



The Management of Workforce Diversity within the Irish Hotel Industry

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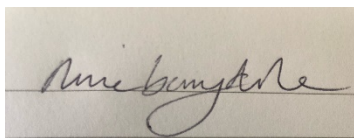
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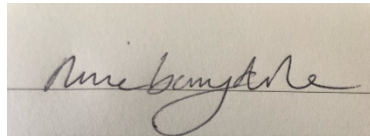
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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate the value of diversity management in the workplace, with a focus on the hospitality industry in Ireland today. Managing a diverse workforce is a considerable issue within the hospitality industry, due to the sector's high reliance on foreign employees, and can create challenging issues for managers, employees, and the day-to-day operations of the business. Employee turnover rates are among the highest for frontline employees in the industry (Ellinson, 2013). Research focused on why diversity management is still a significant problem within the industry and the impact it may have on the sectors high turnover rate, has been limited to date.

To address this dearth in literature, this qualitative research used in-depth interviews in order to gain the perspectives of the different hotel managers on the importance of effective diversity management within the industry. The researcher designed the interview questions (see Appendix A) to allow the managers communicate both their professional and personal opinions on the subject.

The current study found that managers are aware of the industry diversity management problems however changing them proves difficult to achieve. The interviews revealed that the industry can be described as highly diverse and unpredictable with many businesses not investing the appropriate money and time into their personnel. The research also identified that the hospitality industry has earned itself a poor reputation which in due course contributes to employees seeing work in this sector as temporary whose positions are then filled by migrant workers who are in danger of exploitation as they are willing to work for less than their Irish counterparts.

The findings imply that given that many of the diversity management challenges facing the industry are difficult to improve, particularly in larger hotel chains, the turnover rate will increase and the ability to retain staff will become increasingly harder for businesses. This research indicates that issues that were occurring several years ago, according to previous literature, are still affecting the industry today. If the importance of diversity management does not get the recognition it needs from hoteliers, the future and the standards of the hospitality industry are uncertain.

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Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this chapter is to deliver a brief synopsis of the contents of this dissertation. It provides the reader with the research question and the rationale for the research that was conducted, outlines the research objectives, and briefly summarizes each of the main chapters within this dissertation.

1.2 Research Problem

Diversity management has become an important part of running a company. Today, there is heightened interaction between people from different countries, each with their own set of values, cultures, and beliefs. Diversity in the workplace allows businesses to become more adaptable to change, keep up with their competitors and continue business growth. Individuals from other backgrounds contribute their experiences, talents, and thoughts to the company. However, to achieve the top results, businesses must recognize the value of diversity within their workplace.

The hospitality industry is seen as a sector with a highly diversified workforce, especially among frontline employees. Considering the dissimilarity within the sector's workforce, it is extremely important that diversity management is deemed a key aspect of a hotelier's managerial agenda. However, it has been highlighted that this is not always the reality within hotels and diversity management is often disregarded due to the industry's high turnover rate and busy nature (Kim, 2006). If hoteliers do not recognize the need of diversity management, the hospitality industry's future and standards could be put at risk.

1.3 Research Question

The research question that was pursued for this dissertation is:

'How do hoteliers' perceive the importance of effective diversity management?'

The study concentrated on departmental managers of four-star Dublin City hotels.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives which provide context for this investigation are as follows:

- **Objective one:** *To investigate a managers' understanding of what cultural diversity means within today's hospitality industry.*
- **Objective two:** *To appraise managers' perception regarding the importance of appropriately managing a culturally diverse workforce within the hospitality industry.*
- **Objective Three:** *To examine managers' opinions on the challenges that can arise when managing a culturally diverse workforce within the hospitality industry.*
- **Objective Four:** *To explore the practices, if any, that can be adopted by managers to assist in overcoming the above challenges within the hospitality industry.*

1.5 Research Justification

Poor diversity management has been cited as a reason for turnover (Amin & Akbar, 2013) and the greater the level of perception a manager has on the importance and value of effective diversity management has been found to have a significant impact on intention to stay with a company (Gordon, Adhikari & Kotera, 2018). From a personal perspective, there is a strong interest in the rationale for this study. Having worked in the hospitality industry for the past six years, working in non-managerial and managerial positions, the researcher has witnessed first-hand the everyday challenges that both managers and employees can face when interacting with individuals of different culture/ethnicity than their own.

1.6 Profile of Sector

This research relates specifically to the hospitality industry in Ireland, due to the strategic complexity of this sector and heavy reliance on foreign nationals to fill the sector's workforce. According to Wells (2020), the industry's annualized global employee turnover rate was estimated at a staggering 73.8%, this is a remarkable figure as a healthy employee turnover rate is considered between 10-15%. The researcher hopes this study may help identify which, if any, positive diversity management initiatives that may improve the day to day lives of employees in the hospitality industry and ultimately guide the researcher towards hoteliers

fostering the best workplace practices. It is intended that this contribution will assist further research on diversity management in this industry.

1.7 Summary of Chapters

The following sections outline the structure of the thesis.

1.7.1 Chapter I: Introduction

The first chapter is in place to present to the reader the dissertation and the research question that is being investigated, along with the objectives, justification for the research and profile of the focused sector.

1.7.2 Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the academic literature that is available concerning the topic of this dissertation. It will examine the concept of diversity and inclusion and managing cultural diversity within the hospitality industry as well as the challenges of diversity in the workplace. It will also focus on the current diversity initiatives within the Irish hospitality industry and legislation implemented by the Irish government.

1.7.3 Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the method of analysis that was chosen in this dissertation. The research question and objectives are outlined, the methods of data collection are stated along with the justification as to why these were chosen and applied.

1.7.4 Chapter IV: Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the primary research. The findings uncovered that although managers are aware of the industry's diversity management issues, altering them has proven tough. The findings suggest that the future and standards of the hospitality sector are in jeopardy if the necessity of diversity management does not receive the acknowledgment it deserves from hoteliers.

1.7.5 Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter brings forward the main conclusions that were drawn from the research as well as making possible recommendations for the future of sustainability of the hospitality industry and for future research. This chapter also determines the limitations of this investigation.

Chapter II:

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this review is to critically evaluate the current literature on the topic of workforce diversity with a particular focus on cultural diversity. To begin, the review will focus on examining diversity, cultural diversity, cultural diversity management and inclusion in the workplace. There is a strong link between diversity and inclusion, but they are different from one another which will be considered below. Subsequently the review will continue to discuss how diversity management is conducted within the hospitality industry and the current diversity initiatives that are being implemented within Irish hospitality companies. The author will also consider the benefits and challenges that accompany a diverse workforce. Finally, the review will draw on a conclusion and establish if there is a gap in current literature.

It is important to note that while, typically, inclusion and equality go hand in hand, the author did not discuss the concept of equality as they found when researching equality in the workplace that the literature was predominantly focused on gender, which this dissertation does not concentrate on. The critical evaluation of these current academic sources will contribute to obtaining information based on this study's research question which is '*How hoteliers' perceive the importance of effective diversity management?*'

2.2 The Concept Diversity and Inclusion

One would think that in today's vast and growing multicultural society, the idea of diversity would have a simple meaning; however, the definition of diversity varies from individual to individual, workplace to workplace, and writer to writer (Washington, 2008). Diversity, according to Wellner (2000), is defined as a collection of personal differences and similarities that exist between individuals. Race, age, religion, national origin, faith, ethnicity, and sexual orientation are all examples of diverse human characteristics. Diversity in this study refers to the differences in nationality/ethnicity and culture.

Robbins and Judge (2011) state that there are two levels to diversity: surface and deep-level diversity. The authors explain that surface-level diversity consists of human characteristics that are obvious to detect such as race, age, gender, and ethnicity. These characteristics are common in that they can elicit assumptions in people, even though stereotypes do not always represent how individuals feel and think. Deep-level diversity refers to the differences between individuals that include their beliefs, mindsets, and personality.

Owing to the degree of prejudice that can be found in the workplace, equality is a concept that is strongly correlated with diversity. According to Taylor (2014) equality implies that all individuals, including employees of businesses, have the same opportunities and rights. It is important that diversity management focuses on reducing workplace discrimination while striving to promote equality and inclusivity with policies and plans. As this study is primarily concerned with the elements of diversity involving culture and ethnicity/nationality, the concept of cultural diversity will be examined below.

2.2.1 Cultural Diversity

One of most important components of the concept of diversity, which is at the core of this study, is the aspect of culture. The word culture can refer to both actions and symbols. It is a mixture of principles, beliefs, morals, and information acquired from birth, as well as moral codes governing personal and professional interactions, that influences how one chooses to live (Failte Ireland, 2013). Cultural diversity may be construed in a variety of ways. For the purposes of this research, cultural diversity will be assumed to include culture, nationality/ethnicity, and race. Failte Ireland (2013) believes a healthy culturally diverse workplace praises the identities of its workers, values and explores differences, and consciously strives to learn from other cultures.

