

**Implementing Diversity & Inclusion
Strategies in Higher Education
Institutions In Ireland and Its Impact on
Employee Perceptions.**

by

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“Submitted to the National College of Ireland, (August) (2021)”

Abstract

Modern-day Irish society is becoming more culturally and ethnically diverse, thus leading to a diverse workforce. In ensuring equal opportunities in the labour market for all, the Irish government enacted the employment equality act 1998 -2011, which outlaws discrimination on nine grounds effectively making it illegal for organizations to discriminate against potential employees from different social-cultural backgrounds during the recruitment process and as employees within the organization. (Bishop-Monroe, Wingender and Shimerda, 2020) in their research discussion with chief diversity officers from different organizations around the globe discuss the need for organizations to develop strategies that enable them to monitor and measure diversity outcomes. Organizations can benefit from having an inclusive and diverse workforce by attracting a widespread of talented candidates that can enhance a company's competitive advantage. However, employee perception of inclusion within the organization can impact positively or negatively on retention and thus creates the need for diversity and inclusion strategies to be continually assessed to ensure its effectiveness. With the growth of third level education in Ireland in both staff and student numbers including international students, it is important that the higher education institutions in Ireland implement diversity and inclusion strategies that positively impact staff and students alike.

This dissertation delves into the implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Ireland and how these strategies are implemented and the impact on employee perceptions.

Declaration

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Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank almighty God for giving me the grace to complete this programme.

I also want to thank my family for all your support and encouraging words, my colleagues at work including my line manager Noel O'Callaghan and Fionnuala Rahilly.

My thanks and appreciation to my supervisor Dr Miguel Flores for your patience and guidance, your calm disposition and understanding towards me was very encouraging.

This MSc programme has been one of the most difficult things I've had to do in my life and the dissertation was incredibly difficult but rewarding in the end and I would like to acknowledge Keith Brittle and the NCI library team for the wonderful support given to me.

Thank you to the HEIs and their employees who volunteered to be interviewed for this research it is very much appreciated.

Finally I'd like to thank the NCI staff and lectures who supported me and my colleagues in the last two years directly and indirectly, I appreciate all your help.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The Purpose of the Study.....	3
1.3 Research Aims	4
1.4 Research Objectives	4
1.5 Diversity Correlation with Productivity.....	5
1.6 Diversity and Inclusion in the Republic of Ireland	7
1.7 Outcome of the Research.....	9
1.8 Structure and Organization of the Study	10
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Diversity and Inclusion Conceptualization.....	13
2.3 The Approaches of Diversity Construct	15
2.4 Equal Opportunity Attribute Stage	15
2.5 Diversity Management Stage.....	16
2.6 Diversity & Inclusion Business Case	18
2.6.1 Ethnic, Gender, and Religion Diversities.....	19
2.6.2 Ethnic/Racial Diversity and Organization Performance	19
2.7 Diversity Management	20
2.8 Higher Education in the Republic of Ireland and Inclusion	23
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	27
3.1 Research Data and Method.....	27
3.2 Aims and objectives.....	27
3.3 Sample Population and Target Population	28

3.4	Research Instrument	30
3.4.1	Semi-Structured Interview	30
3.4.2	Development of the Semi-Structured Questions.....	30
3.4.3	The Interviewing Process	31
3.4.4	Analysing the Interview data.....	31
3.4.5	Strengths and Weaknesses of the instrument.....	31
3.4.6	Strengths of the Instrument	31
3.4.7	Weaknesses of the Instrument.....	32
3.5	Data Analysis.....	32
3.6	Ethical Considerations.....	33
3.7	The Higher Education Institution Anonymity	33
3.7.1	The Anonymity of Participants Sensitive Information	33
3.7.2	The University Ethical Measures.....	34
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA		35
4.1	Introduction	35
4.2	Objective 2:.....	36
4.3	Diversity and Inclusion Strategies of Higher Education Institutions in.....	37
	the Republic of Ireland.....	37
4.3.1	Having Breakout Sessions and Training	37
4.3.2	Cultural Events.....	38
4.3.3	Periodic Employee Survey	39
4.3.4	Athena Swan Charter Membership	39
4.3.5	Content Creation and Distribution	40
4.3.6	Training the Trainer Outsourcing Program.....	40
4.3.7	Diversity Committee Meeting.....	41
4.4	Diversity and Inclusion Goals of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Ireland	41
4.4.2	Building a Cohesive Culture	42
4.4.3	Increase representation of the underrepresented groups	43
4.5	Objective 3:.....	43
4.5.1	Cohesive Behaviour in Organization	44
4.5.2	Increase in Retention and Reduction in Churn out Rate	45
4.5.3	Mental Health Wellbeing	45

4.5.4	Employee Positive Feedbacks	46
4.6	Objective 4:.....	46
4.6.1	Challenges in the Implementation of Diversity and Inclusion Strategies	46
4.6.2	Cultural Change for a lot of People.....	47
4.6.3	Hostility and Unsupportive Attitudes.....	47
4.7	Solutions to the Challenges of Implementing Diversity and Inclusion Strategies	48
4.7.1	Having a Communication and Mentoring System.....	48
4.7.2	Government should set Diversity and inclusion Objectives	49
4.7.3	Hate Crime Legislation.....	49
4.8	Conclusion.....	50
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION		51
5.1	Introduction	51
5.2	Objective 1 Discussion	52
5.3	Objective 2 Discussion	52
5.4	Objective 3 Discussion	53
5.5	Objective 4 Discussion	53
6.1	Conclusions	55
6.2	Recommendations	56
REFERENCES.....		Error! Bookmark not defined.
APPENDICES.....		77
	Appendix 1 Research Information Leafle.....	77
	Appendix 2 Participant Consent Form.....	78
	Appendix 3 Interview Questions.....	79
	Appendix 4 Sample Code.....	80

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The increasing growth and complexity of diversity and multiculturalism as a corporate and social phenomenon have generated interest in the social sectors such as health, media, workplace and education (Prasad et al., 2005). Diversity, which is now a common factor in the workplace and international community, includes minorities, women, and age groups (Makhdoomi and Nika, 2017; Simons and Rowland, 2011). A reason that could be attributed the international increase of, and complexity in diversity, is immigration. The movement of people across borders has increased the cultural makeup of the population in countries; as such, organisations are adopting diversity management strategies to optimize the competitive advantages and productivity gains inherent in diversity. (Mazur, 2010).

SaintDic (2014) asserted that the pursuit of diversity and inclusion management could be due to any of the following; financial, justice, equitability, and moral reasons.

Research conducted over two decades that explored diversity management and implementation in organisations found no legitimacy and financial gain for excluding women and minorities from the workplace (Kolanaityte, 2010). Thus, suggesting the possible benefits from diversity when it is properly managed. Companies in the United States of America and IT companies in India have started implementing diversity management strategies to become more competitive and attractive to a broader talent pool. (McMahon, 2010; Donnelly, 2015).

Diversity is a concept that involves human differences, from a human resource perspective, managing and properly harnessing diversity strategies can attract and retain talent, and create a workplace that increases organisational performance. (Ashikali and Groeneveld, 2015).

From a demographic perspective, diversity increases the intuitive resources of the team and

thereby gives them the unequal ability to solve complex problems (Mason and Aramovich, 2013).

Organisational diversity suggests diversity in reasoning and critical thinking; when this is explored and harmonised, it produces results unlikely to be found in mono teams. According to Armstrong *et al.* (2010), diversity management integrates elements of the human resource management system and, firms that manage diversity demonstrate higher levels of performance. Similarly, Kossek *et al.* (2010), in their studies of human resource management about diversity management, posited that it is the relationship that exists between the demographic representation of staff and human resources management policies, including practices such as development and promotions, which lead to desired outcomes for both employee and corporations. Therefore, human resource management is pivotal to the optimisation of the gains in diversity management.

Can diversity management impact job satisfaction, employee retention and organisational performance? Diversity in the workplace has been considered a strategic core value that organisations require to uphold the principles of equality and fairness (MorBarak, 2015; Ng & Sears, 2012). Administrative departments in organisations have been inspired to create a positive working environment, select skilled employees and develop processes and strategies to deal with job-related issues (Mor Barak *et al.*, 2016). Some scholars and studies have asserted that workforce diversity management provides a system for solving employment-related matters such as equality, justice, inclusion, bullying; which are related to age, gender, ethnicity, the colour of the skin, etc. (Adams, 1965; Mor Barak, 2015; Thomas, 1990). Hence, for job satisfaction, the organisation should effectively manage its diversity issues in the workplace.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

Few studies explore diversity and inclusion in the Republic of Ireland particularly in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and existing studies focus on social inclusion, religious diversity, and diversity among children (Magee et al., 2018; Connolly and Gallagher, 2016; Rougier and Honohan, 2014).

In the study titled "19 Stories of Social Inclusion – Ireland: Stories of Belonging, Contributing and Connecting" the author employed a quantitative approach. They revealed that for a socially inclusive goal for people with an intellectual disability, the following are needed; the value of social inclusion, the enabler of social inclusion, and support for activities and qualities (Magee et al, 2018). In the research 'addressing diversity and inclusion in the early years in conflict-affected societies', the research target was children. The study concluded that there is a need to form grassroots partnerships between various organisations on common ground (Connolly and Gallagher, 2016). The common ground is to promote diversity and inclusion strategies among children.

However, Corrington et al (2020) conducted a study on the diversity and inclusion of an understudied group of employees in the United States. The understudied diversity variables were religious minorities, transgender or gender non-conforming groups; political ideologies; undocumented immigrants, lower socioeconomic status; intersectional identities and those above 65 years. They revealed different areas of study, but they asserted that diversity could be profitable and beneficial when appropriately harnessed. Diversity could cause or trigger bottom-line productivity, profitability, innovation, creativity, and other desirable organisational outcomes (Roberson & Park, 2007).

