes. #00:00:33-1#
- 8 JN: And why they do that if they do. So (.) that's the focus of my research. #00:00:41-1#
- 9 I: [Okay. #00:00:41-1#
- 10 JN: And, therefore, I have contacted you (.) and you have kindly agreed to take (.) involve (.) to this
- 11 research and I have sent also the research questions to you. Do you have the research questions?
- 12 #00:00:59-8#
- 13 I: Yes, yes. I (.) I have not (.) had enough time to prepare all. But of course, I can talk to you now and,
- 14 and (.) give #00:01:07-5#
- 15 JN: [Yes. #00:01:06-8#
- 16 I: you the answers, that's not a problem for me. #00:01:09-2#
- 17 JN: [Yes (.) Okay. #00:01:11-0#
- 18 I: (.) Because I am very busy and I was on travels, but it doesn't matter. (.) I taken ____ the questions
- 19 and (.) and it's clear for me (.) yes (.), yes, the red line the between what you asked so we can (.) discuss
- 20 it with each other. #00:01:26-4#
- 21 JN: I understand. I definitely do. So (.) the first question: What are the core values of EuroTec and how
- 22 would you describe the organization's culture in your opinion? #00:01:41-4#
- 23 I: Yes, because it is also that did you have the same interview with Lenny or different questions? Or?
- 24 #00:01:45-7#
- 25 JN: [(.) It's little bit (.) changed. These are adjusted. #00:01:51-4#
- 26 I: [Okay, okay. #00:01:53-0#
- 27 JN: But (.) #00:01:52-8#
- 28 I: [It's not a problem. #00:01:52-8#
- 29 JN: some of the questions are similar, because I am aiming to (.) also (.) kind of find out which are the
- 30 differences, because you have #00:02:05-4#
- 31 I: [Yes. #00:02:05-4#
- 32 JN: different perspectives. Lenny has more HR-related and about the process itself and you have of

33 *course (.) your perspective is the higher level and how you (.) how you perceive this topic from your*
 34 *view. So #00:02:24-5#*

35 I: [Yes. #00:02:24-5#

36 *JN: that's why some of the questions are similar, yes. #00:02:27-5#*

37 I: I understand. How that is (.) the core values of our organization and, and (.) its (.) that (.) mean or
 38 more (.) our mission to improve the life of the people that have stoma. #00:02:40-0#

39 *JN: [Yes. #00:02:40-0#*

40 I: So (.) we try (.) to achieve that by (.) yeah, by offering quality products. #00:02:49-8#

41 *JN: [Yes. #00:02:49-8#*

42 I: And all support around for the patient. (.) We have lot of experience of that. #00:02:58-1#

43 *JN: Yes. #00:02:58-1#*

44 I: And (.) so (.) our product range is (.) very dedicated (.) a match with the (.) daily needs of (.) the
 45 ostomy patients. #00:03:14-5#

46 *JN: [Yes. #00:03:14-5#*

47 I: So, that's first (.) that's first the (.) that is what the founder (.) started with is to improve (.), yes, the
 48 life of people that have stoma, because we are very patient-driven that's our focus. #00:03:29-5#

49 *JN: [Yes. #00:03:30-4#*

50 I: And that's a little differentiation from our competitors. (.) So that's the important thing (.) the core
 51 value of our organization. #00:03:41-1#

52 *JN: [Okay. And what about there at EuroTec (.) How you would describe the culture (.) In general?*
 53 *#00:03:54-1#*

54 I: Yes, we (.) are a very flat organization. That means (.) short lines (.) it is since it started and it still
 55 feels like a (.) family business, because the previous owner and founder of the company (.) started it
 56 (.) with a small group of people and (.) the way he was leading that (.) like an entrepreneur. He's (.) he
 57 was a very kind person and was very (.) friendly to the people. (.) So that is totally (.) different from for
 58 example from ConvaTec or (.) other big companies like a multinational. #00:04:30-7#

59 *JN: [Yes. #00:04:29-4#*

60 I: We (.) we are a small company and we've grown a lot in five years. So that means now that we have
 61 to grow also with an organization and that (.) that's also the problem now. To expand in people and in
 62 business. #00:04:43-4#

63 *JN: [Yes. #00:04:43-4#*

64 I: (.) But we (.) we still are a flat organization. So, we do it together as a team and one person is doing

65 (.) several activities and not only one job for example from the boss. #00:04:58-7#

66 JN: *[Yes. Okay. And how you would describe the HR function at EuroTec? #00:05:09-8#*

67 I: (.) I have been making ____ from Lenny there was no (.) in past (.) we have no (.) special (.) function
68 like HR-Manager #00:05:18-5#

