

Title Page –

“A Qualitative Investigation focusing on Cultural Diversity within a Public Sector
Organisation in Dublin”

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ABSTRACT

“A Qualitative Investigation focusing on Cultural Diversity within a Public Sector Organisation in Dublin” by Rebecca Clifford.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the concept of cultural diversity and how it affects employees within the work place, with particular emphasis on a large public sector organisation in Dublin. Another aim within this research is to understand what the public sector organisation may use to enhance their understanding, support and awareness of cultural diversity.

Firstly this research will discuss the literature in relation to cultural diversity, including discussion on the effects in which cultural diversity has on organisations both across the world and in Ireland. With the use of globalisation, diversity is especially relevant within organisations today. Below will discuss where the topic of diversity has advanced and originated from, with reasons as to why organisations are investing money, time and management within the known phenomenon of diversity.

Within the methodology section of this research it will state the reasoning as to why interviews were used in the process of data collection, along with comparisons amongst other data collection and analysing methods.

Following the above, this research will outline the findings from the data collection, while discussing what the organisation uses to support cultural diversity, as well as the effects that cultural diversity may have on the organisation.

Lastly within the conclusion of this research, it will discuss recommendations in which the researcher believes to be appropriate as there was a lack of cultural diversity present within the public sector organisation. Such recommendations involve greater ways for the organisation to support diversity in order to reap greater benefits, to achieve organisational goals more efficiently. This research will finish with an overall conclusion of the researchers findings.

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural Diversity is prevalent within many aspects of Human Resource Management. Such aspects involve how employees interact with one another, the different type of management styles within organisations, and an employees' learning experiences. Cultural Diversity may also be used to discover if an employee is the best fit for the role. On the other hand, there can be lot of negatives and bias that are highly associated with cultural diversity within organisations. This research is to investigate how a public sector organisation within Dublin deals with all the aspects, involved with Cultural Diversity. Researching cultural diversity will allow the researcher to understand how a public sector organisation may also use diversity initiatives and how such initiatives are also managed when promoting diversity.

The organisation involved employs over 3'000 employees and is seen to have many cultures present within its organisation. Although this company accepts many different cultures, this research will analyse the effects in which cultural diversity is managed and presented to the organisation as a whole, by the Human Resources (HR) Department. The primary research will be conducted through the use of interviews with seven employees, who are employed within the HR department of a public sector organisation. This research should also help indicate how a company in Ireland focuses and understands the area of cultural diversity and what affects it has on their employees and their working environment.

Within Ireland, there have been many employees which have been discriminated against, due to their race, age, sexuality and many more aspects in which may make them different from the majority of workers. There are nine grounds of discrimination, which are protected against within Ireland under the Employment Equality Act (1998-2015) (Citizensinformation.ie, 2016). These Employment Equality Acts, have been a stepping stone and encouragement for organisations in Ireland, to strive towards improving the levels of equality (Gold, Holden, Stewart, Iles and Beardwell, 2013). Organisations focused on the area of equality in order to create a fair and diverse working environment for their employees (Gold, et al, 2013). Such laws have also been able to create a fairer working environment, through the promotion of equal opportunities amongst workers within the workplace (Gold, et al, 2013). It is important to state that although the employment equality acts in Ireland have had positive effects, diversity goes beyond the nine grounds which are protected. As diversity is more complex in comparison to the nine

grounds, companies in Ireland should be aware of the extent of Diversity, so that it can be managed effectively. As many employers have begun to heavily embrace a diverse work force, this has allowed for levels of discrimination present within the workplace to be eliminated. Through the reduction of discrimination, this has also allowed for a greater competitive advantage for those organisations. A main competitive advantage has been, the ‘employer for choice’ aspect within the current employment market in Ireland (Nederveen Pieterse, Van Knippenberg, and Van Dierendonck, 2013).

Cultural diversity is also a popular area for organisations and businesses striving to improve their levels of equality. Equality as stated, is needed in order to eliminate any type of discrimination in a fast moving world. If levels of equality improve, this has positive effects and results, in relation to a fairer working environment for employees (Gold, et al, 2013). The topic of cultural diversity can also be seen as an issue within organisations that have yet to address such complexities. Issues are seen to arise especially within the areas of management (Witherspoon & Wohlert, 1996). If organisations choose to ignore such successes in which cultural diversity can provide when managed correctly, the development of that organisation will become stagnant. Such organisations will also become unable to with stand such requirements which are needed to greater their success within the current multi-cultural working environment presently (Witherspoon & Wohlert, 1996).

The first chapter of this study is allocated to outline the relevant literature in relation to cultural diversity. Such literature will allow observation and comprehension of the following theories and aspects which have aspired from diversity, in particular focusing on cultural diversity. The first chapter will also begin by discussing the definitions of diversity and culture, following with an understanding of how cultural diversity has emerged. After outlining the previous, the literature review chapter will explain, what organisational culture is and how organisations can use management techniques and theories, in order to improve their use of culture amongst staff. The below chapter, will also outline the use of management techniques in relation to both culture and the Irish employment equality acts (1998-2015). Due to this study focusing heavily on the area of cultural diversity, it is vital to create a full understanding of this area by also outlining inclusion within the workplace. Lastly within the literature review chapter, it will discuss both positive and negative effects, which cultural diversity creates amongst staff and organisations in Ireland.

As this is a study based on the topic of cultural diversity, such data will be collected through the use of Qualitative research methods, specifically semi-structured interviews. The reason as to why interviews have been chosen for this research, is that they allow the researcher to gain insight into peoples' reality of the topic of diversity. Allowing for this interactive experience, for both the researcher and interviewee, answers tend to be more descriptive which improves both the quantity and quality of the data collected (Grove, Burns, Ihlenfeld and Burns, 2007). Using people's opinions and narratives will also further the levels of discussion and comparison. As there will be a greater level of discussion this will allow the researcher to relate the data findings to the literature, which is presented within the first chapter. After the data findings, analysis and recommendations, this research will be completed with an overall conclusion in relation to cultural diversity within a public sector organisation in Dublin.

Chapter I

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this section is to evaluate and inspect the relevant literature and academic papers which are present findings and research related studies, which involve the area of cultural diversity. To both evaluate and compare the existing literature in relation to cultural diversity has great importance, to ensure a greater level of understanding, so that further effective research may be conducted. To review such literature also allows for effective levels of discussion involving the concept of cultural diversity.

Within this section it will outline diversity as a definition with a brief timeline, followed by explanations and analysis of the topic. Such analysis will include the discussion of stereotypes, involved with different cultures in Ireland. Another aspect of this chapter, will be the inspection of what initiatives have been undertaken by organisations to manage culture diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This literature review will finish with a short discussion of findings.

1.1 Diversity

Diversity is a label which is used to outline differences between humans. Such differences are in relation to culture, race, age, gender, sexuality, disabilities, social and economic status, peoples' religious belief, or any characteristics that are presented amongst humans (Volckmann, 2012). The main aim of this study is to focus on cultural diversity which in recent years has started to become more prominent due to the complexities of this fast paced processing world. These complexities have had both major and direct effects of our working environments and are also known to effect management skills, which will be also discussed further below (Gholizadeh, Keshtiaray and Renani, 2012).

1.1.1 Diversity Definition

Diversity is also a term used that can have multiple meanings. Diversity outlines the differences in human when they are being compared to their comparative. Many authors such as Seymen (2006) and Roosevelt (2010) have been seen to argue the true meaning of diversity. Such arguments involve, whether diversity is a phenomenon that has always been within our world, that this aspect of working life is not new but simply more relevant than previously (Seymen, 2006 and Roosevelt, 2010).

Diversity within the workplace is reported as all individuals being valued, acknowledged and respected on aspects which make them different from their other colleagues (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2010). These differences amongst employees can be attributes such as, individual working experiences or any of the traits discussed above (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2010).

