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# The challenges of diversity management in the social and healthcare sector

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<b>Abstract</b>	
<p>The purpose of this thesis is to discuss about the different factors affecting the management when it comes to diversity management in the social and health sector and how employee selection functions. The current situation has changed a lot and the awareness in the world regarding diversity management in the workplace is increasing and people are getting more information of it. The economic views have been also changing since companies are becoming more global and diversity is increasing, especially in the global companies. People are no longer living and working in an insular marketplace but instead the marketplace is changing a lot. The goal of this thesis is to find and point out different factors that are affecting the line-managers work in the social and healthcare sector, how they can be improved and what could be researched in the future.</p> <p>The research questions are: What are the challenges of workforce diversity in organizations from a front-line managerial view? What management can do to support an employee with a different cultural background in organizations? What are the benefits that a diverse working environment will bring to the working community in a front-line managerial view?</p>	
Keywords	Front-line management, management, diversity management, multicultural, workplace, orientation

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## 1 Introduction

In this work I will be writing about diversity management, but I will be focusing on the multicultural factor and its challenges in managing in the social and healthcare.

A multicultural (non-native Finnish) person in this thesis is a person that has achieved a qualification from a vocational school. The aim of this work is to find out about the challenges in the social and healthcare sector from a managers perspective.

Due to aging and retiring of the population the social and health factor needs even more workforce than it needed before.

It has been estimated that due to 2030, 2 out of 3 public sector workers will be retiring in Finland. Some of the most important ways of fighting to reduce work force shortage is to have a well-functioning recruitment, developing workplace wellbeing, co-operating between the public sector, third sector and communes as well as outsourcing activities and upgrading technology. (Kunta alan eläkepoistuman haasteet ja ratkaisumallit, Halmeenmäki 2010, 5.)

Retiring employees will take with them some useful information and skills that they have gained during the years they have been working in the field.

There is a chance that an organization may lose some important information in the process too. The information should be staying in the organization one way or another because with the right information and experience the future will be built.

Organizations that value their employees working experience and capabilities and value the sharing of it and encourage people to share it forward will enhance wellbeing and eventually will have a positive effect in the community eventually in the future. (Virtainlahti 2009, 255-256.)

On the other hand, the workforce shortage situation has received aid with foreign workers migrating from the Philippines. They have been trained with apprenticeships and courses in English. The working communities have diversified and went towards multicultural environment. The issues and relevant information regarding foreign workers are discussed in this thesis and possible solutions is included too.

## **2 First-line Management in the social and healthcare sector**

A first line manager in the social and healthcare sector is referred to a person that is in charge of the unit. A first line manager is expected to be able to manage the whole entirety within the unit. The job contains consulting and securing resources. The job is based on professional knowledge, HR management, being present when needed and enhancing teamwork. (Aarva 2010, 88-89)

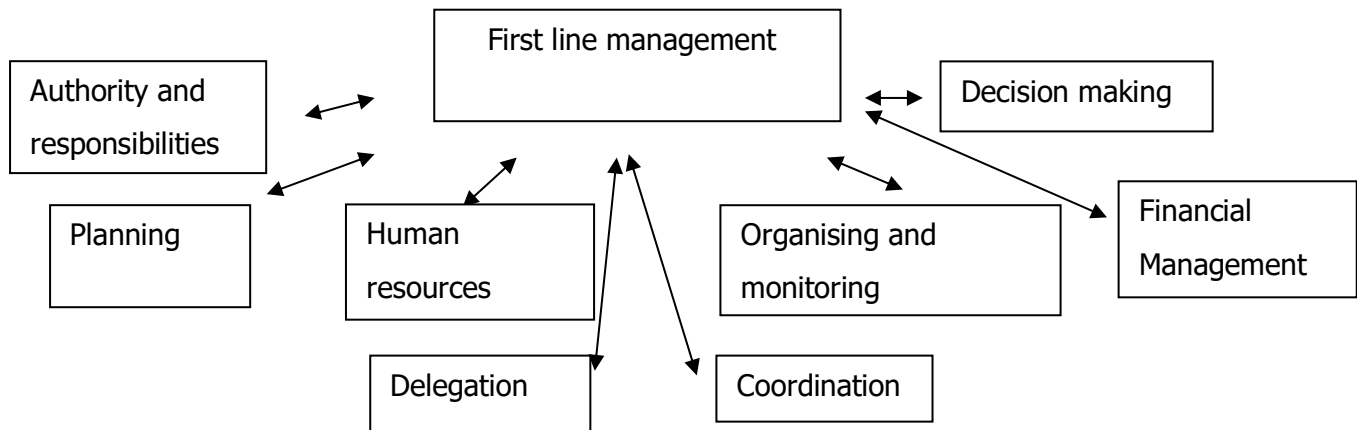


Figure 1. First line managements fields (Laaksonen, Niskanen, Ollila & Riksu 2005)

According to Laaksonen (2005) template the first line manager is responsible to lead his/her unit. The manager leads from 10 to 20 employees approximately. The first line manager aims to utilize the organizations strategy in a practical level within his/her working units' actions and job tasks.

### 3 Multicultural and a diverse environment in the workplace?

A multicultural environment is an interesting concept. In a wider scale it might mean nations mixing with each other, immigrants or asylum seekers among us and internationality. Multiculturalism may also be viewed as a daily phenomenon. We all have our own cultural habits, our own ways of thinking, our own definition of a family and our own way of viewing different values of life and working. (Theseus 2014 monik. 7)

There is no way of describing it with only one definition. A diverse environment can be linked in a broader scale into a working community that has people that are different aged, representing different sexes, ethnic group, nationality, sexual orientation. A multicultural community is linked to a thought that it has people from different nationalities. Vänskä-Rajala (2007, 4-7; Sippola, Leponiemi & Suutari 2006, 3)

Seppälä (2010,14) notes in his article that outside Finland the term "culturality" is "interculturality" which is used mainly in the European continent and the "multicultural" term is used in North America, Australia and Asia (Holm & Zilliacus 2010,11). Especially in a research made by the anglo-saxons about business life and organizational behavior it has been customized to cross-cultural management and multicultural leadership in managing different cultures. (Adler 1991; Mäkilouko 2003) Both terms investigate the organizational behavior of people from different cultures, how it affects them when interacting with each other and how it affects managing human resources. (Adler 2002; Mäkilouko 2003). In his article Haq (2004, 293-295, 280-281) notes that diversity is viewed differently in different cultures, like gender and age-related issues, ethnic background and the rights and equality of people depending in which part of the world an individual is.