69 JN: *[Yes. #00:05:18-5#*

70 I: or Adviser. So (.) we did it (.) from the function from the (.) as a part of administration team and she
71 did it with a colleague and then she did (.) partly (.) did she the HR. (.) And (.) In the past we could do
72 it on this way, (.) but of course (.) we grow enormously (.) also in people. #00:05:43-1#

73 JN: *[Yes. #00:05:43-9#*

74 I: (.) And then we had to do this function separately. #00:05:48-4#

75 JN: *[Yes. #00:05:49-2#*

76 I: (.) And, (.) and that's the reason why we started the test this year and (.) and to discuss with Niina
77 and Rachel and so we started with a differentiated function an HR Advisor and that was Lenny. (.) So
78 it's still in beginning the function. (.) We need to develop lots of things and activities around this
79 function and I'm about to do that, but (.) the (.) it was necessary to do it on this way now. #00:06:15-
80 8#

81 JN: *Okay. Thank you. That already answered to the question numbers two and three. So #00:06:23-6#*

82 I: *[Yes. #00:06:24-7#*

83 JN: *What about general of this acquisition. (.) Do you think (.) or do you feel that you have been well*
84 *informed about the acquisition deal and related post acquisition activities? #00:06:41-1#*

85 I: (.) Yes (.), because (.) the previous owner (.) informed me and I was part of the team to negotiate
86 with (.) ConvaTec and with the lawyers etc. So, from the beginning on he (.) because I was already for
87 two years the general manager (.) below him. So, was I also part of the negotiations (.) and we
88 discussed lots of things. And he ____ talked me. So, I was also (.) involved in the whole process. With all
89 the due diligence and with questions over and over and. (.) So, (.) yes, it was for me (.) yes, well
90 informed, absolutely. #00:07:26-9#

91 JN: *Okay. (.) So you already also answered for the numbers five and six, which are related that (.) have*
92 *you been involved in the pre- and post-acquisition activities and how? So (.) #00:07:42-7#*

93 I: *[Yes, that was before the negotiation of course, but (.) to give them a lot of information, to answer*
94 *questions, the due diligence, so afterwards (.) yeah, because I'm the general manager, so the first*
95 *contact that it's with me if there was coming operational people or commercial people or (.) HR or (.)*
96 *everybody. Yes, I'm involved every time (.) of course in the email or in some (.) request or something.*
97 *(.) So I think (.) that's gonna be (.) that's good how it worked now and how they do it. #00:08:21-8#*

98 JN: *[Okay. #00:08:21-8#*

- 99 I: So, I'm involved. Yes. #00:08:22-6#
- 100 JN: Great. What about, do you know how (.) the line managers or other people (.) other people at
101 EuroTec (.) how they feel? #00:08:35-9#
- 102 I: (.) They feel (.) what about? #00:08:39-1#
- 103 JN: (.) About this acquisition (.) Have they, (.) do the employees feel that they have been involved
104 enough? (.) Or do they feel that they have been well-informed about the post-acquisition activities?
105 #00:08:55-6#
- 106 I: (.) Yes. (.) Yes, some, (.) some do and some people don't do that. It's a little bit different, because a
107 few line managers (.) are (.) rather saying that they are not involved enough by some (.) some projects,
108 like we change a little bit our ____ system for example and #00:09:20-5#
- 109 JN: [Yes. #00:09:21-4#
- 110 I: and some people are not (.) they said that maybe you have to involve us earlier, because (.) of course
111 some decisions are made before and then we do a bit of a project team. #00:09:31-3#
- 112 JN: [Yes. #00:09:31-3#
- 113 I: So, but I think that's normally that (.) you cannot always involve all of them from the beginning. So,
114 and of course (.) the (.) the other people (.) of course we have a lot of production people #00:09:44-6#
- 115 JN: [Yes. #00:09:45-3#
- 116 I: and by the (.) acquisition (.) they (.) they feel (.) yes. They saw a little bit of danger of course (.) that
117 (.) that the company acquired by (.) a bigger company. So yes, they were a little bit unsure about the
118 future and what's gonna be happening with us etc. (.) So yes that's the different opinion from different
119 people. #00:10:12-7#
- 120 JN: [Yes and (.) how these uncertainties have been managed at EuroTec? (.) Are you trying to impact to
121 these uncertainties and these attitudes that they think it is dangerous or (.) #00:10:32-4#
- 122 I: [Yes, yes we have (.) once in the (.) quarter we had a town hall meeting #00:10:38-4#
- 123 JN: [Yes. #00:10:39-5#
- 124 I: and we did it from the beginning (.) so of course all the information that I can share with them (.) I
125 do and of course I want to be honest to them and (.) tell them the truth and (.) I am not lying to them
126 #00:10:52-5#
- 127 JN: [Yes. #00:10:52-7#
- 128 I: what could be happening. And of course, I cannot answer what can happen in the future, because
129 nobody knows in one, in two or in five years. #00:11:00-0#
- 130 JN: [Yes. #00:11:00-7#
- 131 I: So, it's always the question of a lot of people: what's going to be happen about in one or two or four

