The impact of equal employment during recruitment process

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Abstract

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The topic was chosen, because it is current and relevant in today's work life all around the world. Equal employment is an important part of equal society, and people should be hired equally based on their skills and experiences. The concept of equal employment isn't brand new, it has existed for many years and it is protected by law.

The objective of this research is to determine, how equal employment affects to the recruitment processes and how well it is visible to job applicants. The sub-objective is to find out, how companies could improve their recrutment processes to make them more equal. The author is also interested to see, if there are any differences between age groups and genders.

This research uses quantitative methods and was conducted during March 2022. SWOT analysis was created to illustrate, how companies could improve their recruiting methods and if any serious weaknesses exist. The research was conducted with using both primary and secondary resources. The results imply that even though recruitment processes have moved towards equality and most of the times the process is handled equally, there are still times when inapproriate questions or discrimination take a place.

Theoretical framework was mostly based on material used during courses in Haaga-Helia. Inclusive Talent Management by Stephen Frost and Danny Kalman, was one of the main resources used in the thesis. Other materials includes Prime Minister's office publication of the current state of discrimination in Finland. That resource supported the findings of the survey.

The conclusion of this reseach is that equal employement has a positive effect to the recruitment. It doesn't completely remove the possibility of discrimination, but definitely helps reducing it. There are multiple ways to improve equal recruitment by using different tools such as anonymous recruitment and proactive hiring combined with strategic workplace plan.

| **Keywords** |
| Equal employment, recruitment process, diversity, equality, human rights, stereotyping |

Table of contents

1 Introduction

Are employers and recruiters treating every applicant equally? When companies mention that they value diversity and equality, are those themes visible during the recruitment process. In the past few years, equality has been a much-discussed topic around the world. People seek equality in every aspect of their lives, including work-life.

A minor thing during a job interview might make the whole process inequal, employer offers higher salary to the male applicant that shares same qualifications as the woman applicant. These situations might often go unrecognizable for a long time, and the author is motivated to find out how many similar incidents have been left in the dark. The following thesis is quantitative research with an objective to find out what kind of impact equal employment has during recruitment process.

The author's strong theoretical background combined with survey results, and personal thoughts build a picture of the equal employment situation in Finland. The SWOT-analysis was chosen as analysing method. It is well known analytical method and it is a simple way to create a comprehensive picture, which has been analysed in four different ways. The author has gotten familiar with this method during studies, and author has used it on several occasions.

The readers of this thesis could use this as a chance to build better understanding of equal employment. This could be used as a learning material for people, that are interested to see, how they could improve their practices. The author strongly believes that the following findings and thoughts can make readers reflect their own thoughts or behaviour and will give new ideas. Companies can benefit from this thesis and use it when improving their recruitment methods.

1.1 Background, objectives, and limitations

European Union has established laws to protect people from discrimination. European Commission states that the aim of equal opportunities is to protect inclusion and to guarantee participation of under-represented groups in society. EU law recognises equal treatment as a fundamental right. (European Commission 2016.)

The motivation behind this research is the growing need of equality and a pure interest to see, how well companies practice equal employment and if their actions are transparent. The problem is visible on social media e.g., Instagram and Facebook, where people share their personal experiences of facing discrimination and inequality. The author is curious to

see, how companies treat their possible future employees and do employers and recruiters value job applicants regardless of their gender, race, or sexual orientation. Furthermore, author wants to address the unfairness of the system, and give companies a tool to improve their recruitment processes. There are two main questions that will be answered during this thesis:

1. What kind of impact equal employment has during recruitment process?
2. How could companies make their recruitment processes more equal?

After careful thinking, the author decided to focus on only recruitment processes instead of writing about equal employment from employer or company perspective. This limitation gives the author more precise opportunity to study this topic. Geographically, the research is mainly limited to Europe.

1.2 Structure of thesis

The author lays the groundwork for this research by explaining the key concepts and terms, that are used throughout the thesis. After explaining the key concepts, the author moves on to present the main themes and theoretical background. This helps the reader to gain a better understanding of the current equal employment situation in Finland. The author uses several figures to illustrate and support her findings. Data collecting methods and justifications are explained before moving on to analysing the data. Survey results are analysed, and the author compares the results to the theoretical framework. Based on the results, the author creates a SWOT-analysis to show, how companies could improve their recruitment processes and what are the current strengths and weaknesses. Finally, ending the thesis with a conclusion to gather the final thoughts and main points. The author has collected the material from documentaries, books, researches, and online resources. Some materials are from degree program studies in Haaga-Helia.