In Finland, the diversification of working life and society in general is monitored by the council of state in a project it has established called the future of immigration 2020. The project is meant to set a comprehensive strategy that aims to anticipate the amount of immigration affecting Finland and the quality and consequences towards Finnish society. The initial goal was to fulfill the Prime minister Katainen's governmental program, "Finland towards an open, equal and brave future" (2011), which is a statement to improve the immigration politics in a way that it supports the tolerant, safe and multivalued Finland's enhancement and it will increase Finnish international competitiveness in the future. "The governmental program notes that the sustainability gap in the public finance is affected primarily by the aging processes and its fast impact to the dependency ratio's weakening. The sustainability has been attempted to decrease by making working careers longer, increasing productivity of the economy, increasing birth rate and increasing the job-related immigration". (Kuukka 2013, 7-8.)

In the integration governmental program for immigrants 2016-2019 (tem.fi 2016 ) the main focus is to bring out the strengths of an individual's culture to strengthen the Finnish innovation ability, enhance integration by cross-governmental actions, increasing the co-operation between the government and municipalities in regards of

receiving people with international protection and encouraging open discussion about immigration politics. (tem. 2016)

In Finland, there are many laws related to diversity. There are points in the constitution that back up equality, equality law between men and women (609/1986), working agreement law (55/2001, criminal law (39/1889) and the non-discrimination act (30/2014).

The laws mentioned before prohibits discrimination based on age, ethnic or national differences, nationalities, languages, opinions, health condition, disabilities, gender orientation, or something else related to an individual (Alhonen & Alanko 2012. 10).

The Purpose of the non-discrimination act is to enhance and increase equality and enhance the legal protection of an individual that has been under discrimination.

The authorities have a responsibility in their all actions to enhance equality in a methodical and goal-oriented manner and if needed, change the circumstances which are preventing non-discrimination. The law enforces that every authority will make a non-discrimination plan which are in accordance to regulations made by the ministry of the interior in May 2010. With the Non - discrimination act the racism and workplace discrimination directives in the European Union has been enforced. (Theseus 2014 monik. 9)

According to Savileppä (2005, 7-8 and Sippola (2007, 17-18) diversity has many levels. They point out that there is more to the diversity of employees than the sum of its part if it is managed and utilized properly. The diversity of the employees includes employees' differences and similarities which forms an entity for the employees.

Diversity factors in the inner level include an employee's physical and personal related factors for instance, gender, age, ethnic and cultural background, sexual orientation and physical capabilities. The second level includes personal appearance, religion, education, work experience, family ties and hobbies. Sippola summarizes the second levels an individual's personality, cultural background, language, education and abilities, social situation, world view and the life situation. In the third level the affecting factors are an employees working field and work description, duration of employment and trade union activity.

According to Sippola this level includes an individual's ways of working and thinking. In a working community the most noticed diversity factors are physical and personal factors. (Alhonen & Aulanko 2012, 8-10; non-discrimination act 30/2014)

Multiculturalism and diversity among workers are affecting working community in many ways. In many organizations' multiculturalism is viewed as a positive and strengthening factor because it will widen views and bring different solutions. Some cultures emphasize the importance of community which can lead to a better working atmosphere. Bergbom (2007, 52-53) has noted that a person with a multicultural background has strengthening qualities such as: knowledge about his/her culture and language which will strengthen the organizations language capabilities.

According to Sorainen (2007, 179-180) in some working communities' diversity can lead to negative results also. It can affect the working community's functionality because in different cultures there are different views of how time should be spent, regarding work, and gender roles. Other challenges are prejudices, language barriers and lack of professional skills. Conflicts may also rise with diversity.

According to Brewis (2008,48, 188-194, 234) in order to reach results between cultures it is crucial to work with attitudes of people and awareness. According to Brewis, cultural awareness is a way of thinking that a human being understands how different cultural factors affect an individual's perception, thinking, reasoning, behavior and communicating. It is often assumed that the thinking or behavior of a coworker that is an immigrant or a person with different cultural background is affected by his/her cultural background but when analyzing cultural awareness it is necessary to take into consideration of how well the working communities members know how to analyze their own background's influence on their own awareness, thinking, reasoning and communication.

In an article Kujanpää (2010, 619; Schein 1987) notes that multiculturalism manifests in many ways including: values and basic assumptions. They can be for example a used language or working communities' behavioral habits. Values in public tell how things should be and often are used as a guidance to unite employees.

When values are being used and when they end up being useful, they will slowly become beliefs and will turn into unconscious level of basic assumptions. They are the organizational cultures core and represent organizations many choices that have been chosen from multiple alternatives.

In a multicultural environment people's different cultural backgrounds' contribution and interest is utilized for an organization's missions, functions, products or services.

A multicultural or diverse company will make sure to minimize social discrimination in its every form within the organization.

It will give an equal chance for everyone regardless of their backgrounds when it comes to decision making processes. In a well-functioning working environment within an organization people are interacting with each other, by talking and negotiating. One of the most important values especially is being honest towards everyone. It is also aiming to achieve proper developing methods with each other.

The rules of a company should also be discussed with everyone and everyone should have a chance to influence it. In a multicultural working environment, it is crucial that everyone accepts and tolerates diversity without being stigmatized about being "too" tolerant person.