In Ireland, globalisation is seen as the primary cause of cultural diversity in the workplace (Hill, 2011; Failte Ireland 2013). Failte Ireland (2013) states that due to the decrease in young skilled hospitality workers in Ireland in recent years, the growing number of employees from various racial, social, and cultural backgrounds employed in today's industry has helped to alleviate this shortage of Irish workers. International employees are starting to ask what improvements and supports are being made in relation to diversity by organizations as a result of this change and expansion in culture differences within the Irish workforce. Thus, reinstating how important it is for employers to value effective diversity management practices in today's hospitality industry.

2.2.2 Cultural Diversity Management

Workforce diversity management studies have garnered considerable attention in recent years (Tamunomiebi, 2019). Thomas (1990) was one of the first figures to examine the concept of diversity management, exploring the management of race, age, gender, ethnicity, and class. His

thoughts around workforce diversity management emphasized the affect it has on job satisfaction and performance, motivation and ensuring well established relationships amongst all individuals a part of an organization.

Workforce diversity management requires acknowledgment, respect, and acceptance that all individuals have their unique set of differences (Patrick and Kumar, 2012). These differences can include race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious or political beliefs, status, age and physical abilities and disabilities. There have been several proposed approaches to managing a diverse workforce, many concentrating specifically on cultural diversity (Seyman, 2006). As discussed above cultural diversity refers to the representation of individuals who have distinctly different group relationships of cultural importance and can affect the workplace in various ways (Cox, 1993). A study conducted by Kulkarni (2012) suggested that cultural diversity management practices should be based on proven global models which aim at improving cultural dimensions and attaining the best possible benefits from cultural diversity. One of the more used models is Trompenaar's (1993) seven dimensions of culture theory which helps distinguish individuals from one culture compared to another. Such models can be used to prevent misunderstandings when managing a culturally diverse workforce, acknowledging that one culture is not better or worse than another but is simply based on different values, beliefs, perspectives, and ways of thinking.

The typical approach to managing multiculturalism in organisations has been to assume that individuals of the marginal culture must adjust to the cultural constraints of the common culture but as we move into the 21st century the global economy has had a fundamental shift (Patrick et., 2012; Kulkarni, 2012; Jenaibi, 2017). Minorities are becoming majorities with cities such as Toronto, Amsterdam and Sydney reporting up to 50% of their population consisting of non-white racial groups (Kalargyrou and Costen, 2017). As organisations become increasingly globalized, diversity management must be more than recognizing individual differences but understanding, supporting, and promoting the value in these differences, ultimately attempting to become a more inclusive workplace.

2.2.3 Inclusion in the Workplace

As the characteristics historically identified with diversity widen, diversity is now seen fostering the idea of inclusivity. Inclusion can be defined as the scale of which an employee is accepted within an organisation (Schein, 1971). According to Bratton and Gold (2017)

inclusion is also known as social inclusion, and it describes an individual who differs from the mainstream group in particular ways but is nevertheless offered equal opportunities. Employees who feel like they have the power to make the correct choices in their job can be classified as included individuals in the workplace. This feeling of certainty stems from the employee's perception of being respected by the organization because of the information transfer prospects provided by their workplace.

It is important to acknowledge that a diverse working environment eventually progresses into an inclusive working environment. Such diversity and inclusivity must be handled so that the individuals who belong to a minority group feel respected and treated equally to those who belong to the majority group (Panicker, Agrawal and Khandelwal, 2017). Previously, the process of developing an inclusive or diverse working environment was largely involved during an organization's recruiting phases however this perception of diversity and inclusion management has shifted, as an inclusive and diverse workplace must be encouraged constantly within an organization and throughout the lives of all employees (Panicker et al., 2017). To make sure that diversity and inclusion is recognized appropriately, employers must implement, targeted and constructive, diversity and inclusion initiatives within their organisations but before these initiatives are devised, it is important to consider how cultural diversity is managed within today's hospitality industry.

2.3 Managing Cultural Diversity within the Hospitality Industry

As discussed above the need for effective diversity management is now more crucial than ever and due to the diverse nature of the hospitality industry it is especially relevant. A study conducted by Forbes Insights (2012) revealed that the hotel and catering industry had the second most diverse industry in the UK and US. According to Malik, Madappa and Chitranshi (2017) due to the recently increased internationalism and globalism processes, diversity management holds a significant role in a hospitality firm's competitive sustainability and most organisations that implement it are doing it for this exact reason.

The hospitality industry is a multinational industry by design, hiring individuals from all walks of life. For hospitality organizations to gain advantage from any form of diversity, appropriate diversity management strategies must be implemented. A recent CIPD (2020) report stated that effective diversity management practices should concentrate on developing inclusive approaches to employment policies and procedures and that organisations need to go beyond

the minimum legal requirements. Kim (2006) believes that hospitality managers are often faced with difficult attitudes and behaviors when working in a multicultural workplace. He suggests that these problems can be solved by changing the organisations culture through positive management strategies and promoting an open working environment.

The hospitality industry is considered a highly changeable industry because of its high dependence on human capital and consequently, turnover is amongst the highest of any industry, (Rehman and Mubashar, 2017). Research suggests that because the industry's workforce is so diverse, appropriate diversity management practices are key in overcoming the problem of turnover. A study by Gong (1998) highlighted how important diversity management is in reducing turnover and gaining competitive advantage in the hospitality industry and managers must be sensitive to employee's cultures as well as aware of how much of an impact they have on how diversity is perceived within the organisation.

According to Madera (2018) the most significant challenge in managing cultural diversity within the hospitality industry is the unsupportive attitudes that employees of the majority culture may have towards diversity management. There has been extremely little research conducted on what can be done to strengthen diversity management attitudes (Avery, 2011; Yang and Konrad, 2011; Madera, 2018). Instead, the research on diversity management has mainly concentrated on diversity training, which employs several strategies, making it challenging to determine which particular initiative may change employee attitudes on diversity management (Madera, 2018).

2.3.1 Benefits of Cultural Diversity in the Workplace

According to Avery and Mckay (2010), companies are finding it progressively more difficult to keep up with and completely comprehend how to handle their diverse workforce as diversity in the workplace has increased. As a result, organisations are having a tougher time profiting from the widely lauded possible benefits. Greenberg (2004) states that the willingness to accept diversity and reap the rewards is critical to an organization's growth and competitiveness. The productivity benefits improve when organizations and workers can recognize each employee's individuality, recognize that every employee is equally important, and encourage inclusion. Kim and Park (2017) highlight that having this competitive advantage has a significant impact on an organisations turnover rate with existing employees more likely to stay.

Workplace diversity offers a wide variety of viewpoints, which can stimulate ingenuity in many ways. A study conducted by Knippenberg, De Dreu and Homan (2005) revealed that organisations who foster a diverse workforce have a more creative and innovative working environment. Cox (1991) also states that diversity in the workplace can lead to better creativity as well as more productive decision making while providing employers with a larger talent pool. Ayega and Muathe (2018) revealed, from their research, that employee diversity can also enhance knowledge and skills of the organisation as well having a positive influence on employee's career progression and their interpersonal skills within the workplace. Groschl and Doherty (1999) further found that cultural diversity resulted in increased capacity to meet consumer demands, cost savings from attrition and litigation, increased efficiency, and quality enhancements.

Acknowledging and implementing diversity in the workplace generates a more equitable and equal-opportunity workplace for all (Gold, Holden, Stewart, Iles and Beardwell, 2013). Through embracing diversity and providing the same prospects for all workers, businesses will encourage greater organisational loyalty (Gold et al., 2013). Although it is important to recognize the benefits of cultural diversity in the workplace, it is equally important to highlight the challenges that may arise.

2.4 Challenges of Cultural Diversity in the Workplace

Workforce diversity is deemed one of the major challenges for management in modern-day organisations (Martín Alcázar, Miguel Romero Fernández, and Sánchez Gardey, 2013). Managing diversity is often described as a double-edged sword process with some considering it a source of strength for organisations while others viewing it as a foundation of weakness (Shaban, 2016; Carter and Phillips, 2017; Kalargyrou and Costen, 2017). Through careful examination the author has found that three biggest challenges of diversity management involve communication, discrimination, racism and stereotyping, and training (McMillan, 2005; Seyman, 2006; Devine, Baum, Hearn and Devine, 2007).

2.4.1 Communication

When a workforce is comprised of a diverse group of individuals an increased level of ambiguity is developed during intercultural meetings. Different nationalities and cultural backgrounds can often create a barrier of communication, both verbal and non-verbal, between

employees (McMillan, 2005). While it may not be necessary to comprehend every language, it is important to acknowledge that communication may be more difficult for employees of the different international background. CIPD (2020) also highlights that when employees of various cultural environments work together, the misinterpretation of behaviours can cause miscommunication leading to conflict in the workplace, impeding working relationships and efficiency. Conflict may also occur when employees disagree on a particular situation. Malik, Madappa and Chitranshi (2017) also highlight that behaviour which may be appropriate in one culture may not be acceptable in another. Managers must acknowledge the cultural differences within their workforce to avoid tense and potentially destructive situations.