Therefore, the above research indicates the limited available research material in the study of diversity and inclusion in HEIs in Ireland and how it impacts its' employee perceptions. The gap this research seeks to fill is twofold; one, there is a lack of research to determine the

effectiveness of diversity and inclusion within HEIs' in the Republic of Ireland and the perceptions of the staff within these institutions. Secondly, a qualitative approach is needed to collect data regarding the outcome of diversity and inclusion. Hence, this study shall investigate the impacts of diversity and inclusion strategies in HEIs and seek to understand its' employees' perspectives on implementing of these strategies by adopting a qualitative research methodology approach.

Research methods is broadly grouped into quantitative and qualitative methods (Kothari, 2004; Creswell, 1998; Kuzel, 1999). Quantitative research involves the measurement of an object under study to determine specificity. In contrast, qualitative research consists of studying phenomenon or given variables based on the quality of those variables (Kothari, 2004). For example, scientific experiments are usually quantitative research, while behavioural science studies are usually qualitative research.

Kothari further explains that qualitative methodology is the method of data collection that applies to data that cannot be quantified. In contrast, the quantitative research method is a data collection method that uses an observation that can be quantified.

1.3 Research Aims

The research aims to investigate the implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs') in the Republic of Ireland and its impact employee perceptions.

1.4 Research Objectives

To achieve the aims of this research, the following series of objectives shall provide clear guidance.

- To critically review existing literature on diversity and inclusion in Ireland and other countries including the UK and the USA.

- To explore and critically analyse the strategies of diversity and inclusion currently implemented in a HEI in the Republic of Ireland.
- To explore and critically examine employees' perceptions from a sample group of HEIs' in the Republic of Ireland regarding the implementation of such diversity and inclusion strategies.
- To explore and critically analyse the challenges to the implementation of such diversity and inclusion strategies in the selected HEIs'.
- To make recommendations on what HEIs should do to harness the potential of diversity and inclusion in an organisation.

1.5 Diversity Correlation with Productivity

A McKinsey & Company report by (Vivian Hunt, et al., 2015) on diversity and inclusion revealed that in a comparison of companies based on diversity, the most diverse organisations are more likely to outperform their counterparts in terms of financial metrics (Dixon-Fyle *et al.*, 2020).

Reports on diversity and inclusion (2019, 2017 and 2014) reiterated the above proposition that the top quartile for executive team gender equality would likely be more profitable than organisations in the fourth quartile (Hun *et al.*, 2018; Dixon-Fyle, et al., 2020; Hunt, Layton and Prince, 2015). The preceding suggests that executive gender diversity can impact the company's financial performance, which can be attributed to the diversity of strategies and solutions to solve business problems arising in the team.

However, does correlation connote causation? While the statistical data from the McKinsey report signals a correlation trend between the level of diversity of an organisation and its performance, other factors also need to be taken into account. The report further revealed that organisations in the United States have a linear relationship between financial performance

and diversity level. According to the report, for every 10 per cent increment of racial and ethnic diversity in the senior executive team, financial return measured as earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) rises by 0.8 per cent (Hunt, Layton and Prince, 2015). Another factor could be the capability to harness the potentials of a diverse team.

Catalyst, an organisation whose vision is to increase the representation of women from racially and ethnically marginalized groups in the corporate workplace, asserted that corporations with female boards had two financial return outcomes, 16 per cent higher return on sales and 26 per cent return on investment (Carter and Wganer, 2011). Another Catalyst report found that for a company to optimise the potential of its female representatives at the board level, instead of critical mass, three females are enough (Carter and Wagner, 2017). Despite the benefits gained from implementing diversity and inclusive strategies, some organisations fail to harness the opportunities.

A survey conducted by the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI) on black people in corporate organisations found the following;

- 58% of black professionals are likely to admit they have experienced racial prejudice at work relative to 15% of white professionals.
- 43 % of black executives revealed they had experienced racially insensitive terms in their presence by other races.
- 35 % of white women have professionals in their network who advocate for them compared to 19% of black women professionals.
- 19% of black professionals always think that professionals in their race would never attain top executive positions in the organisation, compared to 3% of white professionals who also have similar thoughts (Smith *et al.*, 2019).

According to Dobbins and Kalev (2016), some organisations have invested in pursuing diversity and inclusion goals. However, the outcomes are still a matter of discussion,

particularly as some organisations diversity outcomes are mixed. In contrast, others have yet to fully harvest the potentials of diversity and inclusion, which may imply a lack of understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion programs or they have failed to realise the adverse ripple effects of a non-inclusive culture on their brands.

1.6 Diversity and Inclusion in the Republic of Ireland

While there is limited research in diversity and inclusion in the Republic of Ireland, the advent of equality legislation has encouraged the education sector to promote diversity and inclusion within its Higher Education Institutions (HEIs'). As part of this research, one of the HEIs' in the Republic of Ireland outlines its strategy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion(EDI) within the organisation as EDI pillars. In the 2018-2022 report, the strategic and action plan describes their EDI policy in Table 1.

Table 1: The EDI Pillars

HEI EDI Pillars	Rank	Analysis
Age	1 st	The age excludes minors, as it starts from above 16 years.
Civil Status	2 nd	This group could include married, divorced, widowed, and civil partnered and single persons.
Disability	3 rd	This group includes people with physical, mental, sensory, or intellectual impairments.
Family Status	4 th	This group includes people such as pregnant women, parents, and caregivers of disabled adults.
Gender	5 th	This group includes an individual's identity which could be male, female, non-binary, and transgender.
Membership of the traveller community	6 th	A legally recognized minority ethnic group in the country.
Race/Ethnicity	7 th	Connotes a person's colour, nationality, and ethnicity.
Religion	8 th	It consists of a person's religious beliefs, religious background, and outlook.
Sexual Orientation	9 th	An individual's sexual orientation, heterosexual, lesbian, gay, and bisexual.
Socio-economic Status	10 th	Characteristics of a person's social and economic status or background.

Source: EDI Strategic and Action Plan, 2018-2022

The higher education institute's diversity and inclusion pillars are rooted in the Republic of Ireland legislation and constitution on diversity and inclusion. The employment equality Act of 1998-2015 outlaws areas relating to employment discrimination; which cuts across recruitment and promotion, equal pay; working condition; training or experience; dismissal, and harassment, including sexual harassment (Citizens Information, 2021). The Acts further explained that the legislation cut across nine areas of diversity which include; gender, civil

status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the traveller community.

This EDI 2018-2022 strategic plan goes on to explain that the areas covered by the employment equality act are; advertising, equal pay, access to employment, vocational training and work experience, terms and conditions of employment, promotion or re-grading, classification of posts, dismissal, and collective agreements (EDI, 2018). The preceding supports that the government is promoting diversity and inclusion with legislative frameworks. Part 5 of the Disability Act of 2015 provides people with disabilities the right to 3% employment representation in public service (National Disability Authority, 2015). Also, the code of practice on sexual harassment in 2012 was established to deepen the development and promotion of a workplace devoid of sexual harassment and where everyone is respected (Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work, 2002). The government in the Republic of Ireland has laid a solid foundation for a workplace that promotes diversity and inclusion from the literature, legislation, and materials. This HEI has consolidated it by promoting policies towards realising diversity and inclusion strategies in the Republic of Ireland.

Therefore, this research investigates the impacts of diversity and inclusion strategies on employee perceptions within the context of the HEI in Ireland.

1.7 Outcome of the Research

The research question and objectives of the study were interrogated and answered in this research paper which is shown in table 5. The key findings from the data involved engaging with staff in breakout sessions and training, recognizing, and appreciating the different cultural events, periodic surveys, collaborating with initiatives such as Athena Swan Charter, content creation and distribution, investing in training the trainer programmes and

establishing equality diversity and inclusion committees. The forementioned will be useful in driving a purposeful diversity and inclusion strategies and impact positively on the diverse workforce in the higher education institutions in Ireland.

1.8 Structure and Organization of the Study

The structure and organisation of this research is as follows; Chapter one introduction and background of the study with clarification on the research question, aim and objectives. Chapter two will discuss the literature review, Chapter three is methodology of the research, Chapter four presentation and analysis of the data, Chapter five discussion of the findings and Chapter six is the conclusion of the study. As there is a dearth of literature for HEIs', the next chapter shall critically review existing literature from the corporate sector drawing on lessons learned that could be extrapolated for HEIs in the Republic of Ireland.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Diversity and inclusion has and continues to evolve, from the literature review the reader will note that what we understand today as Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) was a continuous evolution of thought and practice focused on capitalizing globalization for the benefit of corporate bottom line performance.

Garg and Sangwan (2021) asserted that the main reasons for the increasing diversity trends are women's participation in work and the workplace composing various people from different backgrounds and generations. In addition to the above rationale for the growing complexity in workplace diversity, another critical reason is globalisation, resulting in the geographical migration of professionals across borders (Ortlieb & Sieben, 2014). Thus, it can be seen that many factors are causing the increase in diversity; however, while it is helpful to understand these factors, it is more strategic for an organisation to know how to leverage diversity.

Can the effective management of diversity lead to maximising and optimising this in an organisation? Seventy-Five percent of Fortune 1000 companies have been acclaimed to adopt diversity strategies, which has become crucial for every business (Daniels, 2001). Managing diversity will give an organisation a competitive advantage in terms of having diverse talent from different backgrounds and experience working to achieve organisational goals (Mazur, 2010). The work of Miller and Katz (2002) places more emphasis on leveraging the latency in diversity more than the management of diversity. The research of some authors regarding leveraging diversity led to the emergence of the concept of inclusion, which is a concept that means the acceptance of other people's differences; hence diversity and inclusion are inseparable concepts when employed in the organisation or public setting (Sabharwal, 2015; Holvino et al., 2004). The common theme in the reviewed literature for this dissertation is

that; a higher performance and positive workplace environment can abound from effectively leveraging diversity and inclusion management.