Finnish working environment has been developing towards a multicultural working environment since the first immigrants have arrived to Finland. Due to many reasons, immigrants coming to Finland have formed a very diverse environment.

In order to attach immigrants to the Finnish working life we can enhance and develop their capabilities and skills needed in the workplace as well as developing the workplace environment towards an easier place to learn and develop self with different plans and routines. In this way it is possible to enhance the controlled diversification of the working environment.

### 3.1 Immigrants heading to cities – people coming from Europe have settled in rural areas

In the recent years, the city and rural areas have received more immigrants.

However, the issue of moving from country sides to the cities has not been fixed with immigrants: especially people coming outside of Europe will settle down in the cities more likely than native people.

With the upcoming changes of decreasing birth-rates and increasing immigration will change the situation in Finland.

There were 403 000 immigrants living in Finland in 2018. In 2005 there were only 157 000, so the amount has risen for 156,69 percent in 13 years. In 2017 there were 325 000 with different cultural background living in the city areas and 209 000 of them were living in the inner side from city centre, 99 500 in the outer side and 16 300 in the circle area.

People with different cultural backgrounds in majority are mostly living the city areas and especially in the inner side of the city which makes up 12 percent of the whole population in the area. Overall, 85 percent of people with a different cultural background are living in the city areas, which is clearly more centred compared to native people. There were 70 percent of the country's overall population living in the centre in 2017. (Tilastokeskus 2020)

### 3.2 People with a different cultural background (a foreign person)

A person with a different cultural background is a person that has both or one that is his/her parents and are born in a different country. The definition is also valid on a person that has born in Finland (second generation). However, if both parents have born abroad, will the defining nationality come from the biological mother. A foreign person is also he/she that has born abroad and there is no evidence about their parents in the population information system. If there is no information about both of the parents birth country the defining nationality will be the persons birth country.

A person that has Finnish roots is classified as a person that has at least one parent that is born in Finland. Also, a person that has been adopted from abroad but has Finnish parents is classified as a person with Finnish roots. (syntyperä ja taustamaa 2020 tilastokeskus; ulkomaalaistaustaiset 2020 tilastokeskus)

Since we have more options with public transportation compared to some decades ago; we can travel long distances for work relatively quickly. The current situation with transportation has made it possible for diverse people to migrate from other countries and when people migrate to another country, they seem to favour the big cities which means that the diversity will increase in those areas.

A significant factor affecting the migration in the recent years has also been the refugee crisis which emerged after the Syrian and Iraqi wars began which means that countries have been struggling to manage the massive waves of asylum seekers. However, many European countries suffer from high unemployment, some key sectors for example Health care is suffering from a chronic lack of qualified job applicants. In other words, there are too many elder people aging and retiring than there are people to replace them which means that Europe needs individuals that are young and skilled, who can pay taxes and contribute to social security. (ec.europa.eu 2016)

Some of the challenges will be to train the refugees to understand how a specific country is functioning and of course the language barrier.

A good example is Germany. They have many programs that are very useful and rewarding for refugees as an example Germany offers integration courses which will teach them all the relevant information about Germany such like language, culture history and more. Many companies are willing to help and contribute in the training of asylum seekers. (Germany visa 2020.)

These kinds of courses will boost their opportunities to get employed in the future since they are not allowed to work during their first three months in the country. This ensures that their time does not go into waste, and they can be efficient and do something beneficial.

The current situation in Finland in some remote areas can still be a little bit homogenous since culturally diverse people tend to stay and live in big cities which is understandable in a sense because there are more job opportunities and it is always more difficult to adjust to a new and very different environment the individual has been used to especially if most of the population haven't been used to foreign people. This is a question that our politicians need to answer.

It is not necessarily very beneficial for countries to direct the diverse people to a specific city or town only.

To ensure the benefits of diversity, governments should try to make it easier for the diverse people to adjust in their new home cities or towns more easily.

The people that are directed to specific locations by the government are usually refugees and asylum seekers which means that most of them are not speaking even English fluently. The specific cities should ensure that the refugees will get enough services to adjust and start being productive for a mutual benefit. The migrants that are coming to this country or Europe for work have mostly searched for a job beforehand which means that they are basically choosing the location by themselves. This is the differences between refugees and asylum seekers compared to migrants that are coming to Europe in search of a job. (World Economic Forum 2018)

## **4 Culture shock and diversity stress in the workplace**

### 4.1 Culture shock

According to Crawley et al (2013), "Cultural shock is the name given to an unpleasant feeling of being confronted with an unfamiliar culture. This state may result in rejection of the culture or a gradual acceptance of the differences experienced."

There are four different stages of culture shock in general. The first one is the Honeymoon phase. In this phase the person is excited from everything new but is still aware of the cultural differences that limit the interaction between individuals.

The person is optimistic and believes that he/she will learn the language relative fast. (Räty 2002, 120-121).

The second phase is called the Frustration phase. The new culture is seen as hostile. The new life with its difficulties is frustrating so own culture is overly glorified and people seek protection from it. Even a small hardship could cause strong reactions. (Räty 2002, 120-121).

The third phase is called The Adjustment phase. The person accepts and understands the facts, in other words the possibilities and restrictions the situation has brought. The emotions are not only positive anymore compared to the beginning or negative in the Frustration phase. (Räty 2002, 120-121).

The fourth phase is called the acceptance phase. A person knows how to balance between life's two cultures and has adopted the languages, values and habits of two cultures (Räty 2002, 120-121).