Equality is a term, which is highly associated with diversity due to the level of discrimination that can be seen within the workplace. Equality is described as all people and employees of organisations having the same opportunities and rights as each other (Taylor, 2014). Equality within the workplace has also been discussed as the stepping stone towards greater diversity which is part of the global working economy (Taylor, 2014).

Accepting and enforcing diversity within the workplace creates a fairer and equal opportunity working environment for all (Gold, et al, 2013). By using diversity and creating those equal opportunities amongst employees, can also create better loyalty within an organisations (Gold, et al, 2013). Diversity also allows organisations to gain greater competitive advantage within the employment market. Organisations can gain such advantages as, diversity is seen to be a favourable attribute amongst job seekers when they are looking at companies they wish to work in (Gold, et al, 2013). Although research acknowledges how prevalent diversity is, it is also vital to understand and recognise where the topic has emerged from.

1.1.2 Origin of Diversity

Research conducted on Diversity mainly began in the late 1980's according to Janssens and Steyaert (2019). As research began, many authors started to agree and disagree on the topic of diversity, which resulted in diversity being distinguished by many authors as a phenomenon. In more recent years, there has been the creation of legislation which has mainly evolved from civil rights movements, both within Ireland and across the global. As stated such legislation which has been created, has caused a greater shift in the acceptance of diversity amongst workers and organisations. Such legislation within Ireland is the employment equality acts (1998-2015). The main aim of this act to allow for any employee which may be part of a minority group within the Irish workforce, to have the same opportunities as employees which are part of a majority group.

In Ireland today more people from all different cultures are becoming more present within the Irish workforce. Many people within Ireland are seen to be a part of many different cultures when in comparison to their colleagues. Due to the shift and growth in culture differences within the Irish workforce, many workers are beginning to question what changes and supports are being provided in relation to diversity by organisations. Such supports and initiatives will be outlined below with discussion on the effects these initiatives have on organisations.

1.2 Culture

The main aspect within diversity, that is at the heart of this research, is primarily focusing on is the aspect of Culture. In order to understand cultural diversity you need to understand the complexities involved. Trying to define culture, shows the extreme comparison with the word Diversity, as they both involve characteristics which separate one human from others (Iles and Zhang, 2013). Culture is a word which is usually discussed as an inclusive term as there are many meanings and attributes associated with it. Attributes and traits in relation to the aspect of culture usually relate to characteristics such as race, behaviour, morals and values. UNESCO (2017) has described culture as a very open and broad term, as it is associated with such characteristics that humans' process, also known as habits. Habits are seen to be a reoccurring processes in which humans adhere to or perform. In comparison with UNESCO (2017), Hofstede (1991) has explained that these social norms and habits evolve from life experiences, in which people inherit, also known as traditions that are present within different societies.

As stated above, culture outside of the working environment mainly relates to societal norms, in which a collective group people both follow and use within their day-to-day lives (Hofstede, 1991). Culture within organisations mainly describes as how a company would describe its' values, or their expectation of work ethics amongst employees (Maran and Soro, 2010). Culture within organisations can also be in association with the attitudes that are displayed by employees, which may also involve other terms in relation to both diversity and leadership (Maran and Soro, 2010). Employees within organisations that are seen to promote diversity and leadership, are able to gain or use diversity to their advantage within their working environment. Such advantages can be seen as, valuable learning working experiences, which employees both share and inherit from one another (Maran and Soro, 2010).

It is important to state that Culture varies between organisations, some organisational cultures primarily involve what management expect from their employees. These expectations are mainly associated with rewards, work ethic, levels of leadership, inclusion and diversity (Maran and Soro, 2010). It is up to organisations to design a culture best fit to their organisation. Having a culture best fit to the organisation, allows employers to manipulate their workers into believing and performing such values and norms in which employees are to complete and fulfil their working roles in relation to management's expectations (Maran and Soro, 2010).

1.2.1 Cultural Diversity

Cultural Diversity is an aspect in which organisations can pursue higher performance levels of employees (Witherspoon & Wohler, 1996). If cultural diversity is not managed effectively it can have negative effects on both employees and the completion of business objectives (Witherspoon & Wohler, 1996).

Globalisation is seen as the main driver of cultural diversity within the workplace in Ireland (Hill, 2011). Globalisation has the capability to influence diversity within the workplace through the use of technology, exchange of goods, currency and many other driving factors (Hill, 2011). Globalisation also involves a greater level of flexibility of and from workers. This flexibility involves employees travelling and communicating all over the world, within organisations, simply as part of their working life (Ramsey and Lorenz, 2016). As explained employees from all different cultural backgrounds are now becoming into greater contact with one another, both in work and personal life. With higher levels of interaction amongst employees, they too must learn how to best communicate and work with one another within the workplace (Cox, 1994). Managing the high levels of diversity within the workplace is advised in order to have an effective up-to-date organisation, so that such goals and organisational expectations will be achieved (Cox, 1994).

Other than the employment equality acts (1998-2015) briefly explained above, Ireland is also within the European Union (EU). Being an EU member of state, can also be seen as a driver of cultural diversity within Ireland. Being a member of the EU, both encourages and creates a higher level of diversity within Ireland which heavily involves culture. Higher levels of diversity are created as all EU Citizens have the freedom to live, work and buy property within any EU county of their choice (Directorate-General for Communication, European Commission, 2018).

As Ireland is also able to attract such Multi-National Corporations (MNC), such corporations are known to increase the levels of both employment and diversity within Ireland. This attraction from MNC's, to set up within Ireland was created by the low corporation tax offered to these large MNC's by the Irish government (IDA Ireland, 2019). These MNC's also influence greater globalisation and international trade amongst all countries around the world, in also which generates greater levels of diversity (Hill, 2011). With such greater levels of diversity coming to Ireland due to these large companies, it is important that these companies acknowledged, support and create initiatives for the high volumes of diversity.

1.3 Diversity Initiatives

Many companies across the global implement diversity initiatives in order to support employees who may fall into a disadvantaged category or group, in relation to their comparators (Leslie, 2019). Organisations can also benefit from the implementation of such initiatives, as it allows them to gain a greater competitive advantage which extends to the successes of organisational goals (Leslie, 2019). Initiatives are known for helping to improve the quality of working life, acceptance and experiences for all employees within an organisation (Leslie, 2019).

Unfortunately diversity initiatives can be looked upon as preferential treatment rather than positive discrimination or opportunity enhancement. Employers must also be conscious that such initiatives may not always be perceived well by employees (Windscheid, Bowes-Sperry, Mazei, and Morner, 2017). It is also important to state that all diversity initiatives may not be successful and this is mainly due to how such initiatives have been implemented within the organisation (Romanenko, 2012). If management are unable to provide their full support and commitment to training, achieving and implementing an inclusive culture, this will have unfortunate effect on the organisation as a whole (Romanenko, 2012).

An initiative that many organisations are believed to have adopted or implemented is diversity training to both management and staff. This type of training should be available to all employees and not a particular type of employee or a minority group within the organisation (Romanenko, 2012). Such training encourages the loss of both stereotypes and prejudice, to ensure that both management and staff are able to overcome any barriers that are present amongst their diverse team (Romanenko, 2012). Such diversity training

also encourages greater levels of diversity-related innovation. Such innovation is created, due to the higher levels of interaction, being achieved from the minority diverse group.

Such initiatives are also vital for both recruitment and development stages of employees within the workplace (Romanenko, 2012). Having staff undergo training for intercultural learning allows for further personal development amongst staff. Such development will allow them to have greater understandings of situations or problems between different cultures when they are working together (Meier, 2004). If employees are able to understand their colleagues better this should lead to a higher performing working environment (Yamazki and Kayes, 2004). Such performance levels and understanding is usually due to management being fully involved with all aspects of diversity within an organisation, which is further discussed below.