It has been observed from this literature research, that the primary focus is on the financial performance and organisational benefits, while less attention is given to the moral and legal benefits of diversity and inclusion policies/programmes?(Urwin et al, 2013). Rohwerder (2017), would say some of the benefits of diversity and inclusion to an organisation include reduction of cost, quality personnel resourcing, better service delivery, optimisation of decision making, increase in innovation, increased flexibility and productivity, optimised efficiency and organisational performance, enhancement of relationships among teams, a sense of satisfaction on the job and improvement of customer relationship.. However, the author also listed some of the adverse outcomes of diversity and inclusion in an organisation: increased absenteeism, decreased employee attachment, increased conflict, poor performance, and increased discrimination. Furthermore, it shows that the author is referring to the lack of diversity management in this instance. While the business case for the benefits of diversity and inclusion to an organisation is defined as diversity management, the moral case is considered equal opportunities. Some legislation has helped enforce equal opportunities, which can be noticed when operational in an organisation (Wright et al, 2014,). In addition, Wright et al (2014) posited that the moral case for diversity, equal opportunities, is now replaced with inclusiveness, value and respect for individual differences.

Therefore, this research investigates the implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies and how it impacts employee perceptions as experienced by staff inHEIs' in the Republic of Ireland.

The literature review, which is a part of the research objective, is structured thus; conceptualisation of diversity and inclusion, analysing ethnic, gender and religious diversities, critically analysing diversity management, and concluding with diversity in

HEIs' in the Republic of Ireland. In the next sub-heading, the concept of diversity and inclusion will be critically analysed.

2.2 Diversity and Inclusion Conceptualization

Diversity has become a fundamental principle in most organisational policies and initiatives; looking at the meaning from a diverse perspective will provide a suitable context. Diversity is the demographic differences among the workforce based on distinct identity categories, including race, sexual orientation, and gender. Diversity in the organisational context is neither binary nor categorisation but rather a reflection on the diversity continuum (Cleveland, Shore, Anderson, Huebner, & Sanchez, 2018, p. 428; Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998; King & Gilrane, 2015). There are two apparent continuums evident in the above literature; one is the surface-level diversity-it is a diversity that describes the differences regarding the attributes of sex, race, disability, and age group. This continuum is more of classification based on physical features or visible features of people. The deep-level diversity continuum describes the differences regarding the following features: sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, spiritual belief systems, etc. However, these classifications are all critical but more important than each other in various situations. Another area of differentiation between the diversity continuum is that the surface level diversity is visible and easily recognisable. Still, deep-level diversity tends to be invisible and can only be noticed when disclosed by individuals and through groups to which such individuals belong. The common ground is that these attributes give privilege, power and opportunities based on the continuum an employee or an individual falls into (McIntosh, 2008; Pew Research Center, 2019). However, organisational management and leadership might introduce bias by showing a preference for certain features. In the long run, it will not encourage unity in diversity, with a sense of working to achieve the same goal.

Taking a step further to critically explore what specific researchers and schools of thought say about diversity will provide a better and deeper perspective. Available studies have shown that diverse definitions attempt to define diversity from various perspectives (Christian et al., 2006; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Pfeffer, 1983). Nevertheless, the differences of definitions of diversity show that the researchers have identified one of the following diversity questions; the attributes that differentiate people from others, the diversity construct, and the configuration of unique features into diversity (Molleman, 2005). The general sense of diversity is the differences between people and how these personal attributes relate to other people. Pfeffer (1983) has associated diversity with unique characteristics such as age, gender, tenure, etc., making a person different from others.

On the other hand, the broader view of diversity is attributes that people employ to compare themselves with other people, and it should be noted that these go beyond personal features (Williams and O'Reilly, 1998). Similarly, there is diversity at the group level or a community-like level which could be seen as the distribution of unique features or attributes among interdependent team members (Jackson et al, 2003). Therefore, the meaning of diversity could be at the personal and group levels, but the common denominator in the two is the exploration of differences.

It is paramount to determine which of the attributes researchers are interested in when studying the phenomenon of diversity and the level of diversity that matters. Going back to the work of Pfeffer (1983), according to him, the diversity of organisational demography is the composite aggregation of the features of the individual members of a group or entity. These attributes are demographical, including age, sex, educational level, tenure, residence, the race of the social entity. It can be seen that Pfeffer's definition defines diversity at the group level, they are attributes at the group level which are very important to organisations, and other studies also contribute to the study of diversity regarding the demographic

distribution of a social unit (Gonzalez & DeNisi, 2009; Hobman and Bordia, 2006). On the other hand, there is diversity at the personal level. The differences between people may lead to perceiving that a person is different from another (van Knippenberg, De Dreu and Homan, 2004, p. 1008).

Similarly, Rico et al (2017) opined that the compositional distribution of attributes among team members on unique features could trigger the perception that a team member differs from another team member. From the preceding, the literature established that diversity could either exist at the group or personal levels; each produces different outcomes when employed in a study. This study shall focus on diversity at the group level, as it is a study of the diversity in the Higher Education sector in the Republic of Ireland.

2.3 The Approaches of Diversity Construct

As explained above, diversity is the study of the differences in personal attributes between people, existing at the individual and group levels. There is a growth in the number of unique characteristics that researchers have identified in the study of diversity (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Rijamampianina and Carmichael (2005) identified 38 personal attributes that could be explored in a diversity study. However, there are three stages of development in the attributes of diversity; in the beginning, the attributes were mere legal attributes, but this development has grown the list to 38 attributes. The three stages shall be critically explored under these sub-headings; Equal opportunity Attribute Stage, Diversity Management Stage, and Diversity Business Case Stage.

2.4 Equal Opportunity Attribute Stage

Diversity attention started development in the United States of America in the 1960s and 1970s, shortly after the launch of the US Civil Rights Act of 1964 legislation (Title VII of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964). In that Act, establishments or organisations were mandated to

provide a non-discriminatory work environment to their employees and hire people in the underrepresented groups in the country (McMillan-Capehart, 2003). Similar regulations regarding diversity and inclusion in the workforce started emerging in other countries, such as the Employment Equality Directive of the European Union, the United Kingdom's Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act of 1986. The diversity attributes common at this stage were mainly workplace discrimination related to gender, age, and physical disability (O'Leary & Weathington, 2006).

What the nature of regulations help to achieve is that employment by companies is made without prejudice regarding age and gender considerations, thereby helping to stop discrimination regarding gender or race (Kramar, 2005). It can be said that diversity has experienced an interesting evolution as it addresses racial and gender discrimination and fairness in terms of employment.

At this stage of development, the definition of diversity by researchers is related to features with workplace discrimination such as race, gender, age, and physical disability (O'Leary & Weathington, 2006). In addition, diversity relates to racial and gender discrimination at the early stage (Foley, Linnehan, Greenhaus, & Weer, 2006). This laid the foundation upon which the future growth of work in this field will be built. The next stage shall focus on the management of diversity as a core feature of the second stage of development.

2.5 Diversity Management Stage

Two occurrences characterise this stage of diversity evolution, the increasing cost of diversity regulation compliance and the development of training programs based on diversity by organisations (Pless & Maak, 2004; Kramar, 2005). The development of training programs was a strategy adopted to manage diversity whilst also reducing the cost associated with diversity compliance. This stage shows the growth of diversity attributes from the legally

protected features to accommodate new individual attributes such as education and value (Jayne and Dipboye, 2004).

There were three waves of studies and activities around diversity at this stage. The diversity literature or topics at this stage were related to how to avoid lawsuits (James & Wooten, 2006; Pless & Maak, 2004). Attention was being paid to diversity training about attitudes and sensitivity (Combs & Luthans, 2007; Paluck, 2006). The new perspective of diversity at the time focused on diversity management which deals with the following areas; recruitment initiatives, education and training, career development and programs to retain heterogeneity in the organisation; this ultimately led to the introduction of an inclusive culture in the organisation (Pless & Maak, 2004; Roberson, 2006). This reveals that organisations are more focused on how to generate gains from workforce diversity.

Organisational culture is supposed to produce an inclusion result in an organisation; inclusion is a paired concept of diversity. It is referred to as a situation where the employee in an organisation is respected, valued and supported as a result of factors such as organisational culture, management practices and interpersonal relationships, which are core principles of an organisation that promote diversity policies (Giovannini, 2004; Shore et al., 2011). For instance, the systematic integration of women and people of colour into the workplace and research that seeks to explore how different diverse groups can progress within the organisational hierarchies are signs of inclusion (Pitts, 2006). It can be said that diversity policies would eventually lead to inclusion initiatives. Therefore, inclusion initiatives focus on removing frictions that prevent the under harnessing of employee skills and competence in an organisation. The third stage is the business case for diversity and inclusion in organisations.

2.6 Diversity & Inclusion Business Case

What is a diversity and inclusion business case if a business case is a profitable reason for an investment in an idea or initiative? According to O'Leary and Weathington (2006), the business case of diversity posits that increasing diversity should help an organisation utilise all employees' talents and skills, which could be a strategic goal for competitive advantage in a complex and dynamic business environment. The business case is the potential talents that diversity offers to an organisation (Simons and Pelled, 1999). For instance, in a brainstorming session in a heterogeneous team, the diverse thinking, competence, background, and experience will produce innovative ideas instead of what a homogenous team would do. The theoretical justification for the business case of diversity is based on two frameworks or propositions. First, organisations capabilities are not contained in one person but a collection of people with diverse skill sets and experiences (Acosta, 2004). Second, it has been argued that human resource serves as a source of sustained competitive advantage as there is uniqueness in the value, they create which makes it difficult to imitate (Richard, 2000). Therefore, the business case for diversity is compelling and shows that value can be achieved from diversity in an organisation with the right initiatives. Finally, diversity is a fascinating topic in an organisation. Some research Institutions have investigated the business case of diversity, and they have claimed that there is a net gain in financial performance. This study seeks to examine both financial and non-financial benefits of diversity strategies in the HEIs' in the Republic of Ireland.