In multicultural situations it is common for people to feel that their usual modes of coping are insufficient. They experience what is called "diversity stress" The phenomenal "diversity stress" occurs wherever cultures clash: in mixed race settings, in settings where women work alongside men, in companies which employ an international work force. In fact, diversity stress can exist in any situation where beliefs and values differ. Diversity stress can be fleeting and relatively mild. Diversity stress is a type of morality stress which occurs when managerial decisions are shrouded in ambiguity and competing moral principles, and people are uncertain how to behave. Often, managers are apprehensive about the consequences of their actions. Contemplating their alternatives under a situation in which moral issues are involved and there is no clear path to resolution. (Rae 1995)

## 4.2 Cultural problems and how to manage them

On a manager's perspective, some relevant issues facing multicultural environment are that different ethnic groups may ask for holidays and it may not be easy to arrange workers for them especially if it is on a tight schedule. Sometimes people with multicultural backgrounds may ask for long holidays without pay to visit their home countries and it can be even harder to arrange. For religious reasons some people may use headscarves, but it is not a problem when it is discussed about and taken into consideration. Some female managers may notice that taking orders from a female manager might have been hard for some people. Eventually, the workers will get used to it and they will show it by their actions and the managers feel like they have earned their respect. Sometimes problems will occur because of the cultural differences which are related to the state of a man and a woman where a man is superior than a woman. (theseus 2014 erilaisuuden johtaminen)

## 5 The manifestation of diversity in the workplace

Traditionally diversity is linked to differences in gender, age and ethnic backgrounds. Diversity in the workplace is about differences in skills and competencies between people and it is also linked to equal rights towards everyone in other words: No discriminating or favouring someone over another. When aiming to achieving a diverse working environment, one crucial factor is to make it seen. When the habits have been changed the attitudes should change also.

Many people might think that an organization is achieving a diverse environment when the equality between men and women is supported, the wages are equal, and the young and ethnically different people are also appreciated. The diverse working environment is liked to acknowledging differences and respecting them. A wise working community has an ability to utilize the capabilities of a diverse employee base by encouraging everyone to bring up new perspectives, new thought and "thinking outside of the box".

In a diverse working community, the employees work more individually. Everyone's capabilities will be utilized no matter which group the person represents.

(Monimuotoisuus työelämässä vates 2020)

More accurate definitions take physical and other personal feature differences into account as well. In diversity theory the cultural diversity means; cultural differences which refers mainly to people's values, attitude, norms, styles and behaviour. Basically, every cultural feature that is different from others is seen as cultural diversity. Culture is defined usually relatively widely when different professional groups and sectors within an organisation are taken into consideration as well. It can be many different factors differences in religion, personal opinions and actions. Diversity is considered as a creative part within an organisation and managing it has a remarkable role in teams that are multi professional and cultural when it comes to achieving success and monitoring quality of work.

The way how organisations approach diversity management varies a lot. Different ways of approaching it differs by the way it is viewed for example is diversity allowed or is it aiming to point out all the mutual things in common.

The attitudes of leaders and managers reflects to the workforce and organisational culture. One of the main goals to achieve from the managerial perspective should be to minimize harms related to diversity and to bring up. (Dropbox 2019)

## **6 Gender diversity in different cultures**

The Definition of gender diversity is the proportion of men to women in the workplace. Is it a more even distribution or is the employee pool composed of mostly men or mostly women. This factor can affect the workplace behavior for example how they treat each other, and it can also impact the cultural and social environment. The same way other demographics such as population racial characteristics and such all affect the working environment. According to Kochan et al., 2003, organizations are finding that racial and gender diversity, "if managed well, may even enhance

performance"(retrieved from Luis L. Martins and Charles K. Parsons,2007). Researchers have proposed that a greater organizational emphasis on gender diversity management programs will have a positive effect on organizational attractiveness among women, as women are the intended beneficiaries of the programs. (Luis L. Martins and Charles K. Parsons,2007)

National culture is a potential explanatory variable in the adoption of certain diversity and inclusion practices in organizations, or the moderator of relationships between organizational practices and performance outcomes. Based in this cultural reasoning, certain dimensions of culture might be more pertinent to diversity and inclusion than others.

Specifically, some societies have better-defined gender roles compared to others in which gender roles are more fluid.

The GLOBE study of national culture describes this as gender egalitarianism, defined as the degree to which an organization or society minimizes gender role differences while promoting gender equality' (Farndale 2015)

In 2017 The World Economic Forum published a research about gender equality. They ranked 144 countries on gender equality, and they found out that Iceland has a smaller gender gap than any other country – though, crucially, a gap still exists there – followed by Norway and Finland.

The fact that Scandinavian countries are leading the way may not come as a big surprise. However, the rest of the top 10 could possibly be a little bit odder. It features Rwanda and Nicaragua but not United Kingdom for example which was ranked as the 15<sup>th</sup>. (World Economic Forum 2017)

The fact that 50% of the workforce in advanced countries are females means that the workforce is relatively diverse when it comes to gender.

The sad fact is that researchers made a survey of 3000 global companies and they found out that women represent only 14,7% of board seats and women hold 17% of senior management roles of America's 100 largest companies (Catalyst 2015) and globally women hold 24% of senior management roles.

This means that men who are basically ruling the businesses worldwide have a crucial role of aiming to change the fact that women are not equal when it comes to managing or leading companies.

The Credit Suisse Research Institute made a research about companies share prices with female directors and the results were 26% more which means that gender parity in company boards means more profitability. This is leading the traditional companies to encourage women's advancement and entice them to put their talent at the company's service.

At the same time, the current technological and social changes involve a larger distribution of power.

A cooperative and independent work is required facing a dominating and hierarchic leadership. (The credit Suisse Research institute 2016)

The concept of soft power coined to define political leadership based on persuasion and on coercion is now making headway in the business world. Highly valued leaders tend to be the most empathetic, adaptable and motivating ones. Some of the characteristics are traditionally related women.

Without renouncing the determination when needed encouraging the participation and the collaboration will undoubtedly improve the results.