1.4 Cultural Diversity Management

Diversity is known to have been first identified within the United States, such theories and concepts and management styles which have been produced within the United States have been adopted and evolved by researchers all over the world (Nkomo, Bell, Roberts, Joshi and Thatcher, 2019). As spoken briefly above, diversity is known as a phenomenon, which is managed through diversity management techniques.

Diversity management mainly concentrates on practices within the organisation in terms of learning and development, recruitment and selection, all in which primarily understands and improves on the skills that are offered by the employees. Such aspects of diversity management also include what abilities both the organisations and employees can provide each other (Hollowell, 2007 cited in Romanenko, 2012).

With higher levels of diversity within the workplace, an approach to diversity management will need to be adopted by an organisation if they are to achieve the full potential from having a diverse working team (Langholz, 2014). Managing Diversity is a way in which an organisation can further their understanding of their employees. By better understanding their employees and their individual differences, it allows management to value their employees and staff to their fullest potential (Langholz, 2014). When organisations understand how to value their employees correctly they are able to create a higher sense of engagement amongst staff (Langholz, 2014). Such high levels of engagement amongst staff are also linked with greater job performance (Langholz, 2014). Essentially, diversity management will allow for an organisation to function and complete

its organisational goals to the most effective standards. Although management diversity can create engagement and higher satisfaction levels amongst staff, it was firstly created in order to tackle inequality and issues presented by management in the workplace (Kim and Park, 2017). Tackling such inequality through the use of management has positively created a healthy inclusive and fairer working environments for employees (Kim and Park, 2017). Below discusses a study that focused on how to better understand culture using both perspectives from a management and employee point of views.

1.4.1 Cross Culture Management

As this research is based on diversity in specifically involving the aspect culture, it is vital that both diversity management and cross cultural management are discussed. Diversity and cross cultural management are two main factors in leading organisations to manage their diverse teams more efficiently.

Cross Cultural Management began in the 1980's as both managers and employees began to travel the world for work to a greater extent when compared to early decades. As previously spoken about flexibility of workers, such flexibility caused difficulties from a managers' perspective when it comes to managing employees from different cultures (Dowling, Festing and Engle, 2013). Hofstede was one of the first researchers involved within the area of Cross-Cultural Management, who identified four dimensions of culture which are presented all over the world. Such dimensions describes, how different employees across the globe perform within their working life (Dowling, et al, 2013). Hofstede's Cross Cultural Management Study first identified four key factors within the different working societies and cultures, but in recent years these four dimensions have now expanded into six due to further research being conducted (Dowling, et al, 2013). These six dimensions are (1) Power Distance, (2) Individualism, (3) Masculinity, (4) Uncertainty Avoidance, (5) Long-Term Orientation and (6) Indulgence (Horowitz, 2018).

Cross Cultural Management is where both Managers and Employees are from different cultures or parts of the world and are working and communicating with one another in the workplace. Both managers and employees across the globe have agreed that both parties involved must be able to communicate in a sufficient and effective manner in order for organisational goals to be met (Tjosvold and Leung, 2016). Many managers use these six dimensions which have been stated above, in order to understand such employees or subordinates which are from a different country or culture then they are familiar with. Management within organisations use these dimensions as they give insights and

perspective as to what employees expect from management. This study has allowed management to also understand the perspective as to the type of work ethics in which those employees would normally present (Horowitz, 2018). Having such understandings of different cultures through the use of diversity or cross-cultural management, it heightens levels of inclusion amongst staff (Filia, 2018).

1.5 Inclusion in the Workplace

As the attributes previously associated with diversity are broadening, diversity is now viewed as nurturing the word of 'Inclusivity' (Bratton and Gold, 2017). Inclusion may also be known as social inclusion, which is including a person who may have a diverse characteristic from the majority group and yet, are still given the same opportunities (Filia, 2018). Inclusion within the workplace may be seen as, where employees feel as though they have authority to make the right decisions within their role. This sense of authority is due to the employee also feeling valued by the organisation due to the transfer of knowledge opportunities in which they have received from their working environment (Matz-Costa, Carapinha and Pitt-Catsouphes, 2012).

As stated, a diverse workforce further develops into an inclusive workforce. Such inclusivity and diversity needs to be managed so that so that people who are a part of a minority group feel as though they are being included or treated the same, as those who are a part of the majority group (Panicker, Agrawal and Khandelwal, 2017).

Previously when creating an inclusive or diverse working environment, the process was primarily involved within the recruitment stages of an organisation (Panicker, et al, 2017). Recently this understanding of diversity and inclusivity management has changed, as an inclusive and diverse working environment should also be promoted continuously throughout an organisation and all employees working lives (Panicker, et al, 2017). To ensure inclusion and diversity is accepted correctly, employers must also understand both positives and negatives associated within cultural diversity.

1.6 Positives and Negatives of Cultural Diversity within an Organisation

As previously spoken above, many organisations spend a substantial amount of time, management and finance in order to facilitate and support employees who are a part of a disadvantaged group through the use of diversity initiatives (Leslie, 2019). Such initiatives are enforced in order to create a positive environment for all to work in. As previously discussed by McKay, Avery and Morris (2009), cited in Leslie (2019), many

have failed in being able to measure the effectiveness and benefits of such initiatives. Although many organisations have failed to measure the effectiveness of these cultural or diversity initiatives, organisations have been able to measure the levels of performance amongst a multicultural teams. In relation to a multi-cultural teams within the workplace, the results have been positive, which means organisations heavily benefit with a culturally diversity team within an organisation. A main benefit for the organisation is that a multi-cultural team produce greater levels of performance (Leslie, 2019).

A positive aspect to cultural diversity within the workplace is that, if it is managed correctly, it results in high levels of motivation, engagement from employees. Cultural diversity also achieves a healthier working environment for employees within the organisation (Mustafa, 2013). Due to employees having greater levels of motivation and engagement, which has resulted from their multi-cultural working environment, innovation amongst staff is also heightened. With higher levels of innovation, this also affects greater satisfaction levels present amongst employees (Triguero-Sánchez, Peña-Vinces and Guillen, 2018).

A positive of Cultural Diversity also being present within organisations allows the organisations to gain a competitive advantage against other firms, as cultural diversity is seen as adding value to the organisation (Kim and Park, 2017). If an organisation accepts, support and strives for greater diversity, this will attract talent in the form of potential employees who want to work within their firm (Kim and Park, 2017). Having this competitive advantage or edge, will also reduce turnover rates as more current staff are more likely to want to keep working within the organisation (Kim and Park, 2017).

Although there is many positive aspects to cultural diversity within the workplace, it is also important to acknowledge the negative aspects that cultural diversity may have on employees and organisations. Above stated that multi-cultural working teams within organisations are likely to perform better, but this is not always the case. Such issues that are associated with high levels of cultural diversity within organisations can also have negative effects on group communication and interaction (Cox, 1994). Within humans their natural behaviour is to be attracted to other people in which are similar to oneself, such similarities involve demographics in age, gender and nationality (Cox, 1994). If humans struggle to find similar traits and demographics with others in which they communicate with in work, levels of cohesiveness tend to be much lower than those on a homogenous team (Lott and Lott, 1965 cited in Cox, 1994). Multi-cultural teams within

organisations only show higher performance levels when their communication levels are managed effectively (Cox, 1994). Unfortunately if levels of communication amongst the team are to drop due to cultural diversity, this also effects the morale level in staff. It is important that organisations prevent this from happening, as low morale within a team negatively affects turnover. Having a high turnover in staff also affects levels of experience presented within the organisation (Cox, 1994).

Such literature has identified both the positive and potential negatives of working within a multi-cultural environment. It is vital that organisations identify both positives and negatives in order to ensure a fairer, healthier and better sufficient working environment for all workers in employment within Ireland.