2.6.1 Ethnic, Gender, and Religion Diversities

Exploring diversity in the organisation setting presents two general perspectives: surface-level diversity and deep-level diversity. Taking an analytical view on the surface diversity will help examine the concept of ethnic or racial, gender, and religious diversities, as they are common in literature (Roberge and Dick, 2010). The common difference between the surface level and deep level diversities is that while surface-level consists of somewhat visible diversity attributes, deep-level diversity consists of diversity attributes that are rather not visible.

What does the literature say about gender, ethnic and religious diversities and their impact on organisational performance?

2.6.2 Ethnic/Racial Diversity and Organization Performance

Ethnic diversity is about the differences in mother languages, culture (way of life), and race of professionals in the workplace or an organisation (Busolo, 2017). Demographically, ethnic diversity is a constant attribute that professionals use to describe themselves in the workplace (Joshi and Liao, 2006). Conversely, racial diversity has been equated to ethnic diversity and thereby has been taken to mean the same (Roberge and Dick, 2010). Therefore, it is a truism to state that ethnic diversity is common to all workforces, and as such, it is one of the ways one workforce differs from another. For instance, Dr Johnson Jefferson and Dr Philip Tim are neurosurgeons with identical attributes such as age, height, gender, etc. The only area of difference is while Dr Philip is from India, Dr Johnson is from America.

How does ethnic diversity affect organisational performance? (Roberge and Dick, 2010). In a paper titled "the impact of workforce diversity on organisation performance: a case study of AAR group", the author studied the correlation between ethnicity as a diversity attribute and performance (Busolo, 2017; Liao and Joshi, 2006). The studies asserted that the historical

importance of ethnic diversity might be the reason for the dynamics in the workplace. That explains that organisations see the apparent need for diversity; hence they ensure their workforce composition reflects that need.

(Choi and Rainey, 2010), argue that ethnic diversity has a positive relationship with organisational performance. Their study implied that inclusive organisations in terms of diversity in ethnicity or race tend to perform better than those less inclusive in terms of ethnic or racial diversity (Guillaume, 2017; Oslen and Martins, 2016). Furthermore, Konrad (2003) stated that ethnic diversity is more informative and relevant to the demographic composition of the current workforce. Pless and Maak (2004) supported the above argument in that ethnic diversity can be a tool to solve original problems, generate innovation, and ultimately lead to a competitive advantage for the organisation. The preceding research paper shows that organisations that promote a culture of ethnic diversity will more likely have diverse markets and innovative products that these different demographic markets need.

2.7 Diversity Management

The internationalisation of an organisational workforce and markets calls for effective diversity management. Historically, liberal and radical approaches were adopted for diversity management in the 1970s. The liberal approach to diversity management is sameness, while the radical approach is about positive discrimination (Kirton and Greene, 2010). The radical approach that advocates positive discrimination should inform positive discrimination leads to inclusiveness in the workplace. The essence of diversity management is to ensure a discrimination-free workforce composition in the workplace; this has been the historical goal of diversity (Kramar, 2005).

According to Oslen and Martins (2012), diversity management involves the effective utilisation of human resource practices to maintain variation among employees to ensure that the variations do not result in adverse outcomes that would impact organisational objectives

and goals. Furthermore, diversity management is the practice that involves employees' differences and the effectiveness in the utilisation of such differences (Kirton and Greene, 2010). The Employment Equal Opportunity (EEO) and the Affirmative Action (AA) were legislation designed to tackle gender and racial discrimination in the workplace (Konrad et al., 2006). While diversity management involves compliance with the EEO and AA, the scope has become broader as has the business case. The increase in diversity attributes presents more crucial reasons for managing diversity (Kossek et al., 2006). Among the critical diversity management programs includes an initiative for recruitment, promotion, and retention of diverse teams (Jayne and Dipboye, 2004). Diversity management is an effective tool in harnessing the potentials of diversity in the workplace when effectively implemented. What are the different approaches organisations adopted in the management of diversity to ensure it benefits the organisation? According to the US Government Accountability Office (GAO, 2005; GAO, 2019), diversity management creates and maintains a positive work environment where similarities and dissimilarities are valued for all to reach their full potential and maximise their contributions to the organisation goals and visions. Furthermore, the report highlighted nine organisational leadership practices that reflect diversity management, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Nine Organisational Diversity Practices, Source: GAO, 2005

Leadership Practices	GAO Definitions	Analysis
Top-leadership commitment	The top-level management communication and demonstration of diversity vision	Corporate board indicator
Diversity as a component of the strategic plan	Development of plans and strategies that are aligned with the organisation strategic plans.	Corporate board indicator
Succession planning	An ongoing strategic process for identifying and developing a diverse talent pool for the organisation's potential leadership.	Corporate board indicator
Recruitment	The process for the recruitment of qualified diverse talents.	Corporate board indicator
Diversity training	This is the process for staff training and diversity management.	Organizational Culture Indicator
Employee Involvement	Involvement of employees to promote diversity throughout an organisation	Organizational Culture Indicator
Diversity and Performance	The business case for diversity, which means that a diverse workforce can increase productivity in an organisation.	Organizational Culture Indicator
Measurement	The qualitative and quantitative measurement of the impact of diversity on organisations.	Individual leadership indicator
Accountability	This is about making leaders accountable for diversity and using diversity impact to measure their performance.	Individual leadership indicator

Studies on diversity management are usually grouped into three approaches of diversity management in an organisation: executive board, organisation culture, and individual leadership.

2.8 Higher Education in the Republic of Ireland and Inclusion

Education should be seen as established with the core principle of inclusion regardless of the social status of the people (Florian, Young, and Rouse 2010). While that is one perspective regarding diversity and inclusion in education, another view is that inclusive education also covers social diversity and the importance of recognising how ethnicity, language, and inter-generational poverty could be a contributory factor to further marginalisation (Drudy and Kinsella 2009; Florian, Young, and Rouse, 2010; Forlin, 2010; Slee, 2011). Education can be seen from two perspectives, creating a level playing field or cause further exclusion due to the educational policies.

Higher education in the Republic of Ireland is seen as highly regulated, with strict policies controlling its expansion. The Irish State has distinguished itself from financing the Central Application Office (CAO), which is the central clearing house for undergraduate applications to Irish HEIs, thereby making higher education in Ireland somewhat autonomous (Breen and Johnson, 2000). For instance, the Central Application Office (CAO) was built and financed in 1976 by the application of fee structure and so was not reliant on State funding. A report published by the Central Admission Office revealed that acceptance to higher education courses has increased by 70%. The applications to higher education preference are as follows; the priority is the Institute of Technology, then the Universities, followed by other Colleges (Byrne *et al.*, 2009).

In exploring diversity and inclusion in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland, questions in the literature must be asked; does educational expansion have an inverse relationship with inequality (lack of inclusion), or does it have a direct relationship with inequality (increase

inclusion)? Another question is, does qualitative differentiation in education mean a replacement for quantity education?

Studies have revealed that educational expansion cum institutional differentiation tends to promote diversion; thereby, the working class is drifted away from education into the lower status of society (Dougherty 1994). On the other hand, Brint and Karabel (1989) have argued that the importance of expansion is inclusion.

The Maximally Maintained Inequality (MMI) hypothesis states that the level of social inequality existing between two social strata regarding the attainment of a class of education tends to persist until saturation point is attained by the privileged strata (Raftery and Hout, 1993). It connotes that until that point of saturation is reached, opportunities exist for the advantaged group for more education, increasing the inequality gap. However, to determine the validity of this theory, the study of Shavit and Blossfeld (1993) asserted that expansion does have an increasing diversity effect or do not reduce inequality in the educational system. Conversely, there has been a consistent decline of class inequalities in Ireland's primary and secondary educational levels (Jonsson, Mills and Muller, 1996; Shavit and Westerbeek, 1998). Hence, the literature shows that inequality could result from higher-level educational expansion, but that does not hold a lower level of education in Ireland.

The MMI hypothesis was criticised on two grounds; the model does not consider tracking and other types of qualitative differentiation in education (Breen and Jonsson 2000; Lucas, 2001; Ayalon and Shavit, 2004; Byrne, 2008). Supported is the work of Shavit et al. (2007), who asserted that the educational system in Ireland is tracked by degree, thereby allowing students to choose from the tracked degree in the system.

controlled and regulated through the school institution (Reay et al., 2001; Smyth and Hannan 2007). The phenomenon where a social group influences one's behaviour is what is referred to as institutional habitus. Since the institutional habitus had been determined to cause a

positive impact on students, educational policies, programs, and initiatives could be made by HEIs to promote the value proposition through significant initiatives.

There are initiatives created to foster inclusive institutions and society, such as the Athena SWAN initiative in Ireland. The Athena SWAN Advance HE's vision is to encourage gender diversity and inclusion workplace that is sustainable and high performing across all their operations (Advance HE, 2021). In the strategic report entitled 'Strategy 2021-2024' the organisation stated six commandments that would help them to achieve the overall vision of the organisation; they include; enabling strategic transformation, transform leadership for a new world, drive progress in equality, diversity and inclusion, enhancement of teaching and learning for students and institutional success, re-imagination of professional development and recognition and evolve higher education governance (Marston and Johns, 2021). In the same vein, a higher education institution focused on promoting inclusion in the workplace and more generally. The organisation published a strategy report which outlined six strategic plans 2018 to 2021; the strategic plans include:

- The Foundational Strategy: This is needed to support and strengthen the strategic vision of equality, diversity, and inclusion of the organisation
- The Data Strategy: This strategy is to help the organisation to capture EDI data as it relates to workers and students.
- Accountability Strategy: This strategy promotes dignity, respect, and fairness and eliminates discrimination and harassment.
- Knowledge Strategy: This is an educational strategy aimed at helping the college community to understand the EDI issues.
- Community Strategy: This is needed to build an organisational culture on the tenets of diversity and inclusion

- Collaboration Strategy: This is to enter a strategic partnership that will promote EDI best practices in the higher education institutions (EDI Strategic and Action Plan, 2018-2022).