Neither is it that large companies can set aside the fact that technology has transformed the traditional working models as to availability and presence of the workers and the possibilities of small sized enterprises to compete in the global market. The concept of "soft power" was coined in by Joseph Nye in his 1990 book *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. (Joseph Nye 1990)

## 6.1 The law of equality between men and women

The equality law, in other words the law that makes a man and a woman equal (Finlex 2020, 609/1986, 1§) is meant to prevent any form of discrimination related to gender

between a man and a woman. It is also meant to enhance the equality between both in the working environment. The law has been updated multiple times.

The latest update was in 1.1.2015. which stated that people that identify themselves as opposite gender should not be discriminated either in anyway.

The discriminations prohibition covers the immediate and indirect acts of discriminating, sexual harassment, gender related harassment and every form of discrimination. Immediate discrimination is towards an individual's personal affairs and indirect is for example practices that or only seemingly neutral or discriminating someone because of the persons age.

Sexual harassment happens when a person is acting sexually against an individual's wishes, which violates an individual's mental and physical personal space. When it comes to gender discrimination it is not sexual by nature, but it creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or oppressive environment.

A real case of discrimination is based on facts and knowledge and alleged is based on allegation. (Finlex 2020, the law of equality between women and men 609/1986, 7§.) A workplace or an educational place announcement cannot be published based on discriminatory factors. As an example, a workplace announcement states that this job is only for a man without a legitimate and approvable reason. (Finlex 2020, the law of equality between women and men 609/1986, 14§.). The employer has a responsibility to enhance the equality between men and women with set goals and plans. (Finlex 2020, the law of equality between women and men 609/1986, 6§.). The employer must prevent the gender discrimination and operate in a way that men and women can apply for every kind of work equally and can proceed in their careers regardless of their gender. The working environment should be fit for both and the working arrangements should make it easier to combine the working and family life. The wage must be equal as well. Unlike the non-discrimination act (1325/2014, second chapter 7§), which only demands a plan on how to enhance the situation without a real breakdown of the content of actions, the equality law (609/1986, 6 a-6 c § contains the following: A statement of the situation between men and women in terms of equality in different work tasks.

A wage survey of the whole employees in terms of work tasks between men and women and their differences. Acts that are meant to enhance equality or ways to make the wages equal for both parties.

A review of how the previous equality plan succeeded and an evaluation of it. (Tasaarvo laki 2015)

## **7 Religious diversity as a part of culture**

The recent years with mass migrations have brought a lot of different people with different religions from all over the world to developed countries and especially Europe which means that the companies are facing more and more religious diversity in the workplace. The fact that people believe in different religions means that companies must adjust and learn a way of managing diverse religions too.

The companies should be aware of different religious needs and try to achieve a favorable solution for both parties and especially the communication should be well done because if misunderstandings would happen it may make things complicated and mistakes could be made.

Some companies are allowing employees time to be utilized for prayer, meditation and for religious meetings of different kinds. A good example of a religious meeting would be the Friday prayers of Muslim employees. Sometimes employees agree with the employer that they would take some time off from work in the middle of Friday and compensate the time later.

People have become more sensitive towards religion in the recent years and some time ago in the past people did not talk about religion that much because it used to be something that people kept at home.

Now companies are more interested in putting the whole self at work.

The fastest growing religion in the world is Islam and the current mass migration has brought more people to Europe that identify themselves as Muslims. The growth percentage is estimated to increase by 73% and the Christians by 35%.

According to the (pew research center 2011), there will be approximately 10% of Europeans that will be Muslims and Christians 65,2% by 2050. (Pew research center 2011) This means that the workplace environment is going to be much different when it comes to religion in the workplace.

Benefits of religious qualities in the workplace are: Treating each other as we would like to be treated and being kind to everyone regardless of who they are. Being truthful and not cheating other people. Being an example for others motivates other people also to behave better which makes the working environment healthier.

The religious beliefs should not be interrupting the working efficiency but for some people the moments of meditating or praying can be a way of increasing the efficiency and an individual may get inspiration or innovative ideas during the moments too. However, in developed countries at least in Finland we have a religious freedom and the workplace cannot discriminate people based on their religion, sex, gender etc.

The fact is however, that it is extremely difficult to prove that one has dealt with discrimination from co-workers or managers. In 2014 alone, the EEOC received 31,073 charges alleging race-based discrimination but dismissed 71,74% of them due to a lack of reasonable cause. (Tanzina Vega 2018)

## **8 How to improve the employment situation for immigrants?**

The department of labour made a research back in the 1999 about the employment situation of immigrants.

(Forsander & Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000). The research was about finding out who are the immigrants that have been employed, from where and how they have found their jobs and how has their previous employment situation been.

The results indicated that a workplace right in the beginning ("Entry workplaces") when they had started their new lives in Finland seemed to be crucial first steps for the immigrant's employment status.

The immigrants found jobs by their own from the service sector, catering and cleaning fields mainly. The "Entry workplaces" were found either by them contacting the employer or utilising other immigrants contacts. In order to proceed from these jobs to workplace that met the resources and motivation, the immigrants had to have contacts and social networks from Finns. The immigrants often received these kinds of networks mostly directly or there was a middle hand (labour administration) helping them. The most efficient aiding actions were the ones that gave solid contacts to working environment: internships, work placements and subsidised workplaces for the private sector.

The contacts from the public sector produced less results with the exception of the act of legalising doctors. In the subsidised workplace field, the immigrants that benefited the most were the ones whose basic skills in other words language and professional skills were already fine.

Some factors immigrants need in order to proceed in their working careers according to the research: Early stage language courses and additional professional courses to achieve the Finnish levels of professionalism. Intensive, supported contacts for the labour market.

From these supporting acts the most benefited the immigrants who had already achieved some experience from the Finnish labour market for example from the "Entry workplaces".

Even in the present moment especially in the capital area where 60 percent of immigrants live, they have better chances to proceed in their working careers and start a career compared to previous years. On the other hand, if the immigrants get stuck in their "Entry workplaces" it can lead to a feared situation where immigrants only receive jobs that the regular Finns would not accept.