132 years and of course I don't know. We try to do every day our best and give good performance for
133 ourselves and for ConvaTec and (.) so if they have questions they can ask me or Lenny and (.) and (.) a
134 lot of people do that(.) so we have meetings and (.) and ____ enough to share that information.
135 #00:11:27-0#

136 *JN: Okay, great. And then, the next question number seven. This is more about the topic of my research.*
137 *So, the HRM practice transfer and adaptation process. So, have #00:11:41-6#*

138 I: [Yes. #00:11:41-9#

139 *JN: you been involved on the process of HRM practice transfer and adaptation and how? #00:11:47-5#*

140 I: (.) You mean by ConvaTec (.) or what do you mean? #00:11:56-5#

141 *JN: (.) I mean that (.) for example has ConvaTec (.) contacted you and wanted to discuss some HR*
142 *processes with you or (.) would you like to change something of your current practices (.) or #00:12:20-*
143 *2#*

144 I: [we have (.) we have to do better than we did and (.) that is also the reason was made before Lenny
145 was involved of course (.) a lot of information came to me from ConvaTec and (.) we decided to (.) have
146 (.) a special job for that position. (.) So from the moment that Lenny stepped in (.) in the function.
147 #00:12:40-3#

148 *JN: [Yes. #00:12:41-0#*

149 I: (.) Of course (.) a lot is going to enhance, but of course she always informs me and I'm always (.) in
150 copy of the information of the (.) mails of Niina or (.) Rachel etc. We do that together and I know (.) all
151 the things that now are happening or are going to happen in the future (.) what's going on with the
152 Workday and all those things. That's clear for me. #00:13:06-7#

153 *JN: Okay, great thank you. And (.) in general how would you describe the local HRM practices hold by*
154 *the organization before the acquisition. So how would you describe the EuroTec's (.) HRM practices?*
155 *#00:13:29-1#*

156 I: (.) Yes, it was (.) not very professional. It was more informal, because the previous (.) the previous
157 owner did it on his way and (.) it was not the most efficient way and (.) attractive way to do so (.) we
158 had (.) from that situation we had to improve a lot and we now we are busy with that and of course
159 ConvaTec helped how it was ____ it was a little bit informal how the company was (.) in the (.) in the
160 past. #00:13:58-0#

161 *JN: Okay. And how do you think that new HRM practices could positively impact on the organization's*
162 *performance? (.) Do you see an added value of these new (.) practices that ConvaTec aims to transfer*
163 *to EuroTec? #00:14:17-9#*

164 I: Yes, I think it's more professional of course and more the way (.) HR has to be used in (.) 2017 or later
165 so. (.) That is (.) that is important for us and I think we have to be a (.) far more professional organization
166 so (.) I think that give us a lot of improvements and a lot of things under HR. #00:14:46-9#

167 JN: Okay. And (.) and (.) the next question number nine: What are or what were the biggest challenges
168 in this post-acquisition integration process? And, also in the process of HRM practice transfer and
169 adaptation? #00:15:06-6#

170 I: (.) Good question. (.) #00:15:13-7#

171 JN: Maybe, maybe (.) if we start with the post-acquisition in general. How do you see that have been
172 the biggest challenges? #00:15:28-3#

173 I: (.) Yes, (.) to get the (.) the time frame to do everything, because it is still a small organization. Of
174 course, we have a lot of employees and (.) then Lenny is doing that in three and half day a week.
175 #00:15:43-1#

176 JN: [Yes. #00:15:42-7#

177 I: So, when I look at Workday or all those things (.) the whole PTD plan etc., I think the biggest challenge
178 is to do that in the time frame that we have and Lenny has. #00:15:56-6#

179 JN: [Yes. Okay, so (.) it's the resources what you have? #00:16:03-5#

180 I: [Yes, yes. #00:16:03-5#

181 JN: Okay. And, how these (.) how this could be (.) or how these challenges could be managed. Can you
182 manage somehow this (.) because you meant that the lack of resources is the biggest challenge at the
183 moment. (.) So how you, (.) how you manage the challenges related on that? #00:16:26-7#

184 I: I (.) want to give Lenny a very good (.) feeling and I trust her and I am confident the way she does it.
185 Of course, for her a lot of things are also very new, because she has no education for HR, she's a good
186 (.) woman with a lot of brains and smart and she works a lot of time more than ten years. She knew
187 the organization, she knew the people. So, I want to support her where I can and (.) together we (.) we
188 have to make steps and one step after one step #00:16:57-6#