Cox (1994) highlights that humans' natural behaviour is to be drawn to other people who are close to themselves in terms of age, gender, and nationality. Individuals who fail to identify people with similar characteristics and demographics with whom they converse with at work have reduced levels of solidarity than those on a similar team (Cox, 1994). Cox (1994) further states that diverse groups of employees within an organisation only demonstrate greater levels of communication skills when they are managed successfully.

2.4.2 Discrimination, Racism and Stereotyping

As discussed above cultural differences can cause communication challenges, and communication challenges can often lead to conflict which in turn can result in direct and indirect discrimination between employees. Discrimination does not only occur amongst employees but may come from management too. Seyman (2006) states that false stereotypes of minorities can have a huge effect on career opportunities for international employees. Failte Ireland (2013) also acknowledges this idea, suggesting that international employees are often seen as temporary, low-skilled workers.

Jones and George (2009) believe that all organisations must have a zero-tolerance policy for any form of discrimination in the workplace. Prejudices are the predominant cause of discrimination which can be overcome through well-developed training programs that focus on changing these prejudices and eliminating discrimination altogether (Shaban, 2016). Although training programs are a key factor when addressing workplace discrimination, Ferdman and Brody (1996) highlight that the outcome should be aimed at finding a common ground rather than placing the blame on an individual. Rivera and Ward (2010) also point out that institutional racism is a major discrimination challenge for diverse workforces. They define

institutional racism as practices that limit individuals' or groups' professional entry and movement based on race, either directly or indirectly. Organisations must be aware as institutional racism is often undetected and ultimately accepted as the company's norms.

Governments have amended anti-discrimination legislation because of the growth of diverse workplaces, such as the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, which is an equality Irish legislation for preventing workplace discrimination. Such legislation is important, but organisations must go beyond the minimum accordance with the law and make sure that all employees feel equal and included in the workplace (CIPD, 2020).

2.4.3 Training

When managing an international workforce, it is important to consider that native employees may be uninformed in how to work with other employees with different cultures and beliefs and may feel intimidated by unknown situations (Torrington and Hall, 2002). Amaram (2007) suggests that diversity training is a great tool for managers to use when attempting to breakdown employees prejudice opinions on minorities. Diversity training is commonly reported to discuss concerns such as power and control, inequality, and oppression (Fowler, 2006). Although diversity training is deemed practically essential to all diverse working environments in today's society, the process is time consuming and can come at a significant cost for an organisation. Due to the high cost of diversity training, hospitality organisations can be reluctant to make it easily accessible for all employees (Dike, 2013; Reynolds and Rahman, 2014). O' Connell (2005) states that only when native employees are conscious of and understand the needs of multicultural laborers will a culturally enriching atmosphere be developed. Managers must ensure that ignorant attitudes and mindsets must be changed to create a culturally developed workplace.

Hospitality organisations across the globe have introduced diversity training aimed at increasing employee empathy for not only a diverse variety of employees but also for visitors, and customers too (Reynolds et al., 2014). The hospitality industry deals with consumers from all over the world, implying that recognizing different consumer sensibilities is critical to success. Sufficient attention to diversity-related problems tends to be a strong way for hospitality companies to boost customer experience and increase guest satisfaction (Reynolds et al., 2014).

2.5 Diversity Initiatives within the Irish Hospitality Industry

Many organizations around the world have diversity programs in place to support workers who may be in a disadvantaged category or demographic as compared to their peers (Leslie, 2019). With almost 34% of the Irish population born and raised overseas, the author found it surprising that research on diversity management within the Irish hospitality industry is incredibly limited. A report issued by Failte Ireland (2013) has outlined examples of Irish hospitality organisations that use certain initiatives to manage their diverse workforce.

- The Intercontinental Hotel Dublin uses diversity training and diversity days as diversity initiatives. The hotel also takes a no-nonsense approach to any form of discriminatory behavior with serious policies in place for both employees and guests. Although most candidates who are interviewed speak English, language training is available on the property.
- The Westin Dublin also uses diversity training as an initiative as well as organizes themed cultural days in the staff canteen.
- The Doyle collection provides international employees with a pack which includes the essential information on living and working in Ireland. The company has also designed a poster to raise cultural diversity awareness.

The only study that the author could find examining cultural diversity management within the Irish hospitality industry found that many employers often assumed that international employees were temporary and only competent of low-skilled work (Devine et al., 2007). The research highlighted the need for managers to recognize the importance and benefits of migrant workers especially in overcoming labor shortages due to the industry's high turnover rate.

2.6 Legislation Implemented by the Irish Government

The introduction of the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2004 and the Equal Status Act 2002, have had a huge impact on how diversity is managed within organisations in Ireland. The Employment Equality Act prohibits discrimination and harassment in the workplace covering the areas of age, disability, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation marital status, family status and affiliation with the travelling community. Any form of discrimination on these grounds is illegal. Such legislation operates as a main driving force in the management of diversity in Irish organizations.

In 2001, a public awareness programme was created by the Irish government to build the circumstances for an inclusive society in Ireland, one in which racism is effectively tackled from all perspectives and the value and opportunities that diversity provides to the country are recognized. The programme revealed that over one-third of foreign laborers in Ireland have experienced discrimination or prejudice within the workplace, further highlighting the importance of effective diversity management techniques.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief literature review on diversity management in the hospitality industry highlighting the diversity initiatives within the Irish hospitality industry and the challenges that managers may encounter when managing a culturally diverse workforce. The aim for this review was to identify if there was a gap in existing literature in relation to how hoteliers perceive the value of effective diversity management and how these perceptions can impact the workplace. While there has been an extensive volume of research carried out on diversity management in the hospitality industry, the author has concluded that present literature disregards the effects of hoteliers approaches and perceptions to managing a culturally diverse workforce may have on an organisation and in the case of Dublin, the research is non-existent. Therefore, primary research must be undertaken to answer the research question.

The research questions for this study were identified with the help of past studies and academic theories that have been established. After addressing the literature's present strengths and limitations, such as the scarcity of recent research on diversity management in hotels in Ireland. The limitations are viewed as a chance for additional research into the gap. Though there was evidence of the benefits and potential of embracing diversity in the workplace, diversity management in Ireland was considered as primarily driven by employment regulations. One of the most important objectives of this study is to establish what types of cultural diversity are present within the Irish hospitality industry and how hoteliers' welcome these differences as well as to determine what diversity initiatives hotels in Dublin are currently implementing and highlight the link between managing diversity and the turnover rate.

Chapter III: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to identify, from a manager's perspective, the importance of effective diversity management and to determine what initiatives can be adopted by hoteliers to help overcome the potential challenges when managing a diverse workforce in the hospitality industry. The aim of this chapter is to present the methods used to answer the research question and achieve the research objectives. The approach chosen for this research was based on both theoretical and practical considerations that were in line with the study's ultimate goal.

3.1.1 Questions & Objectives

Collins and Hussey (2014) consider a research question as a tool that provides a focus on a certain topic that will be investigated. The research question chosen for this dissertation is:

'How do hoteliers' perceive the importance of effective diversity management?'

A research objective provides a level of focus to help guide the design of the research plan and how it is performed (Brotherton, 2008). The following are the objectives which provide context for this investigation:

- **Objective one:** *To investigate a managers' understanding of what cultural diversity means within today's hospitality industry.*
- **Objective two:** *To appraise managers' perception regarding the importance of appropriately managing a culturally diverse workforce within the hospitality industry.*
- **Objective Three:** *To examine managers' opinions on the challenges that can arise when managing a culturally diverse workforce within the hospitality industry.*
- **Objective Four:** *To explore the practices, if any, that can be adopted by managers to assist in overcoming the above challenges within the hospitality industry.*

3.1.2 Research Timeline

November 2020	Research Approach: Formulate aims and objectives
December 2020	Secondary Research: Literature Review
January 2021	*Submission of Research Proposal*
February 2021	Methodology
March/April 2021	Development of Interview Protocol and Questions
April/May 2021	Primary Research Findings and Analysis
May/June 2021	Findings, Analysis and Conclusion

3.1.3 Research Process

Research can be described as a careful understanding of study considering a concern or problem using scientific methods (Blankenship, 2010). Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2013) recommend a research process should consist of six specific stages. For this process, each suggested stage has been followed by the researcher.

1 st Stage	Research the literature in the topic area
2 nd Stage	Identify the research problem for the topic of study
3 rd Stage	Select the most suitable methods to answer the research question
4 th Stage	Gather and measure the research data collected
5 th Stage	Evaluate the results and the data
6 th Stage	Present the findings through a research project

Zikmund et al., (2010)

3.2 Research Philosophy

Saunders et al., (2012) define the term research philosophy as a system of assumptions and beliefs regarding the advancement of knowledge. A philosophical foundation can be defined as the type of methodology one chooses to comprehend the human behaviour of those assumptions and believes (Creswell and Poth, 2017). By selecting a philosophical position, it

supports a global view of the research. There are three main types of research philosophies that can be adopted to understand research which include: positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Saunders et al., 2012). The researcher will base this study on an interpretivism approach but first the other alternatives are discussed.