Luckily, the labour market has opened its doors also for immigrants. The labour administration should invest in educating the immigrants and subsidized work placements in order to get it started for the new immigrants and the ones that have been here a while already. If done right the immigrants will be given a chance to take their part in making the labour market more efficient and slowing down the phenomenal that is forming up where ethnic and regular Finns are being divided in different categories. It will also help to achieve better workplace equality. In this economic situation, the recourses that go to educating immigrants will be making much more results than ever before. (Forsander 2000)

## **9 Disadvantages of workforce diversity**

Disadvantages are for example: Some people might be afraid of others that are of a different age, sex, or nationality. The diversity might have an effect in the costs also because of the seminars and information sessions that are required to increase awareness of diversity and training will be more expensive because it might take more time to train people with language or age barriers. The seminars and diversity trainings are necessary for all levels of staff because all the employees in the developed countries will eventually be in contact with diverse people. It is done to ensure that prejudices and negative mindsets towards diversity will be minimum.

One other disadvantage is that diversity will sometimes lead to conflicts because of misunderstandings or a lack of communication. For example, an employer gives an order to an employee and the employee does not understand it correctly and does something wrong which may lead to conflicts and inefficient atmosphere. Prejudices cause a lack of acceptance and they may proceed to even worse circumstances such as discrimination and culture clashes.

The most common conflict is when a person or a group feels like they are superior. The management should be able to recognise such conflicts before it escalates and may affect the performance. (Future of working.com 2020)

## **10 Challenges in managing diverse workforce**

One of the largest and most changing employers is the social and health care sector which enhances the wellbeing of the citizens. The whole sector is building itself again in terms of guidance, performance and as well from the organisational perspective. The workplace environment changes will increase the demand of competencies related to managing people and working.

The key is to get the organisational diversity converted into a benefit rather than a challenge.

One of the main aspects in leading is that the actions are focused in a way that the people, organisations and networks will be successful to fulfil the goals that have been set. Diverse working environments in organisations these days are the key aspects to handle in many different sectors especially in the healthcare and service fields.

Due to structural changes in the labour market, the large amount of people soon to be retired, the decreasing amount of young people and the diverse workforce will bring questions in leading people in the future. Since over half of the cities workforce will retire before 2025 the real challenge will be to acquire suitable personnel and to make sure that the current workforce are capable to follow on the footsteps of the predecessors and manage to handle everything successfully in terms of creativity and utilising personal skills properly. In the future, recruiting new employees will get harder in every field which means that the services must be handled with even smaller workforce compared to this moment. (Drop Box 2019)

## 11 Solutions for a diverse cultural environment

By defining key cultural values, employers can better understand their workforce and what their expectations might be.

For instance, if the local culture is heavily family-oriented, then family-friendly policies may provide more value to employees than additional compensation. "Unravelling the cultural codes of a given area — whether a corporate, national, ethnic or a professional one — tells us about what is valued and what is not," says Martha Bird (business anthropologist at ADP).

By focusing on what employees are asking for in their location, employers can tailor their approaches and offerings to meet their unique needs, traditions, and practices. As Bird points out, it is not about forcing adoption of a different set of beliefs, it's about unravelling the existing foundation so that it can be understood and catered to. (Spark 2018)

Companies should assess employees and business goals by asking: What issues are affecting the revenue? Is the company production satisfying the customers in terms of service and innovative results? The answers will bring diversity solutions to the forefront.

Brad Karsh from the Chicago-based JB Training solutions (A company that works with employers to enhance business skills) Quotes: " People that gravitate toward businesses that understand and relate to them. Therefore, the more diversity a company has, the more commonalities and similarities between employees and clients". (Career Trend 2018)

## 12 Achieving equality and functioning diversity

The Equality laws have been informed by three principles: neutrality, individualism and the promotion of autonomy. The first of these, the principle of neutrality, aims to ensure that people are treated in the same way and appears to be the most dominant consideration of the anti-discrimination framework. It is an approach to workplace

equality based on achieving fairness through consistency of treatment. Second, the principle of individualism refers to the notion of judging people on their merits rather than their social group membership. The intention is that individuals are judged on their talents and not treated less favourably as a result of characteristics such as disability, race or gender. Finally, the principle of autonomy is concerned with the idea that individuals should be free to make their own choices. (Leopold J. 2009 50-52)

The fact is though that these qualities are not respected well enough even in the developed countries. The laws and efforts to minimize discrimination might be known but it is extremely hard to prove that a company or an individual has discriminated a person or a group of diverse people. In the future these principles should become more known and used in everywhere to ensure that the development towards a better non- discriminating workplace will happen.

### **13 The purpose of the survey, and survey questions**

Purpose of the survey

The surveys purpose is to receive information directly from the healthcare front-line managers to analyze the working environment.

The survey questions

The survey questions were: 1. What are the challenges of workforce diversity in organizations from a front-line managerial view? 2. What are the benefits that a diverse working environment will bring to the working community in a front-line managerial view? 3. What management can do to support an employee with a different cultural background in organizations?

### **14 The answers of the survey questions**

#### 14.1 Person 1 (17 years as a front-line manager)

##### 1. Challenges of workforce diversity

Culturally diverse working community demands creativity, understanding and flexibility from a front-line manager when it comes to workers and their views. I feel like the working community needs to get to know each of its worker personally and to receive information about each other's cultural background and their working views. Misunderstandings can happen when people think and act differently in everyday life. It is necessary to be brave enough to discuss about things and to have open minded conversations in a diverse working environment. As a manager one must be showing an example of tolerance in words and actions sometimes. The native workers can still have suspiciousness and prejudices towards people with a different cultural background.

##### 2. The benefits of a diverse working community

A diverse working community brings new views and content to everyday life. A diverse working community enhances and brings more creative solutions in the everyday life. I feel like I will develop even more as a manager when I am working in a diverse working community. It is a way of widening my views of working.