189 JN: [Yes. #00:17:00-0#

190 I: and think we don't have to (.) we don't have to go more activities, but (.) we want to do step by step
191 and in a very good way and not to do it fast and not good. #00:17:16-8#

192 JN: [Good. #00:17:17-8#

193 I: And that's I think important. And to keep the priorities what we have to do first and (.) what we have
194 to do after that. #00:17:23-3#

195 JN: Yes. (.) I have also here the question (.) c) that do you feel that you have got (.) enough support
196 within your organization at EuroTec or from the acquiring organization ConvaTec? To (.) able to solve
197 these challenges or other people issues? (.) What do you #00:17:47-0#

198 I: [(.) Yes (.) sometimes, sometimes not (.) because (.) but it is also part of our way of approaching
199 things, because (.) we (.) of course we're now part of a bigger organization and we are not very (.) well-
200 known with (.) yes, how it works in a bigger organization with, where we can find the right information,

201 right people, being a part of the system of course (.) and yeah (.) the (.) like the others system, the
202 intranet etc. (.) So we are a little bit strange to the company, because sometimes we receive the
203 information later or we don't receive any information, so it's also more to try to integrate in a good
204 way and to find the right way to do that. So, I think that's also a part and (.) we have for example a lot
205 of people. Especially in production, that is (.) some is sick, there is absenteeism. So, for example we
206 have to improve that, that is a big challenge for us. #00:18:51-3#

207 *JN: Yes. (.) Okay, and number ten. What are in general your expectations towards the acquisition now*
208 *and in the future? #00:19:07-9#*

209 I: (.) That's eleven? #00:19:11-3#

210 *JN: Number ten. #00:19:14-4#*

211 I: [I'm sorry, please #00:19:14-8#

212 *JN: Number ten, that (.) what are your expectations towards this acquisition or (.) what are your*
213 *desires? #00:19:24-4#*

214 I: (.) Yes (.) yes, I think that the (.) have to be more professional (.) next year to (.) for the people, for
215 the employees, (.) to think in a (.) better way than we did it in the past. (.) So I think that's the important
216 thing; with the help of ConvaTec, with the people of ConvaTec, with the programs (.) to be more
217 professional like (.) like the organization and for the people that (.) give the right the feeling, that the
218 HR (.) decisions is working professional and they are for the people. #00:20:07-3#

219 *JN: Okay. And then number eleven: How do you think that the #00:20:11-4#*

220 I: [Yes. #00:20:11-4#

221 *JN: acquisition deal will affect to your work? #00:20:17-6#*

222 I: (.) Now, now (.) it's a lot of work of course. We need to invest in work, in time etc. But I think
223 afterwards, when we finish a lot of projects we have advantages of (.) of the way we're working in that
224 way. So, okay now we're a little bit skeptic sometimes or (.) we think it's a very load of work, because,
225 Workday for example is a very big problem. Etc. But (.) Yeah, I think afterwards, we feel happy with
226 that. #00:20:45-0#

227 *JN: Yes, okay. And then number twelve. I would a little bit adjust that question (.) I would ask that: How*
228 *would you describe your relationships with the personnel of ConvaTec (.) with whom you are (.) in*
229 *contact? #00:21:08-4#*

230 I: (.) Sorry, sorry, that's question twelve or not? #00:21:14-6#

231 *JN: Yes, it is. But you have already mentioned that (.) you are in contact with ConvaTec quiet a lot (.)*
232 *And how would you describe these relations? #00:21:25-3#*

233 I: Now, I (.) I think the relations are very good, because also I have to find my way of course I am
234 responsible for everything. The commercial part, also really important because we have to generate

235 sales, expand in business. So (.) it is more (.) we have a very big workload on and I have (.) more
236 separate things like sales, like the contacts with the customers etc. So, I want to focus more on that.
237 But of course, first we have to do some projects. (.) And if I have right people on the right place like
238 Lenny or ____ or other one. Then I feel good, I trust people and we can make (.) we can make steps
239 forwards. #00:22:04-0#

240 *JN: Yes, okay. (.) Would you have anything else to add? #00:22:10-1#*

241 I: No. For me it is the whole acquisition. (.) It was this year, (.) it is a very (.) lot of work to do, because
242 a lot of people contact me and want also to come over, we will start projects, we'll have and share
243 information. (.) So for that means: I work very hard and I feel very well with what I do my job. And we
244 are making steps and next year we make better steps and we can have a good basis to start for the
245 next step: to improve our organization. #00:22:42-9#