3.2.1 Positivism Approach

Brotherton (2008) describes a positivism approach as a belief based on the view that a real world of quantifiable social and physical phenomena exists independently and how such phenomena are recognized and intellectualized by people. A positivist takes the view that the truth is out there, and it can be discovered by employing a suitable methodology. Positivism is based on the compilation of data and the critical analysis of that data. With a positivism approach, the study process will be based on gathering data that can be easily measured and validated using questionnaires, surveys, and investigational experiments (Brotherton, 2008). As contrasted to the interpretivism approach, this method of data collection is also seen as a more controlled and inflexible method of analysis (Wilson, 2014).

3.2.2 Interpretivism Approach

Interpretivism differentiates between objects, which are studied in science and human beings (Collins et al., 2010). It assesses the beliefs and perceptions of the topics of research. Consequently, it concentrates more on the human being itself rather than the objects and allows a greater understanding to be extracted from interviews (Saunders et al., 2012). Pham (2018) states that the knowledge sought through interpretivism is of a higher level and more open to interpretation than data collected through a positivist approach, which is more objective and less open to interpretation. Interpretivism permits further participation from the researcher who can communicate and meet with the participants, while positivism prefers researchers to remain separate from the analysis (Collins et al., 2010).

Both positivism and interpretivism have their own set of benefits and drawbacks. Interpretivism recognizes personal views and may lend itself to a more biased analysis, while positivism is a formal methodology with guidelines and standardized procedures to follow, allowing for minimal error and validity in the data collected (Pham, 2018). That said, interpretivism may provide a deeper, more meaningful insight into a research field that may be useful to the study and due to the organized nature of positivism this type of data will not be gathered.

3.2.3 Pragmatism Approach

Feilzer (2010) describes pragmatism as a deconstructive model that promotes the use of mixed methods in research. According to pragmatism, the research question is the most valuable determining factor. Pragmatic research can merge both, positivist and interpretivism positions within the scope of a single research corresponding to the nature of the research question. If the researchers believe that combining interviews and surveys would assist a study, they may choose to use this approach (Wilson, 2014).

3.3 Methodological Approach

Typically, there are two methodological approaches used to carry out research: quantitative and qualitative although sometimes these can be combined in a mixed method study.

Cohen (1980) describes quantitative research as social research that uses both empirical methods and statements. This method involves the use of numbers and statistics. Qualitative research examines, explains, and interprets the personal and social experiences of individuals (Smith and Osbourne, 2008). According to Kvale (2007), interviews are the most predominant methods in qualitative research. This type of research mainly focuses upon smaller samples, instead of the larger samples that quantitative research generally employs. Mixed methods are a research technique in which researchers gather and examine both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study (Creswell, 2009). A mixed methods approach was initially considered with the author planning both quantitative and qualitative approaches to be used as part of the analysis in the research proposal. Unfortunately, due to the study's time constraints and the difficulties in obtaining access to many managers across a variety of organizations in the hospitality industry, this strategy was deemed unsuitable for this study.

For the research in question, a descriptive qualitative method was used as the needed information was non-numerical and required in depth evaluation. By using this method of research, the author attempts to collect enough comprehensive perspectives on the chosen subject from key individuals within the chosen sector. In comparison to collecting a larger sample of less detailed/in-depth data, Bell (2010) claims that qualitative researchers are often more interested in obtaining understanding into individual perceptions and cultivating an awareness of these perceptions or views on the chosen field of study. As a result, managers'

subjective accounts of their own interactions with diversity management in their organizations served as the foundation for data collection and generalizations based on the entire population of Ireland's hotel industry. Creswell (2009) states that it is not about whether one type of research method is better than the other but quantitative research is taking an analytical approach and qualitative research is taking a systematic approach.

3.4 Data Collection

Nykiel (2007) describes primary research as a methodology employed by researchers to gather information directly rather than relying on information gathered from previously conducted research. The three main methods used to carry out primary research consists of qualitative (i.e., surveys), quantitative (i.e., interviews) and mixed methods (using both surveys and interviews). Secondary research can be defined as the collection of data from current literature such as reports and studies by government agencies, trade associations, or businesses within the industry of interest (Nykiel, 2007). The secondary sources of research used for this dissertation largely consisted of academic books and journal articles. During the literature review, which provided theoretical context for this report, secondary research was analysed. The primary research for the study was gathered through semi structured interviews.

Creswell (2009) believes that observation, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials are the main types of qualitative research. Focus groups, another qualitative research method, were considered although proved to be an unsuitable method of research for this dissertation. In focus groups, it is often the group that is viewed as the case and not the individual partakers (Barbour, 2007). This approach was not used as it would have been challenging to arrange a certain time where all managers were available to take part in a group conversation. Considering the sensitivity of the selected subject, qualitative research using semi structured interviews is the favoured method as it is the most suitable way in developing a hoteliers' view on this topic. A semi-structured method can be used to cover a broad number of topics to direct the discussion to where the interviewer wants it to go.

The predominant method used to conduct qualitative primary research is interviewing an individual on the topic in question. Leech (2002) states that there are several ways to carry out an interview which include unstructured, semi-structured and structured. For this dissertation, the author used a semi-structured method to conduct the interviews. A range of different management figures were needed to attain various findings to compare the various departments

in the hotels concerning diversity management and semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate method to gather this data. Semi-structured interviews unravel in a conversational way allowing participants the opportunity to explore matters they believe are important.

The advantages of semi-structured interviews are that they give a better insight into the individual interviewee's opinions and feelings versus a focus group. Semi-structured interviews provide the interviewer with a one-to-one conversation with the interviewee, which guarantees a high level of attention between both individuals. With semi-structured interviews, the interviewer is fully prepared but can also adjust investigating questions to follow-up or respond to the participants answer. The interview began with questions that would have fixed answers before shifting on to questions where more extensive answers could be offered.

The main disadvantage of semi-structured interviews that interviewers may be confronted with is the issue of an artificial conversation. The interview questions, if not piloted, could lead to the respondents answering in a certain way and could lead to inaccurate findings from the interview.

The interviews were conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams. The interviews were approximately 25 to 30 minutes long. There were 14 interview questions (see Appendix A) which were created to address the four research objectives surrounding the departmental managers views and ideas of diversity management. All interviews were recorded on Microsoft Teams and were later transcribed for in-depth evaluation.

3.4.1 Interviewee's Demographics

The table below presents the managers demographics. Interview names remained anonymous and are referred to as Participant 1 (P1), P2, P3 etc. All managers are currently employed in large chain hotels within Dublin City.

Table 3.4 Interviewees' Demographics

Interviewees	Position	Years Worked in The Hospitality Industry	Number of Hotel Rooms	Star of Hotel
P1	Food and Beverage Manager	11	157	4
P2	Deputy General Manager	20	157	4
P3	Front Desk Manager	5+	209	4
P4	Assistant General Manager	6 +	300+	4
P5	Front Office Manager	9	157	4
P6	Meeting and Events Manager	8	191	5

3.5 Participant Selection

The information for this study was gathered from a non-probabilistic purposive sample of departmental managers from four-star hotels as there is a larger number of this grade of hotel in Dublin City. Purposive sampling can be used to select sample subjects based on some important characteristics a key figure may possess. A person may be regarded as a key informant because of the position they hold (Saunders et al., 2012). This method was chosen as departmental managers offer the ability to respond to the research question and provide insights into diversity management.

The researcher reduced their research population to departmental managers from four-star hotels as there is a large grade of this hotel in Dublin city. Where individuals' experiences and perceptions are involved, Morse (2000) recommends the researcher to conduct between six to eight interviews to meet the study's objective. Based on this recommendation, six managers in total, from various departments, were the interviewees. Three females and three males were chosen to ensure a gender equal was maintained. All interviewees are former colleagues of the researcher and were contacted through email, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

3.6 Data Analysis

For the purpose of this research, a descriptive analysis technique was adopted. Lowe, Norris, Farris, and Babbage (2018) emphasize the importance of information organization in the process of analysing and grouping descriptive data into themes to aid theoretical comprehension of the phenomenon under study. For this study, the primary data gathered was grouped under four themes, including: cultural diversity, importance of diversity management, challenges, and initiatives, which align with the research objectives of this study. The themes were selected by the author from the patterns that emerged when examining the data used in the literature review.

The analysed data was reviewed in the following findings chapter of this study. This in-depth review of primary information was also used to critically analyse the research findings, its input to the literature, and its real-world implications for the Irish hospitality industry, as well as to identify its shortcomings and possible areas for future research, all of which are addressed in later parts of this investigation.

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the research question and objectives decided the type of methodology and philosophy that were selected. An interpretivist approach was implemented, leading to a qualitative approach to data collection. By using semi-structured interviews to thoroughly investigate the view and opinions of the participating four-star hotel departmental managers, it was possible to meet the research objectives desired. The research limitation and ethical challenges were taken into consideration when carrying out the primary research. The next chapter will review the findings gathered from the six interviews.