The chapter has critically reviewed relevant literature and found that diversity business cases have multiple processes and approaches. The differences in the attitudes of people will generate increased performance for the organisation.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Data and Method

Research methods is broadly grouped into quantitative and qualitative methods (Kothari, 2004; Creswell, 1998; Kuzel, 1999). Quantitative research involves the measurement of an object under study to determine specificity. In contrast, qualitative research consists of studying phenomenon or given variables based on the quality of those variables (Kothari, 2004). For example, scientific experiments are usually quantitative research, while behavioural science studies are usually qualitative research.

Kothari further explains that qualitative methodology is the method of data collection that applies to data that cannot be quantified. In contrast, the quantitative research method is a data collection method that uses an observation that can be quantified.

3.2 Aims and objectives

The aim is to investigate the impacts of diversity and inclusion strategies on employees' perceptions in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland.

The objectives are as follows:

- To critically review existing literature on diversity and inclusion, covering Europe and other parts of the world.
- To explore and critically analyse the strategies of diversity and inclusion implemented in a higher education institute in Ireland.
- To explore and critically analyse the performance of (HEIs) diversity and inclusion strategies and their impact on employees' perception.
- To explore and critically analyse the challenges to the implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies in the organisation.

- To make recommendations on what organisations should do to harness the potential of diversity and inclusion in the organisation.

This paper adopts the qualitative method of data collection in line with the study entitled "Tensions and challenges in the management of diversity and inclusion in IT service multinationals in India" they employed a qualitative method of data collection (Donnelly, 2015). On the other hand, two other studies on diversity management used the quantitative data collection method (Lu *et al.*, 2015; Mulu and Zewdie, 2021).

While the two data collection methods have merits and demerits, the qualitative data collection method seems appropriate for this study. The research question is investigating the implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies and their impact on employees' perceptions. Interviews, specifically semi-structured interviews, are the primary data collection method. A semi-structured interview allows the participants to describe and share their perspectives on the impact of the diversity and inclusion strategies in their respective institutions over time (Cassell, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews allow the respondents to express their views and opinions on the topic put forward, not just quantifying issues to be studied (Cooke and Saini, 2010; Greene and Kirton, 2010; Hoque and Noon, 2004; Kamenou, 2007). Due to the Coronavirus pandemic to ensure that the interviews are conducted safely, they took place virtually through the Microsoft Teams platform. Supporting the forgoing, web-based or virtually supported research channels have been credited to be flexible for iteration purposes (Phelas *et al.*, 2011; MCKenna *et al.*, 2006; Jones *et al.*, 2008).

3.3 Sample Population and Target Population

The sample population of this study comprises employees of HEIs in the Republic of Ireland and is open to all employees in the higher education institute population is from across the

different employment departments comprising academic, professional, management and support staff. In the Republic of Ireland, the HEIs consist of Universities, Institutions of Technology and Colleges offering a variety of educational offerings according to the National Framework of Qualifications.

As this study is concerned with understanding employees' perceptions of the diversity and inclusion strategies of HEIs, the participants are from four HEIs in the Republic of Ireland. The interview participants selection was based on the saturation theory as a sample size, which states that in a survey or interview process, there will be a point where additional information of a new respondent adds no value to the data collected (Mason, 2010; Barbara and Benjamin, 2016). The data collected is adequate at the saturation point as more information becomes less significant (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012). Therefore obtaining new information becomes very difficult as the participants have exhaustively provided the information known to all; thus, coding becomes not feasible at this point (Guest *et al.*, 2006).

The sample size for this study is eight, consisting of one female and one male employee per institution, initially it was hoped that volunteers would be specific to departments/units to ensure a spread across the Institution but due to time constraints it wasn't feasible to adopt this approach particularly as participation was voluntary and aimed at understanding the experiences of the employees

3.4 Research Instrument

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interview

This study employed a semi-structured interview instrument to gather the data for the research. Semi-structured interviews are designed around a set of open-ended predetermined questions, with more questions expected to emerge from the dialogue between the interviewee and the interviewer (Babara and Benjamin, 2006). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews are often in-depth interviews with either an individual or a group. Whether for the group or an individual, an in-depth interview usually takes between 30 minutes to hours to complete.

The research instrument aligns with the study of Donnelly (2015), where a semi-structured interview was used to determine the diversity management in the IT sector in India.

Following the same design, this study's semi-structured interview focused on interviewing individual employees of the HEIs, offering the participants an opportunity and ample time to share their thoughts and experiences arising during the interview, which in turn facilitated an in-depth exploration of the questions (Cassel, 2009)

The semi-structured in-depth interview questions were developed to achieve the overall aims and are in line with the objectives of this study. However, an online channel was employed to administer the interview, and it has been acknowledged to be flexible, cost-efficient and effective (Phelas *et al.*, 2011).

3.4.2 Development of the Semi-Structured Questions

The first step taken in the interview process was determining the research question, the aim, and the series of objectives. Then, a set of eleven questions were developed from the objectives, consisting of two questions for introduction and conclusion and nine questions for the main areas to be explored.

The process required submitting a letter of consent to gain the permission of the HEI, which involved drafting a consent letter and research information leaflet, which is always an ethical requirement. The two documents were submitted to the HEIs whose names cannot be mentioned due to ethical reasons as agreed with them. The consent letter and research information leaflet explain the research topic and the reason behind the request for their employees to participate as interviewees, which requires their voluntary consent in line with the aims and objectives of the study.

3.4.3 The Interviewing Process

This is a significant stage of the research as it involves the core components of the research data gathering. Microsoft Teams was the video conferencing tool used to conduct the interview, which was recorded and transcribed.

3.4.4 Analysing the Interview data

After the interview, the next critical stage was analysing the data collected during the interview. The data was coded, then arranged in thematically structured form and analysed based on the categorisation by themes.

3.4.5 Strengths and Weaknesses of the instrument

The research instrument has some merits and demerits and will be discussed as it pertains to semi-structured interviews.

3.4.6 Strengths of the Instrument

- Efficiency Benefit of Web-based Interview: web-based interviews make it possible to minimise the cost and time required to conduct face-to-face interviews.

- Health Benefit: Due to the current pandemic (Covid-19), one of the best ways to administer interviews is through the web or online channel.
- Open-ended questions tend to be more in-depth and explanatory. It produces rich data that will be very helpful in the analysis.

3.4.7 Weaknesses of the Instrument

- Technical Problems: there could be technical problems like Internet Service Provider failure, software bugs and data end-to-end encryption issues.
- Interruption Problems: The participants may decide to stop in the middle of the interview without reason for their decision.

3.5 Data Analysis

The thematic method of data analysis was adopted to code and analyse the data collected, aligning with the six phases of the thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The first step was collecting the data through a set of semi-structured interview questions; it was recorded and transcribed with adherence to the institution's research ethics committee regulations. The thematic analysis is explained thus: In this research, care was taken to understand the data collected by carefully reading the data and listening to recordings to ensure that accurate interpretation of the data is recorded and coding the information into distinct labels to understand the different patterns of the data that can be grouped together.

Once the data was organised, the next step was identifying emerging themes from the various responses to understand perspectives in the research question.

From the preceding themes, it was essential to analyse the data to understand the state of the data gathering regarding getting enough information to understand the topic and identify missing themes.

This stage in the process requires the themes to be narrowed to 4 or 5 themes that accurately represent the data's perspectives.

The final stage involves a clear summary of the analysis of the data collected that expresses the participants' views in the process.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Barbara and Benjamin (2006) stated four critical ethical considerations in research that employ interview instruments. They are the standards that protect the respondents or the parties participating in the research process from unforeseen risks (Reiman, 1979). They include the following areas; reduction of unanticipated harm risk, safeguarding participants' data, the participant knowledge about the interview, and ensuring that exploitation risk is minimised.

This research acknowledged ethical standard requirements and factored them into the research process. Below are the ethical strategies to ensure that interviewees are protected from the risks mentioned above.

3.7 The Higher Education Institution Anonymity

The HEIs used in this study gave consent (see appendix 1) to employees to participate, but on the condition, the data is anonymized. As such the institution's name and other nominal information will not be disclosed in line with the agreement.

3.7.1 The Anonymity of Participants Sensitive Information

The participants are employees who are expected to share their experiences of diversity and inclusion in the institution. Their names and other sensitive data are anonymous to protect them from potential risks by adopting the following protocols;

- Ensure they are facilitated with all information about the study and data required.

- Seek their voluntary participation by signing the consent form, with the option to opt-out at any time if they so desire.

3.7.2 The University Ethical Measures

Before commencing the research, the institutions were made aware of the research topic, design, and other plans were submitted for approval which was achieved by filling in a form outline the research details and requirements of participants. (see appendix 2 & 3)

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

The study's broad aim is to determine the effect of the implementation of the diversity and inclusion strategies on employees' perception in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland, and to achieve this aim successfully; this chapter focuses on analysing the data from the semi-structured interview conducted. The data were obtained from the set of questions developed from the objectives of the study. Owing to the nature of the objectives, objective one is to critically analyze the existing literature while objective five is to make recommendations, so objectives two to four are the objectives that will help us explore the strategies and their impact on employees' perception.