Conclusion

The aim of the literature review was to discuss and research relevant literature in relation to the areas of cultural diversity, diversity management and diversity initiatives within the workplace.

Within this chapter through the use of literature in relation to cultural diversity within the workplace, it is clear that many authors have differences in opinion about the topic. Although there is an evident differences of opinions, there is evident growth of research on cultural diversity which has heavily influenced the reduction of stereotypes and bias within the workplace. With the reduction of bias and negatives perceptions, this has allowed for a greater positive working environment for employees (Roksa, Kilgo, Trolian, Pascarella, Blaich and Wise, 2017).

Having identified such diversity and a rapid change in demographics within Ireland due to the assistance of legal requirements by Irish law. Creating the employment equality acts, putting a stop to discrimination, has been a vital stepping stone for the Irish employment market. Such legislation has encouraged the changing of perceptions, while ensuring an accepting approach to the diversity amongst workers and talent. Although there are laws within Ireland that promote the elimination of discrimination, there is very little evidence of extra initiatives that organisations use to promote diversity within the workplace, other than training. The organisations that have produced evidence of such initiatives have yet to answer how effective the initiatives are for the employees present within those organisations (Leslie, 2019).

Along with such initiatives, the importance of diversity, inclusivity and cross cultural management has also been highlighted by many researchers. Management of diversity needs to be better identified within Irish organisations to facilitate the shift in demographics in workers. It's important to state that if such driving factors in relation to diversity are not used it can have truly devastating effects on the communication, moral and turnover rates amongst employees (Cox, 1994).

Through the use of literature, it has allowed the researcher to gain in depth knowledge of the area of diversity in relation to culture which is needed for the completion of this research. The use of the literature discussed, has also allowed the researcher to create and expand on aims and objectives to this research. Within the next chapter it will discuss such aims and objectives in relation to the methodology research element to this study.

Chapter II

RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The previous chapter within this study evaluated the concept and known phenomenon of Cultural Diversity. Such aspects and concepts of cultural diversity displayed within the research above, have presented such wide knowledge and understanding which has allowed for further research to be conducted below.

The next stage of this research study is to prepare the methodology and establish the research questions. The establishment of methodology has been used for greater efficiency of data collection, which will be further discussed in chapter III. Such questions also presented below, will also help formulate a further understanding on cultural diversity. This research has a main aim to understand how to effectively manage and accept culture diversity. This aim is to also understand how diversity can be supported, in order to fully extend the use and effectiveness of such initiatives which result in a greater competitive advantage and healthier working environment.

2.1 Research Questions

The aim for this study is to create an understanding of the perception of diversity with specific focus on the management of cultural diversity within Ireland. This research will also aim in understanding the driving factors of cultural diversity management and what effects in which cultural diversity has on the company and its' employees. These questions and main aims which are presented below, also have sub-questions and aims. Such questions and sub-questions have also evolved from the main question of 'a qualitative investigation focusing on cultural diversity within a public sector organisation in Dublin'.

Questions will be presented though the use of semi-structured interviews that have been conducted with seven staff members who work within a public sector organisation in Dublin. The questions presented below have also been formed and created from the literature review which is presented in the previous chapter, with hopes in gaining a greater understanding within the area of culture diversity in Ireland.

Another aim of this research is to discover how organisations in Ireland promote cultural diversity or use it in order to create advantages. Following, another aim to this study is to understand how differences in culture amongst employees are managed within the

workplace in Ireland and how the various types of management styles have effect on organisations.

2.2. Research aims and objectives of the study

The aims of this research study is to:

- Understand the meaning of diversity within the workplace?
- Gain understanding into driving factors of cultural diversity and management within a selected public sector organisation in Ireland.
- To understand how and why diversity is managed.
- How working within a Multi-cultural environment effects employees.
- Understand what initiatives in which the selected public sector organisation in Ireland uses to promote healthy cultural differences in the work place and working environment.
- An attempt to discover the effects in which these initiatives, factors and management styles affect the organisation.
- Establish whether initiatives are visually effective through the use of HR professionals that will be involved within the interviews of this research.

As a result of the following aims and objectives above, the following below are also being considered:

- The importance of cultural diversity in a fast pace working environment within Ireland with brief discussion of the rest of the world for a further understanding of the concept.
- To inspect any other capabilities or advantages that an organisation can use to promote effective cultural diversity.
- What are the positives and negatives of working within a multi-cultural environment?
- To investigate and justify the ratio of different cultures within the workplace.
- To explain the ratio of cultural differences despite the initiatives and management skills used within the workplace to support differences in cultures.

These research aims spoken within this chapter are the main part and purpose of this research on cultural diversity. Using such aims, the researcher hopes to discover how an organisation in Ireland uses a particular type of management style or initiative in order to create an equal environment for employees. It is vital that even further examinations are conducted and presented on cultural diversity management styles and initiatives, in order to discover what affects in which they have on the workers within Ireland. Such literature which has been discussed within the previous chapter of this research, also shows that cultural diversity is a phenomenon that many organisations struggle to gain full advantage from.

This investigation and research study shows a side of cultural diversity through the use of a public sector organisation in Ireland to contribute to other similar types of research and studies, across the globe. Following, within the next chapter, it will discuss what research strategies, philosophy, data collection and data analysis in which have been conducted as part of this research.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOTOLGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of research outlines what research methodology is, and what type of research methodology has been selected as best suited to this type of research. In order to collect and analyse data effectively, there needs to be a systematic approach used for the benefit of this study (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). The researcher chose an approach with help from the “research onion” by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007). The research onion method allows for researchers to effectively process research methodology by tackling each layer required. The research onion method is also used in order to assure that all data collected correlates with the research (Saunders, et al, 2007). This “research onion” will be discussed further, deepening in to its layers within the research philosophy section of this chapter (Saunders, et al, 2007). Secondly, this chapter will help outline what method was used in order to create findings for this investigation. Below will also discuss the strategy and design in relation to how all data was collected and managed in order to provide a fair and ethical analysis.

3.2 Methodology outlined

The main purpose to any research is to answer any questions in which previous literature has unanswered. Within the literature review chapter, it was discovered that there are no studies which have been conducted within this specific public sector organisation in relation to culture or diversity. As stated, the objects within this research is to understand what cultural diversity is within a public sector organisation and how management and employees are effected. Through the use of the objectives above, it is important that the right methodology is used in order to receive a specific standard of data.

There are two approaches mainly used within research methodology, and they are qualitative and quantitative research methods. As an aim to this research is to identify what culture diversity is within Ireland, the use of words and sentences will be needed (Blumberg, Donald and Pamela, 2005). As this type of research will also need peoples’ opinions, in the form of narratives, a qualitative approach has been undertaken by the researcher (Blumberg, et al, 2005). A qualitative method of research, in the form of semi-structured interviews have been conducted with seven HR professionals working within a public sector organisation as the only method of data collection for this research. This

type of research method is highly appropriate for the data collection of this research. It is deemed appropriate, due to the specific type of data which is needed to optimise the quality of results which will be presented as findings.

Following, this chapter will also explain the system and strategy of data collection, along with any limitations in terms of reliability, ethics and sample population, involved within the semi-structured interviews for this research.

3.3 Research Philosophy

There are four areas of research philosophy which have been identified by Mkansi and Acheampong (2012). The four areas are ‘ontology, epistemology and axiology’ as well as the struggles people face when trying to discover if quantitative or qualitative or mixed methods should be used for data collection (Mkansi and Acheampong, 2012, p132). As this study aims to gain perspective of the employees’ reality in relation to cultural diversity, this means a qualitative ontology approach was also used. Ontology is described as what really exist, which is known as the nature of reality (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, p.127).