2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis is divided into three different sections. The first part takes a deeper look into human bias and how it affects people's choices and thoughts. In the same part the theoretical background of inclusive talent management is presented. The second part focuses on implementing the methods of inclusive talent management to equal recruitment. The third section provides an overview of equal employment in Finland and how good relations affect to the recruitment.

There are several different ways to analyse the impact of equal employment: what kind of impact it has to the society, to the organization, and to the employee. In this thesis, the author mainly focuses on the employee perspective. However, it is necessary to address the impacts to the society and to study the disadvantages caused by unequal treatment. The author wants to use her resources to provide a cohesive picture of her findings, to make sure that the reader easily understands the goal of the research and final results.

The author deepens her reflections with the various literary and electronic materials, that the author has collected before and during the thesis project. The main books, of which the author seeks information to support her findings have been used on degree studies and HR specializing studies. There exist several studies about equal employment, some of them has different perspectives and those studies are used to support the research. The existing material usually focuses on one specific group of people (i.e., people with African background, females, or gypsies). Used material is in English or Finnish, and in that case translated into English.

In this thesis, there are few key words, that are used throughout the research. The words are equal employment, recruitment process, human rights, diversity, and equality, stereotyping. Next, the author explains the terms, because understanding of these terms is necessary and guarantees a better understanding of the thesis. The author has chosen the same words to be the key words of this thesis.

2.1 Equal employment

According to HR software developer Workable, equal employment (or equal employment opportunity EEO) legally means that employer cannot hire or refuse to hire someone based on the following characteristics: race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or age. In most countries equal employment is protected by the law. However, equal employment does not guarantee, that someone from unrepresented groups will be hired.

Equal employment exists to make sure, that everyone has equal opportunities to apply for a job and will be treated equally during recruitment process. (Workable s.a.)

2.2   Recruitment process

1. Job recuirement
Building a job description for the role to be filled.

2. Talent sourcing
Publishing the vacant role that exists.

3. Interview and selection
Find the most potential candidates from the tests and interviews.

4. Negotiation
Negotiate the terms and conditions of the job.

5. Final Placement & Orientation
Employ the candidate and make placement. Orientate the new employee about the company and their role.
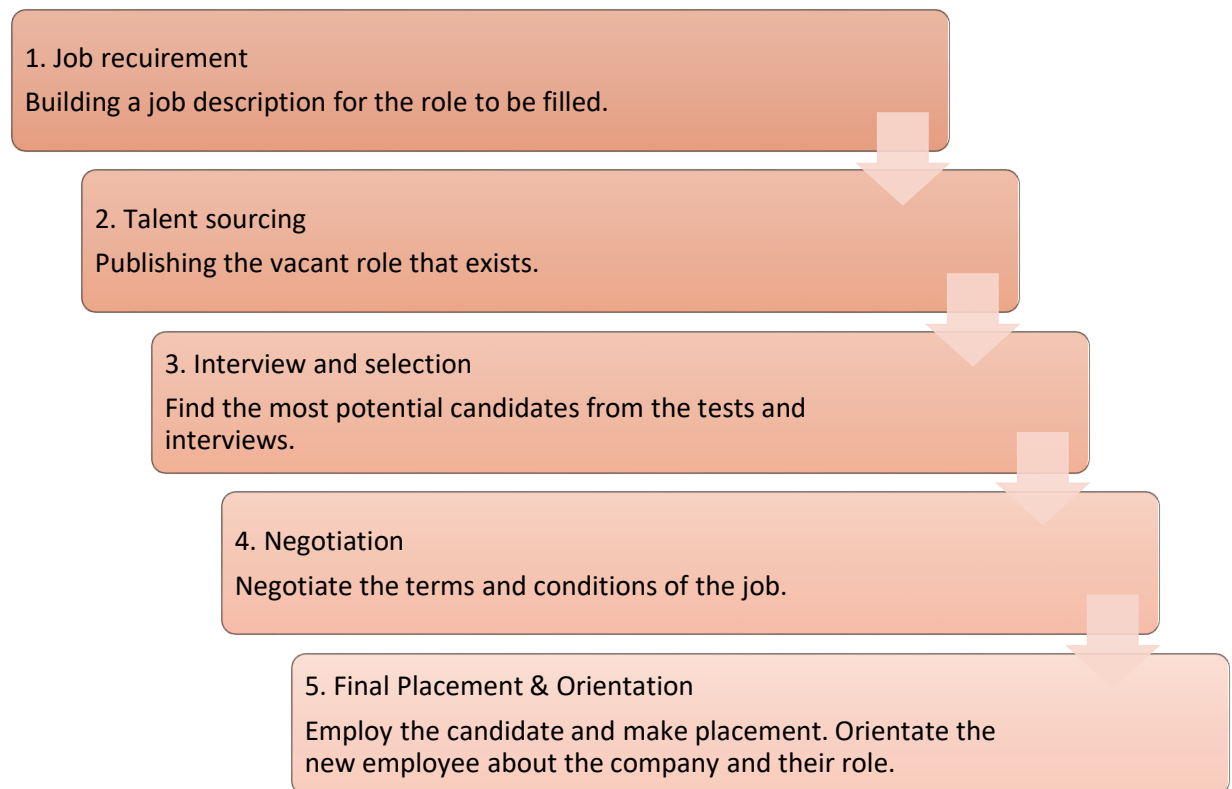
Figure 1. The steps of recruitment process. (Modified Dessler 2012, 105-113.)