The participants of this study were drawn from four HEIs in the Republic of Ireland with an equal gender balance of interviewees comprised of four males and four females, breaking it down to two from each institution. While the presentation of the data will strive to maintain anonymity, Pseudo names have been used to represent the profile of the eight informants.

Table 4 shows the number of informants, though some information is pseudo to uphold the ethical research standard of confidentiality and anonymity.

Table 3: Research Participants

Organization	Pseudo Name
A1	Henry
A2	Stella
B1	Kenneth
B2	Joan
C1	John
C2	Lydia
D1	Mark
D2	Rachael

As shown in Table 4, the informants have different levels of work experiences from the various institutions, making them suitable to give data for the study. However, the common denominator is the fact that they all work in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland.

The analysis will follow this planned structure, and the themes from the data will be analyzed in alignment with each of the objectives, and thereafter conclusion will be reached, starting with objective two because objective one condition had been met in the literature review chapter.

4.2 Objective 2:

To explore and critically analyse the strategies of diversity and inclusion being implemented in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland.

The research question on strategies was structured in a way that helped explore and obtain data about two invaluable pieces of information: diversity and inclusion strategies and the

goals of these strategies. Hence, the themes will be grouped under two subheadings: the strategy of diversity and inclusion and the goals of diversity and inclusion strategies.

4.3 Diversity and Inclusion Strategies of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Ireland

There are seven emerging themes from the coding process that show the strategies that these particular institutions are actively deploying and implementing so as to achieve diversity and inclusion. The seven themes are presented in Table 5 below

Table 4 Higher institute Diversity and Inclusion Strategies

Strategies	Themes
Strategy 1	Having breakout sessions and training
Strategy 2	Cultural events
Strategy 3	Periodic Employee Survey
Strategy 4	Athena Swan Charter Membership
Strategy 5	Content Creation and Distribution
Strategy 6	Training Trainer Outsourcing Program
Strategy 7	Diversity Committee meeting

4.3.1 Having Breakout Sessions and Training

The respondents reported having breakout sessions and training as the foundational diversity and inclusion strategy in the HEI institutions. So, the first step is to facilitate breakout sessions with different departments and units of the organization to train them and discuss the workplace diversity and their attitude towards other staff that is different from them.

Henry stated thus, “And part of that involves having breakout sessions, you know, within different units in the organization to ensure people understand who we are first of all. To have a policy of achieving diversity in our institution by ensuring that everyone who interacts with us being employee or student, is representative of the wider society.”

Above, the interviewee notes that the organizational setting of the HEI is composed of mixed staff, including students from different backgrounds, colours, and races. Facilitating breakout sessions with the other units will improve interactions within the organization's mix of employees and help shape attitudes towards employees from diverse backgrounds.

4.3.2 Cultural Events

A significant aspect of the diversity and inclusion strategies in the coding process is the institutions' efforts to create a culturally inclusive workplace. This data was categorized into three forms, the particular months, such as Ramadan, when the Muslim faithful celebrate religious activities. Such religious dates are an area of diversity in the workforce, so employees need to feel welcome and respected for their beliefs. The next is about employees from countries where English is not their first language. Non-traditional English speaking employees may speak with an accent or pronounce words differently compared to native English speakers. In a bid to foster an organizational culture that embraces diversity and encourages inclusion, such employees need to feel welcome in the workplace. Lastly, the sexual orientation of employees may differ, and this should be respected within the organization.

John commented, "For instance, talk about Pride month or just festivals like Ramadan. Being able to socialize this, you know, through the institution. Taking into cognizance, the need to respect and accept everybody you know how they are, you know, and that it is all-inclusive because I think we're Better Together."

Therefore, it is essential to reiterate that 'we are better together, which means that inclusion is to ensure people are working harmoniously for the HEIs' productivity and competitiveness regardless of the employees' cultural differences.

4.3.3 Periodic Employee Survey

Periodic employee survey strategy helps to determine, among other things, how the training and breakout sessions have helped improve the behaviour of the employees, and the data would help improve the strategies of the unit. This strategy is purely towards gathering data to determine how effective the programs and events of the HEIs have been and also needed for improvement in programs and initiatives.

Joan, “it's crucial to recognize that the framework we have sent the event document is subject to change and improvement, which shows we're constantly asking for feedback. So as part of the service will run periodically, we're taking those feedbacks on board and putting them into practice by always making amendments to the content.”

The excerpt above highlights that feedback received from periodic surveys is crucial to the diversity and inclusion strategies and employee perception.

4.3.4 Athena Swan Charter Membership

The Athena SWAN charter is an initiative geared towards deepening diversity and inclusion in HEIs. The charter is a crucial driver for gender equality, with HEIs eligibility for funding from donor agencies in Ireland linked to achieving the charter principles. The interview also revealed that membership of this charter was part of the overall diversity and inclusion strategy.

Stella stated in the interview, “It is also important for us to get some correct public recognition in terms of what we're doing, and that's why, as part of our strategy, we are signed up to the Athena Swan Charter to show that we are aligned with global best practices on diversity, inclusion.”

The above excerpt revealed that the Athena swan charter would help the HEI align with global best practices and gain a positive image. A fundamental attribute of the diversity and inclusion strategy is membership of bodies that promote diversity and inclusion as encouraged by the Higher Educational Authority (HEA).

4.3.5 Content Creation and Distribution

Content creation and distribution is one of the effective strategies of diversity and inclusion reported by the interviewees or the respondents. According to them, the contents are drawn from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) website and then socialized on the HEIs website in the form of infographics and video content. Another content strategy identified in the coding process is sending memos to staff on diversity and inclusion.

Lydia commented, “Using infographic, for instance, you know to ensure you know we socialize the content ... We also have memos that we send to staff as well and videos.”

The above response clearly shows that the goal of content creation is to educate, but the approach to get it done is through the socialization of the content in video and infographic formats. Videos and infographics are some of the standard and related content on social media.

4.3.6 Training the Trainer Outsourcing Program

As reported by John, the train the trainer program is outsourced and focused on training the diversity and inclusion staff on what they need to know about their work and how to become effective. It equips them to become better trainers, as training and breakout sessions are crucial to the success of the diversity and inclusion strategies.

Mark “we are involved with external organizations helping us with our program called training the trainer to help train some key staff members.”

Marks comments point towards the need for EDI personnel to have adequate training to discharge their responsibilities and duties effectively.

4.3.7 Diversity Committee Meeting

As reported, the equality diversity and inclusion units in these HEIs have expectations, budget, plan, and key performance indicators; the diversity committee is responsible for setting expectations and measuring progress. It is essential to meet periodically, have breakout sessions with different institute units, and get feedback from the staff on the diversity and inclusion strategies of the institution.

John, “we do have a budget; expectations as well, and performance indicators to measure success. So, the diversity committee meets regularly to review progress, which leads to having breakout sessions with different units within the Institute.”

John suggests that a review is necessary to determine if the key performance indicators are being attained so as to give the committee insights on taking actions required to improve outcomes.

Below the diversity and inclusion as organizational goals will be discussed and analysed.

4.4 Diversity and Inclusion Goals of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Ireland

The themes in this section help to explore critically what the goals of the above strategies are.

When there is a reason for executing a strategy, it becomes imperative. The themes in this section are shown in Table 6.

Table 5: Goals of diversity and inclusion strategies in HEIs

Goals	Themes
Goal 1	To enlighten employees to know we're all diverse by nature.
Goal 2	Making the mixed employees feel at home
Goal 3	Building a cohesive culture
Goal 4	increase representation of the identified groups

4.4.1 To Enlighten Employees to Understand the Diverse Backgrounds of the Workforce.

As reported by the participants, the first goal and objective of the diversity and inclusion strategies are to educate the employees to understand diversity and inclusion. Without this foundation, it would become difficult to implement the strategy. Educating people to appreciate what diversity in the workplace means and what inclusion means in practical terms.

For Joan: “Being able to accept everyone and align as units despite where you are from or how we look. I think this is very important, and the data coming back shows that we're making progress in our institution at the moment.”

From Joan’s comments above, it is clear that the HEIs are already educating employees to understand the significance of diversity in the workplace. It can be inferred that this goal is a necessary condition that justifies the means to an end, which is inclusivity, the overall aim of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Making sure the HEIs organization's workplace is devoid of discrimination on racial, gender or other grounds.

As reported by respondent Stella, “So what we have tried to do is make sure the unique mix of people who gather around us feel at home and feel welcome”.

The above quote indicates that attaining a level in which all employees feel welcome will activate the latent potential of each employee, which will lead to a positive impact on productivity and the contribution to the general performance of the organization. However, a failure to achieve this can have adverse effects on employees’ mental health.

4.4.2 Building a Cohesive Culture

Building a cohesive culture seems to be essential to create an inclusive workplace. As reported, a cohesive culture within an organization makes everyone important, and the culture encourages unity and oneness despite differences. One of the ways to do that is to cultivate a culture of acceptance within the workplace.

Lydia said, “You know, building a cohesive kind of culture within an institution. So the first stage will be that of acceptance.”

The data reveals that the prerequisite to building a cohesive culture is cultivating a culture of acceptance which may likely develop into a cohesive culture within the organization.

4.4.3 Increase representation of the underrepresented groups

The underrepresented groups are the people with specific features that make them different from others. So, the goal of the strategies is to ensure these people characterized by colour, sexual orientation, minority group, LGTB, etc., are represented and retained in the workforce.

According to John, “From the different groups, i.e. LGBTQ and other minority groups, the goal is to ensure all diverse groups feel welcome and have a voice in the workforce.”

Increased representation of these groups shows acceptance, which will help the organization achieve its diversity and inclusion initiative' goals.

The next objective explores and analyzes the effectiveness and outcomes of these strategies.

4.5 Objective 3:

It is to explore and critically analyze the results of diversity and inclusion strategies in Ireland and how they influence perception.