Chapter IV: Findings

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the findings chapter is to present the data gathered from the six semi-structured interviews that the author carried out between the 19th of April and the 20th of May 2021. The research objective was to uncover the importance of effective diversity management from an Irish hotelier's perspective. The participants themselves come from a variety of backgrounds, have varying levels of experience and education, and while the study's sample size is modest, it is gender equal. Despite the fact that their anecdotes are very different, common themes arose that shed light on how diversity is perceived and managed within the hospitality sector. Other crucial and unexpected features of the data were found, indicating that the current study has vital lessons for individuals considering careers in the industry as well as organizations that could benefit from stronger diversity management strategies.

The findings are analyzed carefully in respect to the core study question, objectives, and existing knowledge. To demonstrate the research's worth, explicit connections were made to show how the findings reflect, differ from, and expand current knowledge on diversity management, an aspect of hotel management that literature indicated has had inadequate attention.

4.2 Cultural Diversity Management

When asked what cultural diversity means, all six participants agreed that the concept involves acknowledging other people's cultural differences. P2 and P3 both said that the concept of cultural diversity in the workplace should include embracing and respecting these differences to benefit the organisation.

“Cultural diversity to me means acknowledging other peoples’ cultural differences, recognising, respecting, and celebrating them. It is one of the most important teaching concepts from a purely human level” (P1)

P4 acknowledged that in the hospitality sector, cultural diversity is not only present amongst employees but also the industries consumers too. P5 and P6 believe that accepting that there are many cultures that exist around the world and appreciating the different ideas and beliefs that accompany these cultures, is the most important part of the concept.

The next question asked was one on the participants view of the hospitality sector as a cultural diversity industry. Although all participants had different comments on the scale of diversity within the industry, all six agreed that the hospitality industry is indeed a culturally diverse sector. P1 stated that, from their experience, they view the hospitality industry as being one of the most culturally diverse sectors within Dublin City. However, P4 responded that they had witnessed a larger degree of cultural diversity within hospitality workforce's when they worked in London, compared to Dublin. P2 responded that due to the industry being so heavily diverse, be it by choice or necessity, that often cultural diversity can be exploited. P3, P5 and P6 agreed that their response to this question was based on personal experience within the hospitality industry.

"I believe it absolutely is, however, sometimes I feel that cultural diversity is exploited by the industry. Lower earners in the industry are commonly people who have emigrated to Ireland and are willing to work for less than their Irish counterparts. I would argue that most hospitality businesses in Ireland are culturally diverse, whether it be by choice or necessity"
(P2)

The participants were then asked what the current composition of their workforce from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds was. P1, P2 and P5 work at the same hotel and state that their workforce is made up of 43% Mainland European, 27% Irish, 22% South/Central American, 5% African and 3% British. P3 stated that 75% of their workforce is of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds with P4 and P6 saying approximately 50%. The consensus of this question is that in general, Dublin City centre hotels workforces are overwhelmingly comprised of individuals of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

After the identification and discussion of the managers opinions on cultural diversity (objective one), the next section addresses the importance of diversity management.

4.3 Importance of Diversity Management

First, a question was posed to the participants on what the advantages were, to their organisation, of having a culturally diverse workforce. The researcher found that all six

managers agreed that having a multilingual team was, arguably, one of the most important advantages to having a culturally diverse team.

“Hotels facilitate guests from around the world which means sometimes, communication can be difficult. Cultural diversity usually brings with it a range of languages spoken by employees which is beneficial if it means that a team member can assist guests who cannot speak English or those that are not confident in speaking it. I believe that a culturally diverse team enriches the organisation as it promotes a more open and inclusive culture. It makes people more culturally aware and sensitive and uses people’s local knowledge to cater to guests as individuals.” (P2)

P1 and P4 added that a culturally diverse workforce provides a more empathic, accepting and educated team that are culturally sensitive to guests and able to help guests to a higher standard as a result of this.

Next, a question was asked to the participants on how important effective diversity management is within the hospitality industry. The researcher found that all six managers indicated that diversity management should be dealt with differently compared to other industries due to the high reliance on a diverse range of individuals to operate.

“Effective diversity management is incredibly important because the industry relies on a diverse range of people for it to operate. In Dublin especially, without these people the industry would cease to function at its current level.” (P2)

When asked if the idea of diversity management was considered a top priority by managers five out of six participants indicated that it was in their respective properties. With P6 being the exception, admitting that they do not consciously think about it, but they will notice if an employee is having a problem. P4 believes that *‘People are first agenda’*.

All the participants were asked if diversity management is not executed correctly, what are the potential consequences for the organisation. P2, P3 and P6 agreed that if a diverse team is not managed appropriately, an organisation could also find themselves in legal trouble as one's

culture is and should be protected. While P1 believes that ineffective diversity management can lead to a disgruntled and uneducated team which in turn leads to bad customer service, an impact on revenues, a high rate of staff turnover and can also cause a bad reputation within the industry.

“If it is not managed properly, an organisation could also find themselves in legal trouble as one's culture is and should be protected. The mismanagement of cultural diversity can also lead to conflict and segregation in the workplace” (P5)

“I have worked in teams where I felt that there was a low level of cultural diversity, and I knew of certain colleagues that would not feel comfortable telling others they were fasting for Ramadan as a result” (P4)

In conclusion, all participants agreed that effective diversity management is essential in all workplaces especially in the hospitality industry because of the high levels of diversity within the sector's workforce. Hence the next section addresses the challenges that can arise when managing a culturally diverse workforce within the hospitality industry.

4.4 Challenges of Diversity Management

To answer this research objective, another interview question was what the managers considered the most challenging aspect of a culturally diverse work environment. All managers agreed that the main challenge is the communication issues that will occur due to different native languages. P1 believes that, personally, their biggest challenge was not understanding the differences between various cultures and what the needs of these team members were. While P4 expressed that when they have worked in very busy hotels, they have experienced that the overall profitability of the hotel and guest focus came before any cultural diversity promotion within the teams which resulted in lower levels of team morale and a higher staff turnover rate as a result.

The managers were then asked how these challenges can potentially be avoided. All six managers believe that diversity training should be a huge component of a manager's agenda.

P3, P5 and P6 agreed that the HR department has a key role in ensuring and monitoring diversity management and training. However, P2 said that training can only go ‘so far’.

“Education, awareness and training are some solutions, although if someone is bigoted or unwilling to embrace diversity it is unlikely and very difficult to change them.” (P2)

A prevalent theme under this objective was the fact that there are significant challenges within the hospitality industry that many of the participants have identified from experience.

“Hospitality has unfortunately earned itself a bad reputation and that people do not simply want to get into it anymore as well as some properties not valuing their people and having an old school mentality when running the business which can be amplified for individuals of a different culture or ethnicity” (P3)

In conclusion, all participants acknowledged that their several challenges that can occur when managing a culturally diverse workforce, especially in the hospitality industry because of the busy nature of the sector. Some are inevitable and some are avoidable. Hence the next section addresses the practices employed to assist in overcoming the above challenges.

4.5 Current Implementation Practices

The final research objective for this dissertation was to identify the initiatives, if any, that managers may implement to stimulate effective diversity management. As P2, a hotelier with over 20 years of experience in the industry, says

“How do you expect customers to be treated well if frontline staff are not being managed appropriately?”

Which outlines the importance of effective diversity management. Three out of the six managers state that they have taken steps within their organization to promote diversity competence while in contrast P1, P2 and P5 stated that they do not personally, *“as there are two training modules that employees must complete each year. This promotes diversity*

competence and has been designed by experts in the field. It is my duty to ensure that these modules are completed by everybody.”.

P4 and P6 gave the example of how in their organisations during Ramadan, the chefs make the involved employees a meal of their choice so they can take their lunch break at sunset and have their meal together.

Participants were also questioned on what to they consider are the driving factors behind their organisation’s diversity management efforts. P1, P2, P4 and P5 believe that cultural diversity in a hospitality setting occurs organically for the most part and within their organisation they did not purposively try and recruit a culturally diverse team but rather found candidates that were the most qualified for the job. P3 and P6 added that organisations often feel a sense of ‘moral obligation’ when it comes to diversity management efforts, which may not always stem from the ‘right’ place.

The next question asked was one on the participants own individual leadership style. Although the managers had different responses to what leadership efforts worked best to support their organisations diversity initiatives, four out of six agreed that leaders must ensure that one’s culture is always respected within the workplace (P1, P2, P3 and P5). P4 and P6 stated that, as a manager, they like to educate and build an understanding of the different cultures surrounding them in work in order to avoid issues like bullying or racism.

To conclude the interview, the participants were asked what they regard as the major downfalls of the hospitality industry, compared to other industries, in the area of diversity management. Most of the managers agreed that the industry does suffer from some key downfalls while in contrast P6, a well cultured and experienced manager, stated that they *“don’t think we sell the industry well enough; the hospitality industry is an excellent industry with room for all types of people. You can learn many life skills working in the industry and travel anywhere in the world. The industry offers great flexibility, and the variety is never ending.”.*

P4 stated that because of the higher level of cultural diversity, hotels sometimes fail to manage the diversity as well as they should, and sometimes forget that not all their workforce are of Irish heritage. While P2 says that some properties and managers will take advantage of cultural diversity for financial gains or savings.