Recruitment process can be roughly divided into five or six steps. The first step is to build a job description for the vacant role. This includes choosing the screening methods to find the potential candidates. Companies often use job application forms and interviews to find the potential match. Sometimes different set of tests or psychological analysis are used for help when searching certain features. The second step is to publish the existing vacant role and trying to get as many potential candidates as possible. Third step requires time and patience, during this phase the recruiter interviews and selects the candidates that will receive a job offer. Phase four is all about negotiating the terms of the job and during this step for example salary will be defined. Both parties must agree on the terms of the job before signing the contract of employment. The final step is to orientate the new employee and offer proper training if needed. Successful integration into the work community usually guarantees better performance and outcomes. (Dessler 2012, 105-113.)

2.3   Human rights

Equality and human rights commission defines human rights as the basic rights that concerns each one of us. These rights apply despite of where you come from, how you live your life or what you believe in. Human rights are basic rights that can't be taken away, although they can be restricted if a person violates laws or endangers national security. The base of these rights come from shared values i.e., fairness, equality, and independence. Human rights are protected by law. (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2018a.)

United Nations (UN) founded in 1948, was creating the first international agreement of basic human rights. It is called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Nearly every country in the world has adopted it. Moreover, it has inspired over 80 international treaties and domestic laws. (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2019b.) Universal declaration of human rights formed the basis of European Convention of Human Rights, which is followed by 47 member states of Council of Europe. (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2018c.)

2.4   Diversity

Global diversity practices define diversity as, a dimension that could be used to differentiate people and groups from one another. Simplified, diversity is about empowering and appreciating differences. These differences can be for instance gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion.

" Diversity allows for the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It means understanding one another by surpassing simple tolerance to ensure people truly value their differences. This allows us both to embrace and also to celebrate the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual and place positive value on diversity in the community and in the workforce." (Global diversity practices s.a.)

2.5   Equality

The core idea of equality is according to equality and human rights commission, that everyone should have equal opportunities to make most out of their lives and skills. Furthermore, it is believed that one should not have less opportunities or options in life, because of who they are or where they come from. It is historically proven that people of unrepresented groups have faced discrimination based on their race, nationality, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2019d.)

2.6   Stereotyping

Gary Dessler defines stereotyping as a thought process, where individual ascribes certain behavioural traits to other person based on their apparent membership in a group. (Dessler 2012, 66.) For example, "women can't be as strong as men". In these cases, the assumptions are fully based on someone's stereotypes and own opinions.