Although the researcher will be using semi-structured interviews, is it not uncommon the qualitative research methods are more structured and direct (Blumberg, et al, 2005). The researcher understood that semi-structured interviews would allow the knowledge, which is being transferred between the interviewer and interviewee to be more flexible. Having a more flexible interview this would allow for both expected and unexpected themes to occur within the interviews. Later such themes will be identified and presented in an orderly fashion. Below will explain as to how to effectively collect and understand the data also known as findings for the use of this research.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

In terms of data collection for this research study, both primary and secondary data collection have been carried out, conducted and analysed. These methods have been chosen as they are regarded as appropriate in consideration with the topic studied of cultural diversity within a public sector organisation. This public sector organisation involved, has also agreed in conducting semi-structured interviews as the main form of data collection methods, other to the secondary sourcing data collection used by the researcher. The methodology that will be applied to this qualitative study has been chosen

in order to acquire and obtain information about this public sector organisation and its relations and understandings to culture, diversity and both combined.

The secondary data will be collected through the use of other resources previously involved in similar literature such as books, articles and peer-reviewed sources which have been highlighted and discussed within the literature review chapter of this research. The use of this literature has enabled the researcher to process, create and challenge the themes and problematic aspects of managing diversity and cultural diversity within a public sector organisation in Dublin.

3.4.1 Interviews

The primary data methodology chosen for this research will be inductive qualitative methods in the form of one-to-one semi-structured interviews which will be conducted with seven members of staff who are HR professionals within a public sector organisation. This method was deemed to be most appropriate by both the HR department and by the researcher as an agreement, in which they both believed the researcher would most benefit from, as the data collected would be in the form of sentences and narratives from the sample population. The questions within the interviews which have been conducted, have been based firstly on examining the employees' perceptions of Diversity in order to question further the understanding of how cultural diversity is managed within the organisation. Secondly such questions will be further defined into the more specific area of cultural diversity and inclusion within the workplace. All findings from such interviews will be stated below in the next chapter.

As the research method of semi-structured interviews have been chosen for this research, such interviews will be exploring the perceptions and understandings of multi-cultural diversity management within a public sector organisation in Dublin (Horn, 2009). The reason as to why the interviews will be semi-structured is that the area of diversity within any organisation can be defined specifically to that firm. This researcher also wants to examine such driving factors that the firm have created in order to better support cultural diversity within the workplace with particular focus on diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Using the method of semi-structured interviews also encouraged to eliminate any bias which may occurred within this research. Such data that will be collected from these interviews will be analysed through the use of coding in order to distinguish the

reoccurring themes within the data. After all themes have been identified, the findings will be discussed and elaborated within the next chapter.

Another reason as to why such questions within the interviews will be semi-structured is that both the interviewer and the interviewee can stay on the topic of conversation yet have a free flow of information. Creating a free flow of information will also help to prevent any awkwardness which may be associated or present within the interview. Such specific information and data that will provide through the use of semi-structured interviews would not have been as intensive or nutritious as if surveys were used for this type research involving both culture and diversity (Horn, 2009). Although this data may be nutritious it is vital to distinguish the reliability, validity and limitations also associated with the data.

3.5 Reliability, Validity and Limitations of Data

Walliman (2006) discusses that reliability and validity is vital when conducting research. Reliability has been defined as, when many authors conduct the same or similar research and the same answers, percentages or similar outcomes have been provided when the data has been collected (Rugg and Petre, 2007). The researcher of this study can acknowledge that all information provided through the use of interviews have been fully independent. The researcher can also confirm that all secondary data collected which is presented in the literature review have also come from a reliable source.

In relation to reliability, validity is how you are to measure your quality of your research (Rugg and Petre, 2007). The researcher can also confirm that the literature in which has been studied and reviewed has allowed for a stronger theoretical background. Through the use of reliable literature, this has also allowed the researcher to create a strong design for greater evaluation and measurement of the research question.

A limitation within this method of data collection is the behaviour that was presented by the participants within the interview. The researcher was concerned with the reaction of such employees and participants, as interviews can be seen to be embarrassing or intrusive. The researcher understood that it is important to make the interviewee or participants feel calm and ready (Richardson, Stephen, Dohrenwend, Snell and Kelin, 1965).

A second limitation within this data collection is due to the company and participants wanting to remain confidential. Confidentiality is also a main part of the interviews, as

all participants were ensured at the start of the interview that all information will be confidential. Confidentiality is needed as data supplied by the participants have been used within the findings of this research but interviewees names and the organisation they work for will remain unknown. This research will also ensure that all aspects which involved the organisations name, along with all participants, will be coded. Code names were assigned in order to keep all personal names private, but allows the researcher to be able to keep track of this information in which have been provided through the use of the interviews. Such codes will mainly be for the benefit of the researcher so that data can be separated more efficiently and within a timely manner.

Thirdly, a limitation within this research may also be the number of participants within the interviews as the researcher only gained access to one department within the organisation which is the HR department and such department only have seven people willing to take interviews. If the researcher gained more participants for this, possibly allowing for a mixed methods approach, the level of information would've been even greater again, compared to what has been collected.

A last limitation for this research was due to the timeframe that was abided by in order to complete the dissertation on schedule. All participants involved within this research, also had fixed deadlines and were only available at a particular times throughout the research. This timeframe has also contributed to the amount of people involved within the sample population, narrowing it down to seven employees/participants. Again, the timeframe in which the research was conducted, effected the use of a pilot study being conducted.

As seven employees from the HR department have been the population within this research, both this sample size and a population was not picked at random. The seven employees were also all woman between the ages of 22-29, who came from either Ireland or India. As the participants were not selected at random, the data collected is not a representative. However, the information which has been collected and provided should not be seen as unimportant or used to underestimate the power of qualitative research methods (Blumberg, et al, 2005).

3.6 Development and Structure of the Interview and Interview Questions and Design

Due to the method of data collection being interviews, the interviewer needed to prepare a high level of questioning in order to get as much knowledge on the topic as possible. Another aspect in which the Interviewer needed to prepare is how the questions were

asked and the body language presented to the interviewees' by the researcher (Horn, 2009). The researcher/interviewer also needed to provide and conduct extensive preparation for the interviews as the company only had a timeframe to participate within interviews preventing the use of a pilot study.

Although the research conducted may present limitations, it was of importance for the researcher to also acknowledge if there were any ethical issues also associated with the research.

3.7 Ethical Issues and Considerations

There is also many ethical aspects to this research and data collection methods, and given the nature of cultural diversity it is important that this research was not bias to stereotypes (Collis & Hussey, 2003). As this research is taking into consideration the culture of employees, any unethical comments or sentences have not be used and have been ignored. It is important to state that they researcher has been granted permission to conduct research but that the data should not be identifiable or associated with the company and is strictly researched for such purpose of research project only.

A main ethical issues which was heavily focused on is the area of data protection. All participants that have been involved within this research have been ensured that all information collected is confidential. As the data is confidential, this means that all interviewees involved within the research will not be able to be tracked to an individual or organisation which is also for data protection purposes.

Ensuring all ethical issues have been discussed both within the methodology chapter of this research and with participants in the study, interviews took place with a greater level of ease. Within the next chapter of this research, will present and evaluate the data findings which have evolved from the semi-structured interviews discussed above.

Chapter IV

DATA FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Within this chapter the researcher will discuss and present the data collected and research findings through the use of semi-structured interviews with seven employees working within a Human Resource Department of a public sector organisation.

4.1 Introduction

The researcher visited a public sector organisations Human Resource department and queried if there was any employees or HR professionals there willing to participate within a semi-structured interview involving cultural diversity for this research. As it is one of the largest healthcare public sector organisations in Ireland, the researcher was intrigued to understand their views and levels of cultural diversity. Due to the population within the department, the researcher was limited as only one gender (female), willing to participate. Below there is a table which represents the demographics of the interview participants. Interviews were held on the 5th, 6th and 7th of August 2019.