The questions in this section were designed to explore data that would help achieve objective three of the study. The coded themes are some of the effects and outcomes of the diversity and inclusion strategies implemented. Below in Table 7 is a summary of each observed impact from implementing the diversity and inclusion strategies.

Table 6 Results of Diversity and Inclusion Strategies

Strategies Result	Themes
Result 1	Cohesive behaviour in an organization
Result 2	Increase in retention and reduction in churn out rate
Result 3	Mental health wellbeing
Result 4	Employee positive feedbacks

4.5.1 Cohesive Behaviour in Organization

One of the key performance indicators of the strategies of diversity and inclusion in organizations is a behaviour change which will ultimately lead to change in the perception of views held previously by some employees. The cohesive behaviour in the organization theme appeared in the coding process to show a difference in the conduct and perception of the employees regarding diversity and inclusion after the breakout sessions and training. To have a cohesive culture, the employees should have a cohesive behaviour that encourages diversity and is a typical example of acceptance.

Lydia noted that from her perspective, “We can see a significant improvement, and that is a perception. in terms of behaviour, and I think it is a key indicator that we, you know, used to measure success.”

The above response revealed that improvement in the behaviour of employees regarding the issue of diversity and inclusion is a success parameter for the institution's diversity and inclusion strategies in every organization. Furthermore, it also helps determine the manner of views and perception of the employees on diversity and inclusion. Hence, this is an outstanding achievement or output, as outputs from the implementation of the strategies.

4.5.2 Increase in Retention and Reduction in Churn out Rate

Churn-out rate is a metric used to describe the number of employees that exit an organization over a period, whether annually or semi-annually. In contrast, the retention rate determines the number of employees who have remained with the organization over time. A high churn out rate signals a lack of effectiveness of diversity and inclusion strategies; a low churn out rate signals a high performance of diversity and inclusion strategies as more employees feel included and wish to remain in a workplace where they feel recognized, valued, and respected.

John said, “high churn rates in terms of losing people from certain backgrounds or groups, oh yeah, at least we can see a, you know, huge reduction in Churn out rate, and I think that's a success for us”.

The data above revealed that a reduction in churn out rate year on year is a significant success factor. It shows the effectiveness of the strategies to promote diversity and inclusion and the retention of employees in the identified groups due to the third-level institution's cohesive nature.

4.5.3 Mental Health Wellbeing

It is crucial to have the strategies to support staff mental health wellbeing to avoid depriving employees of achieving their full potential. According to the respondents, HEIs are becoming more cohesive and inclusive. The problem is being solved as more opportunities exist for those formerly excluded to maximize their full potential.

John, “we can see a lot of cohesive behaviour within our workforce where people feel at home. We can see better workplace practices and relationships formed, and I think the strength of our institute is served better by having these initiatives that create this perception.”

Therefore, there are fewer cases of mental health, given that HEI workplaces are more cohesive and have recorded a considerable improvement in the behaviour of the employees toward each other.

4.5.4 Employee Positive Feedbacks

One of the key outcomes from implementing the strategies is the positive feedback obtained from the employee who has participated in the breakout sessions and training on diversity and inclusion. Most started seeing the importance of supporting the excluded and the minority groups within the organization.

Stella stated, “I think a lot of employees have given very positive feedback. And in terms of how they now recognize the need to support minority groups within the framework of diversity and inclusion as well, so I think we've got a robust response back.”

The above quote indicates that employee feedback on diversity and inclusion is a great outcome, and positive feedback from employees is an expected outcome. What is interesting about the comment above is the readiness of the employees to provide this feedback.

While the outcome, effect, and results of the diversity and inclusion strategy have positively impacted the perception of the employees of HEI in the Republic of Ireland, the next session will focus on the challenges encountered while implementing these strategies.

4.6 Objective 4:

It is to explore and critically analyze the challenges to implementing diversity and inclusion strategies in organizations.

The themes of this section addressed two main issues: the challenges encountered in the implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies and the solutions to the challenges.

4.6.1 Challenges in the Implementation of Diversity and Inclusion Strategies

The themes addressing the challenges to implementing diversity and inclusion strategies in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland are presented in Table 8.

Table 7 Challenges in the Implementation of Diversity and Inclusion Strategies

Strategies challenges	Themes
Barrier 1	Cultural change for a lot of people
Barrier 2	Hostility and unsupportive attitudes

4.6.2 Cultural Change for a lot of People

Change initiatives like Diversity and Inclusion Strategies in the workplace sometimes are not easy to implement/roll-out. Change from a previously held perception to a new perception or change from a previous behaviour towards identified groups to a new behaviour; are sometimes fraught with difficulties, as experienced by some of the interview participants.

“Diversity and inclusion and cultural change in an organizational culture have been a major bottleneck because change is sometimes difficult to sell.”

The above-quoted comment aligns with Koters’ (1995) 10 commandments of change, where he summarized it as “not a sprint but rather a marathon” Hence, for a culture shift to occur, the training and breakout session should continue to produce consistent results.

4.6.3 Hostility and Unsupportive Attitudes

As stated by a participant; “some employees in the organization are uninterested in the diversity and inclusion programs.” This is yet another bottleneck for cultural change to take place in an organization. Unwillingness from a group of people in the workplace is a severe problem but requires a systematic approach to resolve

“Educating them properly on the need and letting them know the benefits of talent from across every group isn’t sometimes easy to achieve.”

The above statement showed that breakout sessions and training sometimes take longer to get buy-in from some sets of employees who are not interested in changing their perception of diversity and inclusion and who do not understand diversity and inclusion.

4.7 Solutions to the Challenges of Implementing Diversity and Inclusion Strategies

This section has three themes that helped address the challenges highlighted and analyzed above and other solutions that could help to foster diversity and inclusion strategies in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland. They are presented in Table 9.

Table 8 Solutions to the Challenges of Implementing Diversity and Inclusion Strategies

Solutions to Strategies challenges	Themes
Solution 1	Communication and mentoring system.
Solution 2	Government should set Diversity and inclusion Objectives
Solution 3	Hate crime legislation

4.7.1 Having a Communication and Mentoring System

As stated above, change cannot be triggered to take place by one-off training. According to the report, there is a mentoring and communication system as part of the engagement strategy to tackle the lack of buy-in from some employees. With continuous mentoring and systematic communications, employees will continue to build cohesive behaviour in the workplace.

“Some of what we are doing, and that is where communication comes in terms of how we communicate by having a mentoring system within organizations as a support tool.”

Hence, the comment above supports the proposition that a systematic mentoring system will gradually lead to an aligned behaviour in line with the diversity and inclusion strategy of the organization.

4.7.2 Government should set Diversity and inclusion Objectives

This theme considers the impact of government involvement in diversity and inclusion in organizations. As reported, the government could set the objectives and policies for diversity and inclusion; this would help to accelerate the adoption of diversity programs and initiatives by employees as they know that the government voice has joined the conversation around the subject matter. Here is an excerpt from the interview regarding government involvement and intervention.

“The leaders need to set the objectives, and the government could do a lot more in accelerating these programs within our own country as it is today...”,.

From the preceding perspective, it is clear that when the government sets the tone of the diversity and inclusion agenda, it will help promote and accelerate the pace of the discussion within HEIs in particular and society in general.

4.7.3 Hate Crime Legislation

A possible solution recommended by the respondents is hate crime legislation. Legislation against hate crime in Ireland will help change people's attitudes towards minority groups. There isn't a specific hate crime legislation at the moment apart from the “Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, but the government should consider introducing new robust legislation to prosecute people that commit hate crimes. The excerpt from the coding stated, “We need to look at things like a hate crime where the government can legislate.” It could be deduced that the government's action can help resolve some of the challenges relating to diversity and inclusion. One of such challenges is a hate crime, the way to solve it is legislation against it.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented and analyzed the result of the semi-structured interview conducted.

The feedback was very invaluable in providing answers to objective 2, which is about the strategies of diversity and inclusion in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland, objective 3, which is about the impact of these strategies on employee performance and objective 4, which is about the challenges to the implementation of the diversity and inclusion strategies.

In conclusion, it can be averred that the current diversity and inclusion strategies have produced excellent output that have positively impacted the employee's perception. However, government intervention would lead to the positive acceleration acceleration of the impact of the strategy. The next chapter will focus on the conclusion and recommendations, which are crucial to the study's objective five.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed to investigate the impacts of diversity and inclusion strategies on employees' perceptions within the context of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Republic of Ireland. In working towards achieving the aims of the research, five objectives were developed to provide a roadmap for the conduction of the research, which included the following:

- To critically review existing literature on diversity and inclusion, covering Europe and other parts of the world.
- To explore and critically analyze the strategies of diversity and inclusion implemented in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland.
- To explore and critically analyze the results of diversity and inclusion strategies in Ireland and how it influences perception.
- To explore and critically analyze the challenges to the implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies in the organization.
- To make recommendations on what an organization should do to harness the potential of diversity and inclusion in an organization.

The literature review revealed some interesting findings in relation to the topic under exploration in this dissertation. The design method adopted was a semi-structured interview; the interview was conducted and analyzed accordingly. The following chapter shall discuss the study and results of the objectives as previously outlined.

5.2 Objective 1 Discussion

The literature reviewed in this study demonstrated quantitatively and qualitatively that there is productivity gain in a workplace that embraces a culture of diversity and inclusion (Mor Barak, 2015; Garg and Sangwan, 2021). Similarly, the data analyzed supported cohesiveness when diversity and inclusion thrive in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland. However, while this study adopted a qualitative method, some of the literature adopted a quantitative method, but the results are somewhat similar. It is suggested that the HEIs in the Republic of Ireland should implement diversity and inclusion strategies that promote an inclusive culture.