“Some Properties and Managers will take advantage of cultural diversity for financial gain or savings. Unfortunately, there is also a minority in Ireland that see cultural diversity as a bad thing for illegitimate reasons fuelled by bigotry and ignorance” (P2)

The discussion above has outlined the managers personal perspective on the practices that can be used to overcome diversity management issues within the hospitality industry which allows the researcher to provide a conclusion.

4.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, all managers are fully aware of how important cultural diversity management is although it can be challenging to execute appropriately. The findings have uncovered that the profession is incredibly diversified and unpredictable, with many companies failing to spend enough money and time in their employees. The findings have also revealed that the hotel industry has a bad reputation, which leads to employees viewing work in this sector as transient, with migrant workers filling the vacancies, putting them at risk of exploitation because they are ready to work for less than their Irish counterparts. Given how difficult it is to improve many of the industry's diversity management difficulties, the participants believe that turnover will rise and organisation's ability to retain personnel will become increasingly difficult. A hotelier must be able to recognise the importance of effective diversity management, not only for the employee's well-being but also for the growth and success of the company.

The findings of this investigation show that this is a continuing issue for the hospitality industry. All participants accepted that managers have a substantial role in ensuring diversity is handled appropriately within the hospitality workforce. The research supports the idea that ineffective diversity management can affect the industry's turnover rate.

Chapter V:

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this research was to investigate how hoteliers perceive the importance of effective diversity management and what impact that perception has. This chapter presents conclusions to the study by answering each of the four research objectives outlined under the headings- Main Findings and Analysis of Findings. Recommendations are also provided for future industry and academic research and an overall conclusion will be proposed.

5.2 Main Findings

Research objective one was aimed at revealing an understanding of what cultural diversity is within the hospitality industry according to the perspective of the participants.

Most of the respondents established that the concept of cultural diversity requires acknowledging other individual's differences. Although the participants had different views on what diversity means within their own organisation, they unanimously agreed that all ethnicities and cultures should always be respected.

All participants were aware of how culturally diverse the hospitality industry is and the noted the importance of migrant workers in keeping the industry operating. Each participant identified their current composition of their workforce from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds was, which revealed high levels of diversity within their organisations.

The research uncovered that all managers regard diversity management as a top priority in the business and that managers in the hospitality industry should pay close attention to the subject. Both primary and secondary research suggested that effective diversity management can create a more empathic and culturally sensitive working environment and is especially important in the hospitality industry due to the diverse nature of the sector (Forbes Insight, 2012).

This study explored the challenges that today's hospitality industry faces, and specifically, the research revealed that all managers believe that the industry does suffer from a number of prevalent concerns regarding diversity management. The primary and secondary research uncovered that language barriers, bigoted attitudes and how managers treat employees of the minority culture different to those of the majority culture were common issues that affect the industry (Madera, 2018). The primary research also unveiled the disappointing fact that the hospitality industry has earned itself a bad reputation which ultimately contributes to employees seeing work in this sector as temporary whose positions are then filled by migrant

workers who are at risk of exploitation as they are willing to work for less than their Irish counterparts.

The final research objective of this study identified that more often than not diversity management practices are implemented for financial advancement rather than for an employee's benefit. The participants understood that if diversity management is not carried out effectively, employee's performance will suffer thus affecting the day-to-day operations of the business. With the participants revealing a variety of different practices that should be implemented by managers, the research made clear just how much work it takes to provide a hospitality work environment where diversity management is, truly, a top priority.

5.3 Analysis of Findings

One might think that in today's huge and expanding multicultural society, the concept of diversity would have a straightforward definition; yet the notion of diversity differs (Washington, 2008). The findings suggest this to be true as all six participants had different opinions on what cultural diversity means to them.

Agreeing with Forbes Insight (2012), the respondents acknowledged that the hospitality industry is a highly diversified industry. Although the traditional approach to managing multiculturalism in the workplace has been to assume that members of marginal cultures must adapt to the cultural restrictions of the dominant culture (Kulkarni, 2012), a majority of the respondents acknowledged that managers must learn to include all cultures and ethnicities within the working environment rather than just majority.

Wellner (2000) describes cultural diversity as a collection of personal cultural differences and similarities that exist between individuals. The managers gave a similar definition with the majority saying cultural diversity involves understating other individuals' differences as well as embracing and respecting these differences. All six managers acknowledged that their workforce consists of a variety of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. As the literature suggests that the number of personnel from varied racial, social, and cultural backgrounds engaged in today's hospitality industry has increased and can attributed to a drop in young competent hospitality workers in Ireland in recent years (Failte Ireland, 2013).

To address objective two, amongst other aspects the participants were asked if they regarded diversity management as a top priority on their managerial agenda. According to Gong (1998),

effective diversity management is a key factor in establishing an organization and its ability to gain competitive advantage. Surprisingly, there was one participant that admitted they did not consciously think about it, but the remainder acknowledged that it was.

There has been a substantial amount of research conducted on diversity management in the hospitality industry with particular focus on the advantages that a culturally diverse workforce brings to an organisation (Cox, 1991). Exploring objective two further, the researcher was curious about the managers opinions on what these advantages were. The primary and secondary both touched on the advantage of creating a more inclusive working environment, with three participants stating that a more inclusive workplace is not only beneficial for employees but also for the guests too.

All managers agreed that if employees are managed appropriately, their performance will reflect it. These findings back up Thomas (1990) beliefs around workforce diversity management highlighting the affect it has on job performance.

Although diversity management is a known issue that unfortunately affects the hospitality industry, there is truly little evidence that the problem is recognized by hoteliers (Madera, 2018). The primary research revealed that all six participants agreed that the most significant challenge are the communication barriers that may arise when managing individuals of a different native language.

Often people perceive the unsupportive attitudes that employees of the majority culture may have towards diversity management as one of the most considerable challenges for hoteliers (Madera, 2018). The findings supported this with one of the participants stating that if employees have negative attitudes, it can be extremely challenging to try and change them. Madera (2011) also found that, within the industry, there is very little done to change bigoted attitudes and diversity training is assumed to be the only solution in overcoming such challenges. The idea of diversity training was perceived as a huge factor in avoiding diversity management challenges as all six participants agreed that training should be a top priority on a manager's agenda, which further supports the secondary research. Although one of the managers expressed, that from their experience, diversity training can only go so far.

The Hospitality Industry can be interpreted as being constructed around business imperatives rather than an ongoing commitment to sustainability (Jones et al., 2016). Hence, one gap in the literature that was found was the lack of suggested strategies to help managers in the hospitality industry overcome diversity management challenges in the workplace and aid sustainability.

Therefore, the participants were asked if they implement any strategies in their workplace; three out of the six said they did with three saying they did not. Diversity management is especially important in the hospitality industry as the industry is highly diversified, hiring people from all walks of life (Rehman et al., 2017). Notably, the prevalent theme that ran through the primary research findings was the idea of teamwork and inclusivism.

The participants indicated that, often, diversity management initiatives are implemented to financial benefit the organisation rather than in the best interest of the employees. These findings support the literature as according to Reynolds et al., 2014, initiatives can help boost customer experience and increase guest satisfaction which in turn increases company revenue.

5.4 Implications of Study

This dissertation contributes to the research of diversity management in the hospitality industry in Ireland. The research undertaken aimed to provide further awareness on the effects of a hoteliers' perspective on the importance of effective diversity management can have on the ability to retain staff, specifically in Dublin. Therefore, the researcher believes that this work will assist managers and academics to evaluate the potential challenges to be brought about through a hoteliers' perspective on diversity management. The researcher hopes this piece of data will aid academicians and researchers by allowing them to conduct in-depth research and examine the present state of diversity management research.

The most significant impact of this study is the importance effective diversity management is for the hotel industry. The second impact is a systematic portrayal of the evolution of diversity management and diversity aspects, which will serve as a guide for future scholars. The research also highlights the importance of respect and acceptance in the workplace between all employees. Further diversity management practices such as diversity and awareness training can help organisations foster a positive and inclusion working environment.

5.5 Industry Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, managers and owners within the hospitality industry should take into consideration the impact their managerial styles and practices might have on their ability to conduct effective diversity management which can further affect the ability to retain employees. A disregard for an employee of a different culture or ethnicity's wellbeing could

impact negatively on the daily operations of a hotel thus possibly damaging the overall guest experience, which is imperative to the success of any hospitality business. The research has shown hoteliers must be aware how important effective diversity management is to the sustainability of a business, due to the high levels of diversity within the hospitality workforce, and what influence their perspective on diversity management may have on the turnover rate.