	Age	Type of Industry	Position	Length of Service	Nationality
Participant 1	24	Human Resources	HR Assistant (Grade 3)	1 year	Irish
Participant 2	23	Human Resources	HR Assistant (Grade 3)	1 year	Indian
Participant 3	29	Human Resources	HR Assistant (Grade 3)	4 months	Irish
Participant 4	22	Human Resources	HR Assistant (Grade 3)	1 year	Indian
Participant 5	26	Human Resources	HR Administrator (Grade 4)	5 years+	Irish
Participant 6	27	Human Resources	HR Administrator (Grade 4)	4 years+	Irish
Participant 7	28	Human Resources	HR Executive (Grade 5)	5 years+	Irish

Table 1: Demographic and Employment details of interviewees.

4.2 Analysis

In order to effectively analyse the interview data, a thematic approach was adopted by the researcher. Each interview was transcribed, each transcript was then analysed in order to distinguish if there were any reoccurring themes throughout. There was three reoccurring themes which involved various aspects of diversity, culture, cultural diversity, and diversity management and diversity initiatives. The analysis process focused on making connections with the different themes presented within the data. This assisted in creating a full understanding of the opinions from the interviewees. There were both similar and contrasting opinions given throughout the interviewing process which will be discussed in depth below.

4.3 Semi-Structured Interview Findings

There was three main themes which have emerged from the data collection process through the use of semi-structured interviews. These three themes were, ‘the meaning of diversity in relation to Culture’, ‘Cultural Diversity Management’ and ‘Cultural Diversity Initiatives’. All three themes have been developed through a number of dependant aspects involved in Cultural Diversity.

Based on the findings obtained from the interviews with the seven employees of a public sector organisation who had worked there between 4 months and over five years, this gave an insight in relation to the information gathered and their views of the topic of cultural diversity. All seven employees where in the position to provide the researcher with extremely useful knowledge on how the organisation has approached or adapted to fit the current employment market demands. This information was especially useful as all participants worked within the HR Department of a public sector organisation in Dublin.

4.3.1 The meaning of Diversity in relation to Culture

The first and most prevalent theme throughout the interviews was ‘The meaning of Diversity in relation to Culture’. All interview participants were able to confirm to the researcher that they knew and had an understanding of the complexities to both culture and diversity. Although all participants could confirm what both topics were, there was a mixed opinion about the amount of diversity both within the HR team and the organisation as a whole. Some participants stated that there were employees, other than themselves, who presented many different diverse traits including culture. Other participants argued that the levels of cultural diversity within the organisation were very low and that they do not encounter much diversity within their day-to-day working lives.

“There are people who are of many different genders, ages, race, em but, that would really be it. I wouldn’t think it’s mad and have loads diversity.” - Participant 5.

“.. In a working environment...I don’t really encounter a lot (of Diversity).”- Participant 3.

Some argued that the level of diversity was not as low as others made it out to be, relating it to other organisations within Ireland. Some interviewees further acknowledged the cultural diversity stating that the culture balance is noticeable from the day they started

within the organisation, while making it clear that all cultures are able to work really well together.

“I mean any work place for that matter, especially now ‘cause it’s so globally accessible to go anywhere you want now. So like it’s (Cultural Diversity) present everywhere and yeah, it’s (Cultural Diversity) present where I currently work.” - Participant 4.

Although the majority of participants agreed that there was not much diversity involving culture within their working environment they all agreed that the cultural diversity currently presented amongst staff had a positive effect on their working lives. Participants stated they were able to learn, develop and problem solve better, due to the amount of ideas and work ethics presented from employees with a cultural diverse background. The interviewees also discussed that such developments, allowed working life to improve amongst the teams. Having cultural diversity also has allowed employees perceptions to change allowing bias and stereotypes to be reduced and further eliminated. Participants also identified that working with more than one culture has also improved their social life as they now have a better understanding and that they have more acceptance and are more mindful towards cultures which may be different to their own.

“I suppose it (Working with other who present diverse cultures) just broadens your mind and kinda your tolerance and acceptance for people ... you might have misconceptions.... and you won't really know if that's really the case, until you until you work closely with somebody (of a different culture).” - Participant 1.

Within the above paragraphs, there are many positives in which have been involved with Cultural Diversity. It is important to highlight that there are also negatives, which the participants were able to confirm within the interview. Participants acknowledged that communication can be an issue between different cultures. As participants have been able to identify positives and negatives of working within a multi-cultural environment, they understood that cultural diversity is needed within the workplace to improve morale and work ethics of staff.

“I've been brought up to do things a certain way ... people may believe that the way they do things is better than the way you do things, em they might not really understand your way of thinking, or thought process.... So that's bound to bring up some problems or some disagreements. But I do think that overall, it's better to do that, to have more of a diverse group of people (within the workplace)”- Participant 3.

When conducting the interviews the researcher also wanted to determine a driving factor of cultural diversity. As the participants could not confirm any supporting factors or high levels of diversity, the researcher questioned as to why cultural diversity was not as relevant within this public sector organisation, as was expected. Unfortunately, the participants identified that there was a noticeable ratio amongst different cultures. When questioned on why they believed there was such a ratio difference, they responded with answers surrounding the topic and issue of geographical location. They also felt as though there was not enough diverse cultures applying for the roles and that language barriers also affected success of applicants.

“Maybe there isn't as many people from different cultures applying for the roles.... it's very difficult for anyone coming from a different culture, different background ... if there's a language barrier, it's very, very difficult, because communication is so important, no matter what job you're doing.” - Participant 3.

The researcher was intrigued with the opinions of the participants and their understandings as to why they believed employees who were culturally diverse were not attracted to work within this public sector organisation. This furthered the researcher's questioning into the level of initiatives and factors that the organisations is using to tackle such barriers within recruitment and development of staff, which will be further evaluated below.

4.3.2 Culture Diversity Management

The second noticeable theme amongst the data was the area of 'Cultural Diversity Management'. Within the semi-structured interviews, all participants were questioned on the management techniques in which they have used or what may have been used by their managers in relation to cultural diversity. Many stated that they were not aware of any management techniques within the area of cultural diversity. Two participants involved, expanded and expressed their opinions of diversity management techniques and to an extent disagreed that diversity management techniques should be used on employees. One of the participants discussed that if management techniques were used and people were managed differently that this might appear as discrimination. The researcher found this opinion to be conflicting, negative and unusual in relation to what other literature and studies had presented on the area of cultural diversity management.

“If you approach it differently then it’s kinda like a bias... Treat everyone the same... there should be no discrimination on that sense”- Participant 4.

Although there was no evidence of diversity management, it was evident that all of the participants who encountered cultural diversity within the workplace, have admitted in giving special treatment to employees, who were not of Irish Decent. This was mainly used and mostly evident within the interview conducted with participant 7, whose role managed the success of the first twelve weeks of employment for any overseas employees.

“(With employees coming from other countries) it’s kind of a slower, and more kind of nurturing, maybe way, to help them ease and get over the culture shock.”- Participant 7.

Due to the lack of diversity management data present, this gave the researcher an opportunity to further investigate the area of ‘Cultural Diversity Initiatives’.

4.3.3 Cultural Diversity Initiatives

The last theme in which has present within the semi-structured interviews surrounded the area of Cultural Diversity Initiatives. When participants were interviewed on this area, the researcher’s aim was to discover what initiatives were used in order to promote cultural diversity and inclusion, within the workplace apart from using the employment equality acts (1998-2015). Other than the discussion above about the nurturing treatment of overseas staff by one member being interviewed, there was a total lack of diversity initiatives present within the organisation. A participant has identified the lack of diversity initiative due to a total lack of funding available within the public sector organisation. As there was no current diversity initiatives present within the organisation, participants were unable to discuss what effects they would or could have had. Although there weren’t any current initiatives, participants were questions on what they believed the organisation would gain, if they were to implement initiatives within the organisation. Participants recognised that the organisation would benefit greatly if such initiative were to be implemented. They also recognised that the areas in which would improve would be in terms of communication, management, inclusion, awareness, and acceptance, while also being able to improve morale of employees throughout the organisation.