3   Talent management and inclusivity

In this chapter, the key concepts of talent management and inclusivity will be explained to the reader. In the first part the concept of homogenous talent management will be covered. The second part will explain, how human bias affects people's thinking and to the choices that they make every day. The third part will give an insight of why organizations need inclusive talent management and diversity.

3.1   Homogenous talent management (HTM)

Stephen Frost and Danny Kalman write about homogenous talent management and how that has been a trend for the last twenty to thirty years. CEO's and recruiters are obsessed to find talented workers and the word talent has been in everyone's mouths for years. Homogenous talent management (HTM) means that people seek for sameness and fail to acknowledge diversity and differences among people. Recruiters and CEOs tend to look for people with similar talents and skills to make sure that those workers will be the "best fit" for the company. This manner often causes companies to be filled with workers sharing the same talents and skills, and that is not necessarily a good thing. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 4-11.)

Table 1. Ecosystems, financial systems, and people system (Frost & Kalman 2016, 11.)

System	Ecosystem	Financial system	People system
Diversity benefits	Biodiversity increases productivity and resilience	Diverse portfolios mitigate risks, and increase resilience	Mitigates groupthink, correlated with higher financial performance
Diversity costs	Costs of conservation	Potentially lower short-run returns	Potential conflict (if unmanaged)
Importance	Each species, no matter how small, has an important role to play in the ecosystem = basis of human existence	Avoids system contagion and economic crises, maintains growth and standard of living	Can improve decision making, market and social relevance and mitigate social exclusion

Charles Darwin proposed an idea of diversity in ecosystems in 1859, on his book On the Origin of Species. This idea proposes that for the ecosystem to thrive and flourish, it needs diversity. In the figure above is explained why different systems need diversity. For

ecosystems biodiversity and diversity overall increases productivity and resilience. Species do better when they are mixed with others and sameness is avoided. Financial systems need diversity as well. The financial crisis in 2008 is a great example what happens when there is a lack of diversity and organizations aim for sameness. Different financial institutions used similar strategies in credit ratings and mortgage handouts. When things went south, these institutions were all in trouble because they used so similar strategies. Now those institutions are forced to have diversity, governments have created so called anti-sameness strategies to avoid the same mistakes that were made before 2008 financial crisis. In financial world diversity might not mean short term returns, the results will show in a long run. Unfortunately, many leaders and CEOs are only interested in short term results and fail to acknowledge the long-term effects. Diversity improves companies' resilience and usually guarantees growth. In people system when you put people together, diversity and differences can first cause conflicts. That is a given fact since everyone is different, and people need to be educated about other people's cultures and habits. When people and especially employees feel included and safe, their work performance is usually better. Like the table shows, when different people are put together, decision making and brainstorming usually improves. That is because different people bring different ideas to the table. Sameness often causes lack of new ideas and improvements, furthermore it might cause CEOs and leaders to ignore serious financial threats or crises. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 11-20.)

3.2 Human bias

To understand, why people act certain way, it is necessary to take a deeper look into human bias and thought processes. Diversity is a complex matter and there are several factors that affect people's thoughts about diversity. Frost and Kalman give an example of diversity in workplaces: a survey proved that in many organizations' diversity is limited to gender. Meaning that their idea of diversity is to make sure that they hire both male and female workers. Gender is part of diversity, but so is age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. These are just the easy examples that usually come into mind when asked to describe diversity. Diversity is also socio-economic, cultural, religious, and linguistic. The following aspects might define someone's whole life and career. For example, linguistics: there are at least hundreds of English dialects in United States alone, not to even mention the differences between United States and United Kingdom. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 20-23.)

"Ultimately, diversity is a combination of a person's physical DNA, their life experience to date and the social context they find themselves in – nature and nurture, or raw materials, location, and education. This leads us to more sophisticated understanding of diversity, rarely articulated in within corporations. Diversity, ultimately, is cognitive difference." (Frost & Kalman 2016, 24.)

Table 2. Types of bias pertinent to talent management (Frost & Kalman 2016, 36.)