5.3 Objective 2 Discussion

This objective critically explored the strategies of diversity and inclusion in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland. The study revealed the strategies to be relatively effective in promoting diversity and inclusion, which include the following:

- Breakout Sessions And Training,
- Cultural Events,
- Periodic Employee Surveys,
- Athena Swan Charter Membership,
- Content Creation And Distribution,
- Training The Trainer Outsourcing Program,
- Diversity Committee Meeting.

Donnelly (2014) and McMahon (2010) found that the policies adopted by the IT companies in India include employee affinity network groups, leadership and mentoring programs, and flexible working opportunities. While this study explored more strategies, the IT diversity studies explored limited strategies. The above diversity strategies would positively impact organizational productivity and foster employee relationships in HEIs in Ireland.

Implementation of the strategies outlined will support the attainment of diversity and inclusion goals. Consequently, enlighten employees to know we all come from diverse backgrounds, creating a workplace that embraces inclusion that gives all employees a sense of belonging, building a cohesive culture and increasing representation of underrepresented groups.

5.4 Objective 3 Discussion

This objective aims to critically explore the outcome of the diversity and inclusion strategies in HEIs in the Republic of Ireland. The findings revealed that the following results were achieved with the implantation of the strategies.

- Cohesive Behavior In The Organization
- Increase In Retention And Reduction In Churn Out Rate
- Mental Health Wellbeing
- Employee Positive Feedbacks

These outcomes showed that the results of diversity strategies are mainly positive on employees' perception of diversity and inclusion; they are consistent with the studies (Choi & Rainey, 2014; Cooke & Saini, 2010; Groeneveld, 2012). The difference in findings is that these studies were conducted in the non-educational sector, but the results are similar.

However, this finding implies that HEIs' could adopt these outcomes as benchmarks or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) when implementing diversity and inclusion strategies.

5.5 Objective 4 Discussion

The objective was to explore the challenges of diversity and inclusion strategies critically. Two sets of results were generated; they explored the challenges and the solutions. The challenges are cultural change for many people and lack of buy-in, and unsupportive

attitudes. At the same time, the solutions are communication and mentoring system. The government should become more involved in promoting diversity and inclusion and implementing hate crime legislation.

Similarly, cultural change has been identified as one of the reasons for diversity legislation and management (Choi and Rainey, 2010; Kramar, 2005). The limitation of these studies is that they explore the challenges but do not proffer solutions.

The implication is that the government can accelerate the adoption of diversity and inclusion policies in HEIs in Ireland if they support the conversation and legislate against hate crime.

Objective five is to recommend what HEIs in the Republic of Ireland could do to harness diversity and inclusion gains. This objective will be met in the next chapter, as the chapter focused on the conclusion and recommendations. However, the recommendations will be helpful for academics, the government, and private organizations. The next chapter will recommend what the institutions should do to maximize the gains in diversity and inclusion.

This study was about understanding employees' perceptions of the impact of implementing diversity and inclusion strategies on employees in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Republic of Ireland. Here are the conclusions that can be drawn from the study based on contribution to knowledge, limitations of the research and recommendations.

6.1 Conclusions

The study revealed that the diversity strategies currently being implemented in HEIs in Ireland are effective. Some of the strategies mentioned include; facilitating breakout sessions and training, cultural events, periodic employee surveys, Athena Swan charter, Content Creation and Distribution, Training the Trainer Programs, Diversity Committee meetings.

Furthermore, the study revealed that diversity and inclusion strategies were pivoted on the following goals; enlightening employees to the diversity of the workforce, creating an inclusive workplace for all employees, building a cohesive culture, and increasing representation of the underrepresented groups. However, each strategy should be measured to determine the actual output, whether negative or positive. One of the limitations of this study was that the research design could not measure quantitatively the positive results of the diversity and inclusion strategies of the HEIs in the Republic of Ireland because of the qualitative research methodology design.

The study revealed that some of the outcomes of the diversity and inclusion implementations positively impacted employees' perceptions, leading to cohesive behaviour in the organization. An increase in retention and reduction in churn out rate, mental health well-being, and positive employee feedback, which suggests that organizational productivity is achievable when a culture of diversity and inclusion prevails in the workplace.

In addition, the study explored some of the challenges hindering the implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies in HEIs in Ireland and proffered possible solutions to

mitigate them. The challenges centred around cultural change and unsupportive attitudes. At the same time, the solutions can be found through communication and mentoring systems and the government's approach towards diversity and inclusion and hate crime legislation. Since the government is a powerful institution of the state, its involvement will accelerate adopting diversity and inclusion policies in Ireland.

6.2 Recommendations

The recommendations for this research takes into account the outcomes as explained in the conclusion and further suggests the following:

- 1) Ireland's HEIs will benefit from adopting the diversity and inclusion strategies stated in the above conclusion. And at the same time, the necessary structures need to be put in place along with a process for evaluating Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) periodically should be adopted to ascertain their effectiveness.
- 2) The central government of Ireland should propose legislation to promote diversity and inclusion in all organizations in Ireland. The first bill should legislate against hate crime, and the second bill should set diversity and inclusion guidelines for all stakeholders.
- 3) This study scope comprised HEIs in the Republic of Ireland with employees of the HEIs as the participants.
- 4) The government is saddled with ensuring that everyone in society is given equal opportunities and is in position to be change agent. Further research is required to identify areas that government intervention can help to strengthen diversity and inclusion in the education sector in the Republic of Ireland. A study is needed to determine the Intervention of government regarding diversity and inclusion in Ireland.

Despite the insightful findings in the conclusion and recommendations, the study had some limitations which may help future researchers, as shown below:

- 1) Delay experienced in obtaining approval to conduct a semi-structured interview with employees of the HEIs. Future researchers should start the ethical process application much earlier in the proposed research study.
- 2) The data collected was largely qualitative, leading to limited analysis as there was no quantitative measurements to determine the definite impact of one variable against the other.
- 3) Internet failure limitation, during the interview, the wifi connection fluctuated, which posed a threat to the successful flow and completion of the interview.
- 4) Future research is needed to advance methods for effectively measuring diversity and inclusion outcomes in higher education institutions in the Republic of Ireland in order to contribute to international best practice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

RESEARCH INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR THE INTERVIEW

Researcher: Paul Igrude

Course: MSc in Management

Email: X19174144@student.ncirl.ie

This is an Invitation to participate in a research. Please take time to read through this information leaflet.

- The research aims to find out from employees their experiences on the impact of the implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies in the institution.
- We require volunteers who are employees of higher education institutions in the Republic of Ireland.
- Participation is voluntary and will be in the form of a one to one semi structured interview with the researcher. The interview will ask questions to probe the experiences of employees on the impact of your institution's diversity and inclusion strategies.
- The Interview will be virtual on Microsoft Teams and will last about 30 – 40 mins and the session will be recorded to allow for analysis by the researcher. There will be no questions about personal details, and the questions will be submitted in advance of the scheduled meeting.
- The researcher (Paul Igrude) will conduct the interview transcription which will be anonymized, meaning that you and the institutions name will not appear in the interview transcription and dissertation.
- The data will be encrypted in cloud storage and will be deleted once transcription is completed.
- The research will be significant in helping me complete my dissertation leading to my MSc degree award and will give insights into the research topic. It will be presented to my college (National College of Ireland) and held at the NCI library for reference purposes only.
- You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time before or during the interview and you can choose to decline answering any question during the interview.

Appendix 2

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Understanding Employee Perceptions on the Impact of Diversity and Inclusion Strategies in Higher Education Institutions

Please carefully read the the following statements and sign this form to give your consent and to participate in the research interview.

It has been made clear to me that the interview will be anonymous and no personal details will be disclosed.

I understand that any information provided as part of this research will be held in the strictest confidence.

I'm aware of my right to access my interview information after the interview.

It has been made clear to me that I can withdraw from the interview at any time, and to refuse to answer any questions without any ramifications.

The opportunity to ask questions about this research has been offered to me with appropriate explanation.

The interview format has been explained to me and I agree be mode of interview through Microsoft teams.

By signing this form I give my consent to be interviewed for this research.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction

Thanks for attending this interview today; as you know from the research information leaflet and the consent form, this is voluntary participation. The discussion will follow the laid down procedures as contained in the consent form and would last about 30 mins.

Diversity & Inclusion strategies

- What are the past Diversity and inclusion strategies in RCSI? What are the current Diversity and inclusion strategies in RCSI?
- What are the goals of the diversity and inclusion strategies?

Implementations

- What are the ways the Institution implements diversity and inclusion strategies?
- Are there new initiatives in this area being implemented by your Institution?
- What are the popular programs for Diversity and inclusion in the Institution?

Perception and Outcomes

- What effect has the implementation of the strategies produced?
- How does the implementation of the strategy lead to more inclusion?
- Can you explain with examples some of the effects of the programs?

Challenges

- What are the challenges in implementing D& I strategies in Ireland?
- How is the organization tackling these challenges?
- How can the government help to tackle these challenges?

Conclusion

Thank you for taking part in this interview. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix 4

SAMPLE CODE

Code	Explanation
Diversity Committee Meeting	<p>OK, an you know we do have a budget, you know an expectations as well and you know performance indicators to measure success so you know the Diversity Committee meets regularly to review progress and you know, as part of that you know they do go out and have breakout sessions with different units within the Institute. You know to kind of fit this message back home. Carry out training, you know, push the message back training and measure the outcomes based on that over time.</p> <p>Not just one fell swoop over time, you know we measure outcomes and then you know the the indicators from the service carried out showed up. We're making progress and will continue to do what's necessary.</p>
Improvement in behavior	<p>You know we can see a significant improvement, and that's a perception. You know in terms of behavior and then. I think, is key indicators that we, you know we used to measure success. So I practically implementing a, you know some of our you know our strategies contained within our framework. You know that's been socialized within institution. I think we can then look at, you know, the data to understand based on the service, how we're doing.</p>