##### 3. What management can do to support an employee with a different cultural background?

It is important to face every worker as an individual person and being open minded in the conversations with the worker. It is important to discuss things openly with the worker and respect his/her views and beliefs.

Additional information: I Have been working as a manager for 17 years and currently we have 65% of the workers in our unit that have a different cultural background. When I started 17 years ago the rate was only about 10%.

#### Person 2. (8 years as a front-line manager)

##### 1. Challenges of workforce diversity

The biggest challenge is the language barrier (lack of language skills). Finnish language has been supported in some of my workplaces by organizing language courses during working time. Learning the Finnish language has been always encouraged in my workplaces. We use only Finnish as our working language to encourage everyone to learn more. English speaking workers (also Finnish) tend to start speaking in English at work sometimes even when we have agreed to speak only Finnish. The language skills improvement stops with some people easily. Especially the written language's developing demands a lot from a worker who does not speak Finnish as his/her mother tongue. With a lack of language skills also the information can be misunderstood and

that can cause more misunderstandings. Another challenge is about prejudices towards a foreign worker by the customer. Before it was more common to face prejudices and still sometimes. It because of alleged or real trust issues. Another challenge can be a different service culture, it can be a challenge and a benefit also.

In Finland, the customer is encouraged to do as many things as possible by themselves in order to maintain their own capabilities. Sometimes an immigrant person does everything on behalf of the customer. Another challenge can be a way of belittling the professional skills and prejudices towards their working. However, I feel like it has decreased a little in the recent years. Another challenge can be the disagreements of politics and religion between workers. It brings tensions that I sometimes must intervene.

Another challenge can be about the gender roles in the workplace; sometimes orders from a female manager have been hard to receive and follow by a male worker. Sometimes there have been misunderstandings with the contents of work agreements for example, the holiday practices. Many workers want to have their holidays during Christmas times. The granting the holidays is based on equality also and that the workplace has enough workers during the holiday seasons. According to the collective agreement the worker has to have a minimum amount of holidays during the summer season too.

Another challenge can be about the different ways of working. Some of the immigrants come from a culture that is based on receiving orders from the manager all the time. Sometimes the "Finnish" workplace attitude of being pro-active is a new thing to them.

The workplace safety can be viewed in a way that is a challenge to other workers in the community, ultimately to the manager.

Previously mentioned issues are the things a manager has to intervene. Guide and support an immigrant and other working community. In practise the work is time consuming and seldom there is a chance to focus on them enough as a manager. A challenge often is to organize a proper orientation.

## 2. The benefits of a diverse working community

Diversity is a strength. Everyone's working input is needed and we need more work force in Finland in the social and healthcare sector. Workers coming from different cultures often possess very good social and customer encountering skills. Diversity also enhances the native Finnish working culture; we can learn from one another.

## 3. Orientation as a supporting method is the most important thing. Cultural and religious habits are aimed to take into consideration as well as it is possible. The general tolerance towards diversity and openly discussing things in the working community supports the immigrant worker. A feeling of receiving support from the manager is important.

## 15 The way of conducting the survey

### 15.1 How the survey was done and how they were delivered and received

The survey questions were done by the author of this thesis using Microsoft Office's Word writing program. The survey questions were delivered by email and received the same way. The survey questions form can be seen in the (appendix 2).

### 15.2 Analysing the answers

As we can clearly see from the answers when analysing them that the lack of language skills is mentioned often and that with it sometimes people misunderstand orders and mistakes can happen because of it. Another factor that came up was the cultural ways of working whether it was about an employee being under a Female manager or an employee working based on their own culture's values.

This might not be how things are done in Finland for example a specific employee likes to do everything for the customer while in Finland the way is completely different. In Finland, the employees are expected to let the customer do as much as possible by themselves and only helped if they really need it. This is done to keep the customers as active as possible which is beneficial for their health.

A supportive method for the employees coming up from the answers was the importance of orientation. The importance of getting to know the employee and ensuring that they have enough skills and competencies in their work is crucial.

## 16 The results of the survey

In the end the results indicate that they were concrete and optimistic. Some of the results according to the front-line managers were that in order to improve the lack of language situation, they have agreed that only Finnish should be used in the workplace. This is a way of ensuring that they will keep using the language as much as possible at least 5 times in a week for a complete working day.

The language skills will improve, and new words are learned often. Orientation in the workplace was discussed a lot and the result to achieving more tolerance towards immigrant workers is done by getting to know each one of the workers as individuals and respecting everyone the way a person wants to be respected themselves. The way to success always depends on the relationship between the worker and the manager. If the Manager can give the worker a feeling of getting noticed and helped, the learning process should get better. In a case that an immigrant does not get enough orientation in general, the learning can be much harder. The issue from a managerial perspective is according to a front-line manager "In practise the work is time consuming and seldom there is a chance to focus on them enough as a manager. A challenge often is to organize a proper orientation" (Survey Person 2). This sentence indicates that sometimes the orientation was not enough, and the worker may not get enough information related to their work which will affect the employees working efficiency. In the long run the co-employees will notice the wrong ways of working and it can irritate others.

## 17 Discussion and conclusion

### 17.1 Discussion

The methodological approach used in this thesis was qualitative, and data was collected by interview forms. The informants were front-line managers. The data was analysed according to the answers received from the recipients and the similarities were compared. The identities of the individuals were kept anonymous. The credibility of this thesis comes from a decent research practice. The author has done research of the subject literature and interviewed healthcare frontline managers. The ethicality of this thesis is based on trust and the persons that have been interviewed have been informed about the thesis in advance and the results have been described as truthfully as possible. The question forms were received anonymous and the identity of the respondents have not been published. Two answers were received from the front-line managers and they were analyzed and used as a part of this thesis. After analyzing the results from the two front-line managers, they were similar in terms of negative issues. The orientation and language barriers were major issues that needs to be developed in the future. The front-line managers do not have enough time to orientate their employees and monitor their employees when working. This Thesis is about diversity management and particularly about cultural diversity management and a thesis about developing the cultural diversity management in terms of orientating and monitoring employees would be relevant in the future. There are big issues related to organizing proper orientation for the new employees which is why the orientation needs proper developing. Some opinions directly from the employees with a different cultural background would also be helpful when aiming to develop the orientation since they are the ones that will be orientated and they may know ways that could work better in the researches done in the future.