It is evident, from the investigation, that diversity management is a substantial problem for the hospitality industry and is not being handled sufficiently by hoteliers. However, a solution in the form of government regulations could encourage implementing measures to stop the underpayment of migrant workers, the regulations could also include implementing strategies to improve diversity, inclusion, and equality practices. These regulations could ensure managers are dealing with the diversity amongst their employees correctly which will inevitably assist them with the daily operations of the business, which the findings from this study have proved it could greatly improve the industry.

5.5.1 Academic Recommendations

This dissertation focused on the effect of a hoteliers' perception on the importance of effective diversity management can have on employee wellbeing and the turnover rate in four-star hotels in Dublin.

Quantitative research could also be conducted to better understand the scope of the issue. A survey distributed to hospitality employees working in Dublin could be manufactured in order to understand how they think their managers perceive the idea of diversity management and does that perception affect their level of contentment at work. This survey could be distributed by Human Resource managers to employees working in all hospitality establishments.

Due to the fact that the participants that took part in the research seem to regard, for the most part, effective diversity management as a top priority in order for their hotel to function effectively, the first area for further research would be in relation to the sample interviewed. The research revealed that the hoteliers have experienced work environments where diversity was not dealt with appropriately by managers and because they have learned from previous managers mistakes, the issue is not extremely prevalent in their current organisation. Future research could be carried out involving the analysis of alternative hospitality outlets such as restaurants, B&B's, hostels, and bars. Future research could also focus on different chains or brands and stars of hotels.

The research was conducted between a wide range of departmental managers. The author would recommend further investigation and analysis into each separate department and if there are variations in the way the managers carry out their diversity management.

Although a number of studies have established a link between the lack of appropriate attention diversity management receives and the turnover rate within the hospitality industry, there has been a dearth of research on whether a manager's perspective on diversity management contributes to the high turnover rate. Based on the study carried out by Madera (2018) it is evident that attitudes do affect the perception of diversity management. However, as this is a singular study, further extensive research is required in the area to determine the influencing factors.

5.6 Limitations

Saunders et al., (2012) acknowledge that almost all research has limitations. Throughout this research process, limitations were encountered. The primary limitations concerning this study were the time constraints in arranging and conducting the interviews and the lack of access to a sufficient number of participants. The research focused on hoteliers across Dublin City and the researcher's aim was to carry out as many interviews as possible.

Due to the current pandemic, interviews were conducted virtually and finding suitable times for each participant proved difficult. The pandemic also made it more difficult to recruit interviewees. The researcher found that many managers did not want to partake in the investigation since they were no longer working in the industry because of the pandemic. Other attempts were made to reach out to potential interviewees via LinkedIn and Facebook with many suitable participants replying but with few or none committing to conduct an online interview. Three scheduled interviewees were no shows which left the researcher in a disappointing position with less data, than expected, to analyse. Due to these time restraints and recruitment issues, the sample size of this research was considerably small in respects to the research question itself.

The researcher also considered further potential challenges that could occur when interacting virtually which may include connectivity problems and background distractions which thankfully did not occur.

5.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is underpinned by morals and values. There are certain research ethics that must be considered when conducting any research as partakers may want confidentiality of their information being included in the study and to remain anonymous. The researcher ensured that the Application for Research Methodology & Methods Clearance to Undertake Research was approved by The National College of Ireland before any research was carried out. The researcher also designed an interview protocol (see Appendix C) before the research was conducted, intended to eliminate any ethical issues which may have arisen during the investigation.

The researcher created a consent form (see Appendix B) in order to comply with The National College of Ireland's ethical guidelines. The consent form clearly outlined the purpose of the research, a description of the procedures that were followed and most importantly that no personal information would be disclosed. All participants were made very aware that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the research at any stage. Participants were also informed that the interview was being recorded on Microsoft Teams and they could stop the recording at any point. The consent form was signed by all participants in this study and the researcher ensured that all participants were over the age of eighteen. The researcher made the participants feel as much at ease as possible during the interview.

5.8 The Final Word

As can be viewed from the limited literature currently available on the idea of a hoteliers' perception on the importance of effective diversity management, extensive research is needed in many related areas. More awareness and understanding of the problem are required by hoteliers if the sustainability and success of the industry wants to continue and develop. The subjective nature of a hoteliers' perspective on diversity management and the lack of available reports have resulted so far in inconclusive results.

The author proposes that this dissertation has shown that there is a capacity for further investment into effective diversity management within hotels in Ireland based on a larger sample size. Additional research may prove beneficial to both the organisation themselves as well as the overall sustainability of the future industry.

To conclude, the primary research revealed how much managers' perception does effect diversity management within their organisation and if not executed correctly, can contribute to the ever-growing turnover rate that the industry suffers from (Gong, 1998). Diversity management can greatly affect a worker's wellbeing which is a key element in determining a link between an organisation and its ability to maintain long-term effectiveness, (Arnold et al., 2017) which the participants agreed with. Therefore, improvement strategies from hoteliers must be developed, implemented, and incentivized in order to combat the problems that ineffective diversity management imposes on a business.

CIPD Requirements

Recommendations for Managing Diversity in Hotels

Diversity management should not be approached by one manager alone. Instead, effective diversity management techniques should be implemented from the top management of an organisation and filter through the various departmental managers. Organisations must recognise the importance of diversity management and the benefits it has on organisational success and the ability to retain highly skilled employees. Employee diversity and inclusion in the workplace can be more successful if managers and co-workers assist employees from underrepresented backgrounds. It is also important for the HR department to be heavily involved in structuring and implementing diversity and inclusion policies within a hotel. Such organizations' HR departments could help develop and implement effective training programs for their staff, including diversity management training to raise employees' understanding and sensitivity to cultural diversity.

Recruitment and hiring, is a huge area that can be improved regarding diversity management. Employee inclusion and diversity numbers may be driven by hiring targets, but this will not result in an inclusive organisation on its own. Employee diversity and inclusion activities are sometimes overly focused on the employee pipeline, but the employee experience extends further than the employee contract. It's vital to take a truthful look employee experience in order to create conditions that promote employee inclusion and cultivate employee diversity on a daily basis, while also providing tools to quantify the impact, in order to maintain and encourage the top talent. Organizations must examine all aspects to ensure that they are providing conditions in which everyone can contribute in their own unique and significant way

while also feeling protected and secure. If businesses discover areas of their operations where this is not the case, they must collectively admit to it and make the necessary changes.

Companies in the hotel business benefit greatly from cultural variety. At the same time, many businesses are still grappling with how to effectively manage multicultural workplaces. Many cultural challenges remain to be overcome, including communication barriers, discrimination, and preconceptions. A corresponding training program should be established and implemented in the industry to raise the understanding and compassion to cultural diversity management.

Timeline and Costing

One of the CIPD elements required for this dissertation, is to put forward a suggested timeline and costing for the researcher's recommendations mentioned above. In terms of a timeline for the above recommendations for managing diversity within hotels, the author believes that it will be on going. The author believes you cannot put a time limit on the implementation of diversity management initiatives as they should be constantly changing to keep up with the current society's diversity. Recruitment practices can be changed within a few months to create a more inclusion work culture, as the hiring process in is in the present. A training plan may take anywhere from 6-12 months depending on how much or little change an organisation wants to bring.

Costing is the number one reason why diversity management is not a priority within in the hotel industry. Implementing effective diversity management initiatives can be costly with U.S companies spending approximately \$8 billion annually on diversity training. However, diversity training may not be needed if hired managers are already appropriately trained on diversity management and create and instil an inclusive and welcoming working environment. It is crucial for hotels to emphasize the importance of diversity management from the day of hiring.

Personal Learning Statement

This research project has been a great personal learning experience for me. In addition to learning about the importance and complexity of the research process, the researcher has firsthand experience with the ups and downs of a demanding but gratifying research project. The researcher was very excited to learn more about the topic of this dissertation when they

initially started it because they had learnt about diversity in my undergraduate degree and throughout my master's degree. Although equality and diversity are standard aspects of excellent Human Resources Management, the researcher felt that the industry in which they worked did not recognize or acknowledge the benefits of diversity management in aiding an organization's success. The purpose of this investigation was to demonstrate evidence that there is a link between the way in which organisations carry out diversity management and the high turnover rate that the industry experiences and as a result, professionals operating in this field should be encouraged to implement some of my recommendations.

In retrospect, there are several aspects of this research that this researcher would have addressed differently, which would have made the task less laborious and possibly produced more results. This study may have benefited from a mixed-methods approach, which would have brought a new dimension to the findings. The importance of time management and strict adherence to a structured plan, as well as the support and advice of an excellent supervisor, cannot be overstated.

The research has also given the researcher some significant ideas and important insights into personal professional values, as well as highlighting aspects of what is truly important when managing a diverse group of individuals. This researcher has drawn inspiration from the great ideas supplied by the research participants and has already begun the process of evaluating the findings in relation to how the researcher will carry out their diversity management techniques. The researcher truly hopes that the outcomes of this study will aid future research into the issue of diversity management within the hospitality industry.