4.4 DISCUSSION

Below will demonstrate the implications, comparisons and unusual themes presented within the above data.

Having conflicting data in relation to the opinions of cultural diversity within the public sector organisation, this allowed the researcher to discuss the level of awareness in relation to diversity. This level of awareness needs to be further addressed as staff should be able to positively identify diversity within their organisation. Awareness is needed so that employees will be able to gain a greater understanding of their colleagues in order to form a rationale to the different ways of communication and attitudes towards work (Cox 1994).

Cultural Diversity is evident throughout the globe, both as a topic and phenomenon. This means that cultural diversity is more likely to be present and evident within the public sector organisation involved within this research (Ramsey and Lorenz, 2016). Employees stating that they didn't counter much diversity within the workplace was unusual for the researcher, as it was conflicting with both literature stating that cultural diversity is so prevalent within Ireland.

Within the findings it was also unusual that although many researchers have found many reasons for the rise of cultural diversity within organisations through the use of globalisation, this organisation had somewhat failed to identify with such reasons improving the levels of diversity (Hill, 2011). Conflicting with current literature, some participants within the interview firmly believed that cultural diversity was not evolving within the organisation they worked for. This presented a gap within the literature involving the barriers to cultural diversity presented within Ireland.

There has also been both positives and negatives identified and displayed within the data findings above. For some of the participants that did identify that there was diversity present within their working lives, they were unable to comment or make clear whether such diversity effected their motivation or engagement levels that they presented within the workplace. This conflicts with the research conducted by Mustafa (2013), which stated such aspects involving motivation and engagement, result from employees working within a multi-cultural environment. Although the employees may not have felt motivation from their culturally diverse colleagues, they did feel as though their personal development levels improved, especially within the area of problem solving. This

problem solving aspect was identified by Triguero-Sánchez, et al (2018), which can also be identified as innovation, in which participants could relate with. As analysed within the literature review, innovation and problem solving commonly leads to improvement for employees that are working amongst a multi-cultural team (Triguero-Sánchez, et al, 2018). Such literature also extended this statement saying that multi-cultural teams show greater levels of innovation when compared to a homogenous team (Triguero-Sánchez, et al, 2018).

In relation to Cultural Diversity or Diversity Management, it was striking that the employees did not desire to alter their management styles or the styles of their managers in relation to diversity. This is worrying to the researcher as different management and communication styles are needed. Due to the various and contrasting aspects that both management and communication have in relation to one another evidently in the workplace (Hofstede, 1991). Many other studies on this area of cultural diversity management would argue that management styles and communication should be best fit to each individual due to character or individual diversity. Within the literature above, involving Hofstede (1991), it discusses the main reasons as to why management styles change, through the use of cross-cultural management, due to the evident differences in work ethics from one country to another. Due to the lack of management techniques within this public sector organisation, this would also have a negative effect on inclusion levels amongst staff within the organisation (Filia, 2018).

Unfortunately due to the findings in relation to the lack of diversity management within this organisation, it may be the reason as to why staff morale is not as high as compared to employees in firms in which have diversity management tactics. Levels of morale may be linked with the lack of cultural diversity management as people may not feel full included (Panicker, et al, 2017). If employees feel as though they are not being completely valued by either their manager, employer or colleagues, they may feel as though there is a lack of equality and are less like to be highly engaged at work (Langholz, 2014). Such lack of diversity management could be contributing to the issue with communication and disengagement levels amongst staff within the workplace. This also has a negative knock-on effect when trying to reach organisational goals (Tjosvold and Leung, 2016).

Within this research, participants have made it clear that there is a lack of diversity related initiatives. As stated within the literature review, Leslie (2019) explained that when diversity initiatives are implemented within an organisation, it creates a competitive

advantage which many organisations use when recruiting the best talent for their organisation. In relation to the lack of diversity and diversity initiatives, this could be the result as to why many potential employees are not attracted to work within this public sector organisation. If this organisation were to implement a diversity initiative it would enhance their talent pool of potential employees, when recruiting talent for the organisation. Attracting high volumes of greater talent also results in improving current employees work experiences, as performance, innovation and efficiency levels rise (Leslie, 2019). Diversity initiatives also give the encouragement and confidence that employees need within organisations to improve their level of communication and performance within a multi-cultural environment (Yamazaki and Kayes, 2004). Due to initiatives not being available to all employees within the organisation, may be a feature of the issues in relation to communication presented within the data findings.

The main implication that was discovered when conducting the semi-structured interviews was that the researcher had not prepared for participants to state that the public sector organisation in which they worked, had not implemented any sort of initiative or management training to deal with cultural diversity. Due to participants not being able to identify what affect diversity had, on their working lives, their management skills or their levels of acceptance towards diversity, this majorly limited the amount of creative data collected. Unfortunately the researcher was left dissatisfied with the standard and amount of data collected from the seven participants, as the researcher expected more diversity nutritious data findings. Although data did not provide the effect in which diversity has on employees when present within the organisation, the researcher did discover the effects in which a lack of diversity had on both an organisation and its employees.

Outlined below are the recommendations in which the researcher would implement to further the use of cultural diversity for the benefit of both the organisation and its employees. It is also important to highlight that within the interviews conducted with participants, the researcher also asked the participants what they would recommend to improve or implement within their organisation to better support diversity. By questioning the participants on what they would recommended for the organisation, it also enhanced and cemented what recommendations the researcher believed would fit best and be implemented with pride into the organisation, if to be used within the future.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the data findings and analysis above which have been presented through the use of semi-structured interviews, the main recommendation in which the researcher believes would help this public sector organisation, would be training in relation to culture and diversity for all employees. The researcher has made this recommendation as the lack of training within the area of cultural diversity is having a negative effect on cultural awareness within the public sector organisation.

Cultural Diversity Awareness training for this organisation, is an aspect of the organisation which needs improvement. The organisation could use this cultural awareness training when considering what will be needed in terms of drafting policies for recruiting, selecting, performance management, training and development in relation to the area of cultural diversity. Cultural Awareness Training, as stated within the literature review, will both reduce any bias amongst staff while further developing their skills. If staff have a greater amount of skills for their roles, this will lead to increased higher performance levels within the organisation. Providing training to staff will allow for greater understanding and respect for different cultures amongst teams. With staff having greater understanding of their colleagues this will allow for barriers of communication to be broken down, which will also create high levels of cohesiveness amongst teams.

Managers will also be supported through the use of cultural awareness training being implemented throughout the organisation. As managers will be better supported, they will be able to focus on how to better reward diversity amongst their teams. If support is given to employees, this firm will reduce the levels of stereotypes amongst staff, while creating greater levels of innovation and improve their competitive advantage (Yamazki and Kayes, 2004).

As the organisation is lacking cultural diversity training and initiatives, along with no diversity support for managers or rewards or recognition for staff, the researcher believes that in order to complete all initiatives there would be a significantly large time-line which may involve a medium-term time frame. Due to the length of time which may be required, the researcher recommends that a diversity/inclusion officer or advisor be recruited at an average cost €40,000-€80,000 per annum depending on level of experience. Having a diversity officer as part of the HR team, the officer would also be able to provide the right support to managers and employees when faced with issues in relation to the area of cultural diversity. With the appointment of a Diversity officer, although there will be an

additional cost for the company, the investment will lead to greater awareness in the area of cultural diversity. As Kim and Park (2017) stated, by investing in cultural diversity is adding value in more ways than one to an organisation. By investing €40,000-€80,000, will help lower the turnover rate amongst staff, improve work-life balance, staff morale, performance and communication while creating an open, healthy and equal working environment for all.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The main objective to this research was to achieve a greater level of understanding of the effects of the area of cultural diversity within the workplace. The researcher was very eager to investigate the shift towards greater levels of diversity within the workplace.