As noted by a front-line manager (Person 2.) Some workers may have cultural behaviors that may affect their work such as:

Not taking orders from a female manager. This may affect the whole workplace because the front-line manager is supposed to have authority but in the same time justice for all is needed too.

The fact is that cultural behaviors cannot be changed during a day or two, it takes a long time to really change their ways of thinking but as noted by the front-line manager, they start to respect the manager eventually.

The cultural differences may also bring issues when talking about two individuals that have a cultural background that has history in a negative way. For example, an Iraqi and a Kurdish employee may create conflicts due to their ethnicities. The front-line managers are in a crucial role when these kinds of conflicts happen. They will have to be in the middle and aim to resolve everything which may be hard for him/her also but being a front-line manager brings more responsibility. In order to be ready to solve cultural conflicts in the workplace it is need for the manager to have a fair amount of cultural knowledge, this will help them to work with the issue more conveniently.

## 17.2 The conclusion

With the rising diversity in the workplace, it is more than crucial to make plans and try to enhance the current situation whenever it is possible. According to the front-line managers the time management was one of the most important aspects during orientation because the field of work is very hectic, and it is hard to find time to give for the employees.

The current situation of cultural diversity in the workplace is becoming normal in many workplaces, especially in the Southern Finland. As the technology has improved a lot in the past years, it has enabled us to deal with clients and customers from all over the globe. This might be a new way of living but the challenges with cultural diversity cannot be swiped under the mat.

There will be language related barriers which will make it harder to communicate efficiently as it was noted by the frontline-managers in this thesis in the survey part. Comparing the literature Sorainen (2007, 179-180) and the frontline-manager (person 2.) one of the difficulties was indeed the language. It may come to a stage that individuals may create conflicts and the front-line managers may even have to intervene in the situation.

Also, different cultures may prevent customers from being comfortable to be themselves in all situations.

These potential problems may be a disadvantage in terms of relationships in the working environment, that is why the company leaders and managers should plan and aim to prevent potential issues that may occur when misunderstanding something simply because of ignorance or prejudices.

The Companies should organize or keep meetings about multiculturalism to ensure that every employee will learn about each other's cultures or ways of living. This will help in keeping the workplace more comfortable for everyone.

The companies could set aside a certain day where the employees will share their views of life and cultural habits. The atmosphere should be easy going and fun.

People will socialize more and get to know each other which will prevent potential issues in the future because the differences were known beforehand.

The key factor when striving to achieve success in understanding other cultures is to keep an open mind and to accept everyone else as they are and to acknowledge that your way is not the only way of living as the frontline-managers noted in the survey.

One does not need to change their culture or try to change others culture. We should try to find common things where everyone is able to understand each other and respect cultural differences.

Overall, firms that are aware of the importance of diversity in the workplace will usually perform better when it comes to financial and cultural aspects. When employees engage with people with different backgrounds in the workplace, they will have an opportunity to learn from each other and produce better outcomes regarding products

and services. A diverse working place will also affect the working community with positive working environment in which the employees will grow and thrive.

A diverse working community will also bring different talents to the talent pool and the employees are able to work together and learn from each other. Different talents may be needed sometimes depending on the situation. Employees with diverse backgrounds can have inspiring ideas and utilize them in different projects which enhances the innovation within the working community. However, the key factor to success is communication. If everything is very clear and easy to understand for the employees and if the employers and employees have a positive atmosphere in the workplace when it comes to working and managing employees, it will have a positive result and continue to do so in the future too.

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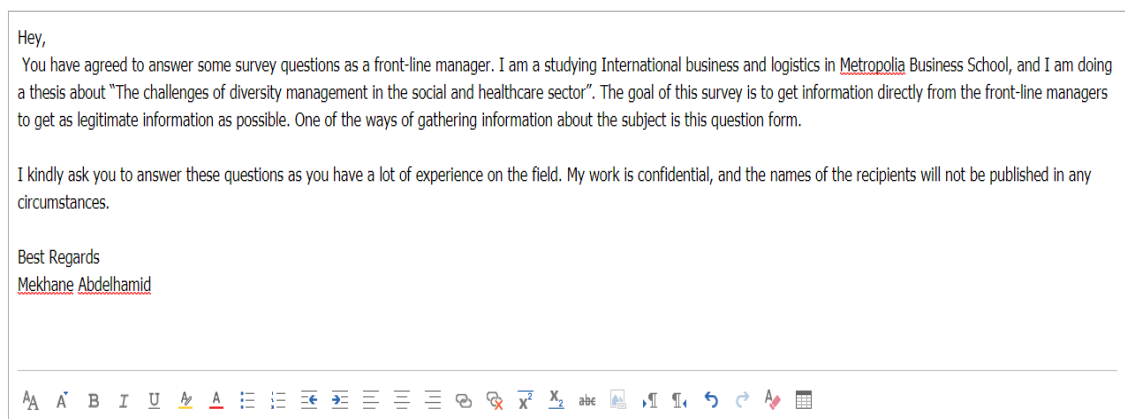
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## Table of figures and tables

Figure 1. First line managements fields (Laaksonen, Niskanen, Ollila & Riksu 2005)

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. The Email




## Appendix 2. The survey questions

Hey, here are the survey questions

Personal question: Experience on the field in years?

The survey questions are: 1. What are the challenges of workforce diversity in organizations from a front-line managerial view? 2. What are the benefits that a diverse working environment will bring to the working community in a front-line managerial view? 3. What management can do to support an employee with a different cultural background in organizations?

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