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Appendices

Appendix A-

Interview Questions

Personal Experience:

1. How long have you worked in the hotel industry?
2. Could you please briefly describe your job and role you have in the current organization?

Theme 1- Cultural Diversity

3. What does the concept of cultural diversity mean to you?
4. In terms of employment, do you view the hospitality industry as a culturally diverse sector?
5. What is the current composition, in terms of percentages, of your workforce from the different ethnic and cultural backgrounds?

Theme 2- Importance of Diversity Management

6. What are the advantages of having a culturally diverse workforce in your organization, as an employer or employee?

7. How important is effective diversity management within the hospitality industry?

8. In your opinion, if a diverse workforce, in the hospitality industry, is managed ineffectively what are the potential consequences for the organisation?

Theme 3- Challenges

9. What do you think the most challenging aspect of a culturally diverse work environment? And what measures have you taken to overcome these challenges?

10. In your opinion, how can these challenges be possibly avoided?

Theme 4- Initiatives

11. What steps/initiatives have you taken in your organization to promote diversity competence and understanding?

12. What do you believe to be the driving factors behind your company's diversity management efforts?

13. What kind of leadership and management efforts will you/your company have made to ensure your company's dedication to diversity initiatives?

14. Final question- what do you think are the major downfalls of the hospitality industry compared to other industries regarding the area of diversity management?

Appendix B- **Research Consent Form**

<u>Consent Form</u>
Researcher's Name: Nina Barry-Duke
Faculty/School/Department: National College of Ireland
Title of Study
To be completed by the interviewee:
<p>Have you been fully informed about this study? YES / NO</p> <p>Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? YES / NO</p> <p>Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions? YES / NO</p> <p>Have you received enough information about this study and any associated health and safety implications if applicable? YES / NO</p> <p>Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study: YES / NO?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At any time • Without giving reason for withdrawal • Without affecting your future relationship with the College <p>Do you agree to take part in this study, the results of which are likely to be published? YES / NO</p> <p>Have you been informed that this consent form will be kept in the confidence of the researcher? YES / NO</p>
<p>Signed _____ Date _____</p> <p>Name in Block Letters _____</p> <p>Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____</p>

Appendix C- **Interview Protocol**

Introduction: (3 minutes)

- Self and research introduction
- Confirm consent from participant and ensure awareness of the recording device.
- Reiterate that the participant should not use any names of any people or organisations.

Personal Experience: (5 minutes)

1. How long have you worked in the hotel industry?
2. Could you please briefly describe your job and role you have in the current organization?

Theme 1- Cultural Diversity (6 minutes)

3. What does the concept of cultural diversity mean to you?
4. In terms of employment, do you view the hospitality industry as a culturally diverse sector?
5. What is the current composition, in terms of percentages, of your workforce from the different ethnic and cultural backgrounds?

Theme 2- Importance of Diversity Management (6 minutes)

6. What are the advantages of having a culturally diverse workforce in your organization, as an employer or employee?
7. How important is effective diversity management within the hospitality industry?

8. In your opinion, if a diverse workforce, in the hospitality industry, is managed ineffectively what are the potential consequences for the organisation?

Theme 3- Challenges (5 minutes)

9. What do you think the most challenging aspect of a culturally diverse work environment? And what measures have you taken to overcome these challenges?
10. In your opinion, how can these challenges be possibly avoided?

Theme 4- Initiatives (8 minutes)

11. What steps/initiatives have you taken in your organization to promote diversity competence and understanding?
12. What do you believe to be the driving factors behind your company's diversity management efforts?
13. What kind of leadership and management efforts will you/your company have made to ensure your company's dedication to diversity initiatives?
14. Final question- what do you think are the major downfalls of the hospitality industry compared to other industries regarding the area of diversity management?

Conclusion:

- Ask participant if you could contact them in the future for any

clarification when analysing the interview results.

- Thank interviewee for contributing to your research.

Appendix D- **Interview Transcription**

Interviewer: Nina Barry-Duke

Interviewee: P2

Date: 14/05/2021

Location: MS Teams (virtually)

Duration: 24.02 minutes

Personal Experience:

1. How long have you worked in the hotel industry?

<i>I have worked in the Hotel industry in some capacity for the past 18 years from the age of 16.</i>

2. Could you please briefly describe your job and role you have in the current organization?

<i>I am currently Deputy General Manager of a mid-size hotel in Dublin City. My role focuses on the operational aspect of the business; however, I would have commercial responsibility also. I am the direct line manager to the management team of the hotel and work through the team to accomplish the various metrics and objectives set by the hotel brand management company and ownership. I am responsible for the operations of the hotel and the day-to-day operational running of the business. This includes direct management of the HOD's/management team, leading and motivating them and their teams, business development and strategic planning, cost control, assist in revenue management and ensuring guest satisfaction is the priority of the whole team. I am also responsible for human resources in the Hotel as there is no Human Resources Manager.</i>
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Cultural Diversity Management:

3. What does the concept of cultural diversity mean to you?
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It is the term given to a collective number of people coming from different countries, races, religions & creeds and embracing & respecting these differences in the workplace to benefit the organisation.

4. In terms of employment, do you view the hospitality industry as a culturally diverse sector?

I believe it absolutely is, however, sometimes I feel that cultural diversity is exploited by the industry. Lower earners in the industry are commonly people who have emigrated to Ireland and are willing to work for less than their Irish counterparts. I would argue that most hospitality businesses in Ireland are culturally diverse, whether it be by choice or necessity.

5. What is the current composition, in terms of percentages, of your workforce from the different ethnic and cultural backgrounds?

I would say, 43% Mainland European, 27% Irish, 22% South/Central American, 5% African and 3% British.

Importance of Diversity Management

6. What are the advantages of having a culturally diverse workforce in your organization, as an employer or employee?

Hotels facilitate guests from around the world which means sometimes, communication can be difficult. Cultural diversity usually brings with it a range of languages spoken by employees which is beneficial if it means that a team member can assist guests who cannot speak English or those that are not confident in speaking it. I believe that a culturally diverse team enriches the organisation as it promotes a more open and inclusive culture. It makes people more culturally aware and sensitive and uses people's local knowledge to cater to guests as individuals.

7. How important is effective diversity management within the hospitality industry?

It is incredibly important because the industry relies on a diverse range of people for it to operate. In Dublin especially, without these people the industry would cease to function at its current level. If it is not managed properly, an organisation could also find themselves in legal trouble as one's culture is and should be protected. Mismanagement of cultural diversity can also lead to conflict and segregation in the workplace.

8. In your opinion, if a diverse workforce, in the hospitality industry, is managed ineffectively what are the potential consequences for the organisation?

As I mentioned before conflict and unhappy employees are potential consequences that can result in a high employee turnover rate for an organisation. If hotels are experiencing an excess number of staff resigning, they must look at the potential causes. In my experience turnover in our industry has a lot to do with managerial styles.

Challenges

9. What do you think the most challenging aspect of a culturally diverse work environment? And what measures have you taken to overcome these challenges?

The main challenge is communication issues that will occur due to different native languages, differences of expression and ignorance of one's culture leading to conflict. I suppose training and awareness is the first measurement which is done through annual online training. Leading by example by embracing diversity and highlighting the benefits of diversity is also important and not tolerating anything but respect and disciplining anyone that does not.

10. In your opinion, how can these challenges be possibly avoided?

Education, awareness, and training, although if someone is bigoted or unwilling to embrace diversity it is unlikely and very difficult to change them.

Initiatives

11. What steps/initiatives have you taken in your organization to promote diversity competence and understanding?

I personally have not as there are two training modules that employees must complete each year. This promotes diversity competence and has been designed by experts in the field. It is my duty to ensure that these modules are completed by everybody.

12. What do you believe to be the driving factors behind your company's diversity management efforts?

I would argue that in my experience, cultural diversity in a hospitality setting occurs organically for the most part. For example, in my current role as a Deputy General Manager, which was a new opening, I did not purposefully try and recruit a culturally diverse team. Instead, I found that the candidates for any one position would be from several backgrounds and cultures and by picking whom I thought was more qualified for the job created a culturally diverse team. The clear benefits of having cultural diversity in the workplace as mentioned before. I also believe it is the right and moral thing to do and most organisations worth their salt know this.

13. What kind of leadership and management efforts will you/your company have made to ensure your company's dedication to diversity initiatives?

As a Manager, I personally will ensure that one's culture is respected in the workplace and will educate and discipline anyone that does not follow this stance. All employees have annual diversity training through both the management company and brand. As Marriott International grows globally, they are building on a long-term commitment to diversity and inclusion, embracing the cultures of all the communities where we do business. Marriott promotes the recruitment, retention, and advancement of diverse employees, and actively engages in efforts to develop a diverse owner, guest, and supplier base.

14. Final question- what do you think are the major downfalls of the hospitality industry compared to other industries regarding the area of diversity management?

As mentioned above, some Properties and Managers will take advantage of cultural diversity for financial gain/savings. There is also a minority in Ireland and every country for that

matter that see cultural diversity as a bad thing for illegitimate reasons fueled by bigotry and ignorance.