Within the literature associated with cultural diversity it was clear that it is still seen as a phenomenon, surrounded with many issues and barriers to it within the workplace (Seymen, 2006 and Roosevelt, 2010). In comparison to the issues associated with cultural diversity, the seven employees of a public sector organisation, have confirmed that there are organisations within Ireland struggling with cultural diversity.

However, such issues and barriers will be eliminated through the use of investment, time and management (Romanenko, 2012). Organisations that have begun to tackle such barriers and creating awareness of cultural diversity within the workplace have discovered the enhancement of communication amongst staff (Meier, 2004). Along with awareness of diversity, organisations should encourage their management and employees to set diversity objectives and targets, these targets will allow for heighten acceptance and tolerance for cultural diversity within the workplace (Leslie, 2019). Giving support to managers in relation to managing diversity, will help promote how organisations truly value the diversity present amongst their employees (Romanenko, 2012). These initiatives will be a stepping stone towards better corporate governance, a better public image and avoidance of any costly litigation in which the organisation and its employees will heavily benefit from.

Having identified such diversity within Ireland along with rapid change in demographics, and legal requirements by law, this has resulted in a major focus within the area of discrimination in the workplace. With eliminating areas of discrimination, it has allowed for the Irish employment market to gain an accepting approach to the diversity present within its environment and workers. Research of current literature allowed the researcher

to understand the broad depth of diversity and culture within the workplace and has found that many studies surrounding diversity have either gender or ethnicity at the heart of the study.

As the researcher was able to understand the area of cultural diversity, it allowed the researcher to focus on what research they felt was needed to be conducted further. The researcher wanted to focus heavily on the effects in which cultural diversity had on organisations and employees within Ireland, by effectively using semi-structured qualitative data collection methods.

After the data was collected, all information was transcribed and coded. After the coding of the transcripts, the researcher felt it was important to familiarize themselves with the data in order to discover which common themes were presented. The researcher soon discovered that there was a lot of data which conflicted with such literature in relation to cultural diversity. With seven staff members of a public sector organisation being in conflict as to how they identify and deal with diversity was concerning for the researcher. It is clear that not enough work is being conducted within the areas of equality, diversity or inclusion within this public sector organisation.

Although the researcher was somewhat dissatisfied with the data that was collected, it allowed the researcher to efficiently provide useful recommendations for the organisation. This also allowed the researcher to outline below what they would consider if they were to conduct the same level of research again.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The subject of cultural diversity is continuing to evolve and advance both within Ireland and throughout the world. Within this study, the researcher investigated the meaning, presence, management and initiatives of cultural diversity within a public sector organisation in Dublin. This research has highlighted the need for further investment in the area of cultural diversity within the Irish Employment Market in relation to:

- How Management and Employers of organisations help promote diversity in a positive open manner to their employees and staff.
- How to implement and use effective diversity initiatives, while understanding that the area of diversity may be sensitive and what complications may evolve from such diversity initiatives.

- To understand the barriers of having greater cultural diversity within Ireland.

Furthermore, by using mixed methods as the research methodology within further studies in order to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data. This would ensure a greater amount of knowledge into cultural diversity to advance current implications in relation to the phenomenon.

CIPD PERSONAL REFLECTION AND LEARNING EXPERIENCE STATEMENT.

I decided that I wanted to do my MA in HRM when I was both working part-time and had finished my BA in Human Resource Management in the National College of Ireland. After putting great effort and hard work in to my three year degree, I decided that I should continue to push ahead with another year to complete another award. Although I have sacrificed many things throughout the last 4 years, I am so utterly proud to be able to say that by the age of 21, I will have both a degree and a masters awards in Human Resource Management.

This research was an extremely hard, challenging and testing process. I found it difficult to choose a topic in which I wanted to do but once I had made my decision it was a relief and I thoroughly enjoyed conducting so much research within the area of cultural diversity. I would like to see the area of cultural diversity be greater adopted by all organisations, so that stereotypes and discrimination will simply become an element of the past. I believe there is so much learn within the area of cultural diversity which both organisations and people could benefit greatly all over the world.

I believe that the experience and skills from this MA in HRM specifically, in which I have gained, will be something that will continue to push and motivate me both within my personal and working life for many years to come.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Consent Form

Researcher name: Rebecca Clifford

National College of Ireland

I am invited to participate in this research project which is being carried out as part of the MA in Human Resource Management in the National College of Ireland. My participation is voluntary. Even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time without any consequences.

The study is designed to investigate perspectives of cultural diversity in a public sector organisation. If I agree to participate, this will involve me engaging in an individual semi-structured interview that will be recorded and coded. I may also refuse to answer any questions I do not want to answer.

Any information or data which is obtained from me during this research will be treated with great confidentiality. Research participants will be anonymised throughout the study – they will not be identified by name and instead will be assigned a randomised code. The organisation's name will not be identified or referred to in the research. Audio recordings will be stored on an encrypted hard drive and any data that is no longer required will be destroyed or erased in a safe and secure way.

If I have any questions about this research I can ask the researcher.

Signature of research participant

I understand what is involved in this research and I agree to participate in the study. I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher Date

Appendix B

This is the email in which all participants' received after they confirmed via face-to-face and signed the consent form:

Dear Sir/Madam/Other,

Thank you for agreeing in participating in interviews for my thesis research. If you wish to withdraw at any time I would ask you to let me know as far in advance as possible.

This email is also a reminder that all data collected within the interview process will be fully confidential. Please contact me either by phone or email if you have any further questions.

Many thanks with kind regards,

Rebecca Clifford.

Appendix C

Due to the research method of semi-structure interviews being used as part of the research. Below find the questions in which were used as a guideline to form a basis of the semi-structured interviews. Transcripts can be obtained if requested.

Research Semi-Structured Interview Questions (Not all questions were present within all interviews conducted):

1. What is diversity?
2. Do you know what diversity is?
3. Do you know where diversity where the topic of diversity came from?
4. Have you ever heard of any theories around diversity?
5. Is that any signs of diversity within your organization that you work in?
6. Would you say there are people that have different religions to you, maybe different ethnicity to you, and different ages?
7. Would you say, their experiences that they've gone through have now affected your experience and your working life?
8. Can you like describe what culture is to you?
9. What is your understanding of cultural diversity within the workplace?
10. Are there any driving factors towards cultural diversity within your organisation?

11. So would you say that culture and diversity would be highly linked together within the organization that you work in?
12. Can you outline any initiatives or support that are involved with Diversity?
13. Can you explain any diversity management techniques that have been used on you, or that would be used within the organization?
14. So you would agree that there should be other management styles used due to all the different cultures?
15. Is the culture within the organization, affecting how different cultures work together?
16. Is there any other positives that you can see from different cultures working together?
17. Can you identify with any negatives with working in a multicultural environment?
18. What affects does working within a multi-cultural working environment have on you?
19. Is there any signs of inclusion within your organization? If so, can you please explain what they are and how they affect you?
20. Is there anything you would advise your organisation to do to better support cultural diversity?
21. Do you believe cultural diversity is needed within the workplace? And why?
22. What advantages do you think your organisation could gain if certain initiatives were put in place to better support diversity?
23. When you speak about diversity in work, does it come across negative?
24. Does a multicultural environment affect how well you communicate?
25. Is there a noticeable difference in ratio between different cultures within your organisation?
26. Can you example as to why you think there is such a ratio?
27. Is there anything else you would like to add in terms of cultural diversity for this interview?

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

EU- European Union

HR- Human Resources

HRM- Human Resource Management

MNC- Multi-National Corporation