Type of Bias	Definition	How it affects decision making
Unconscious bias	Bias that we are unaware of and that happens outside of our control.	Decisions are made instinctively without thought or deliberation.
Cognitive dissonance	The state of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes.	Decisions are based on behaviours and attitudes, often to reduce tension and avoid conflict.
Confirmation bias	The tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of one's existing beliefs.	Prevents us from considering important information when making a decision.
First acceptable option	Feeling compelled to some degree of making a quick decision.	Deciding before considering other opportunities.
Groupthink	Tendency of humans to agree with each other to prevent conflict.	Decisions are based on similar or the same thinking.
Framing bias	Taking into account contextual features of situation.	Base decision in interpretation of the background to a situation.
Egocentricity	Viewing everything in relation to oneself and being self-centred.	Decisions are made on how the person making the decision sees things and not from the others' perspective.

Most of our brain activity happens unconsciously, in fact 98% of the activity. Most of that activity is low order activity such as processing food. When people answer to questions about diversity or racism in a group setting, usually their brain automatically chooses a socially conditioned answer even when one might not consciously believe so. However, regardless of these facts, when hiring or promoting people we are still influenced by the unconscious brain. This causes bias. It is necessary to recognize that even, when people think that they are being objective, most of the times they are not. After recognizing this issue, only then it is possible to work towards objective behaviour.

When asked, if people like diversity, the answer depends on the publicity of the results. If the question is asked publicly, when others might see your answer, people tend to say that they like diversity. However, if the same question is asked privately, the answer usually changes. Frost and Kalman found out that for example in Ireland a professional service firm was planning to set targets for gender representation in the firm. When asked publicly, most partners said that it was a good idea. When the voting was conducted anonymously, it turned out that 69% of the respondents were against the idea. People don't necessarily have bad intentions, when they choose to surround themselves with a homogenous group of people. People want to feel safe and that usually happens when their loved ones, colleagues and neighbours share similar background or lifestyle as them. Even though people claim that they like diversity, the following facts usually tell a different story. This phenomenon is called cognitive dissonance. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 25.) Verywell Mind (2022) defines cognitive dissonance as a term that is used to describe mental discomfort that occurs when holding two conflicts beliefs, values, or attitudes. Usually, people seek for consistency in their attitudes, so conflicts like that cause feelings of discomfort. People try to avoid discomfort that might occur when their actions and beliefs don't match or when they should be doing something that is against their values. (Cherry 2022.)

Everyone has stereotypes about other people. They are used as a cognitive shortcut to cope with information overload. Explained in the table above, confirmation bias means that people only observe behaviour that matches their stereotypes and by doing this actively ignore the evidence that contradicts preconvinced notions. Stereotypes often prevent people seeing other options or to make different decision. For example, recruiters aren't interested to interview people that have foreign sounding name even though they might share identical CV with someone that has a native sounding name. In that situation the recruiter is only making decision based on stereotypes and own beliefs. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 36.) Research suggests that in Finland, people with foreign sounding names struggle to even get job interviews. A researcher in Helsinki university, Akhlaq Ahmad did an experiment, where he sent about 5000 job applications pretending to be Finnish, English, Russian, Iraqi, and Somali all of them sharing similar qualifications. The results were disturbing: Finnish names got 390 invitations to job interviews, English names roughly around 140, Russian names got around 130, Iraqi and Somali names got both less than hundred. Important aspect was also that immigrant women received more invitations to job interviews than men, suggesting that immigrant men are seen as a bigger threat. These results prove that recruiters are letting their own stereotypes and prejudices affect decision making, and they were choosing the applicants based on their assumed background. (Martti, Mäntymaa & Pietarinen 2019.)

As the figure above illustrates, there are multiple factors that may affect to the decision making. Sometimes people try to find the first acceptable option and after that decision-making cease. Similar situation might occur when recruitment needs to happen quickly and there is a rush to fill in the vacant position. In that situation recruiter might just pick the first possible candidate that seems "good enough", without even considering other options. Groupthink is common when working in a bigger groups or teams. People tend to avoid difficult situation and conflicts, so instead they decide to agree when making decisions, even though personally they might not agree on the given matter. This kind of behaviour often causes lack of new ideas or improvements, people don't want to give dissenting opinions to avoid conflict. However, when people are acting out together as a group, they will usually make more riskier decisions. Sometimes used language and the given context might affect to decision-making. Some words simply have more negative tone in them and that gives a negative feeling to the person reading the text. Usually, diversity training is so poorly framed, that people see it as a negative thing instead of an opportunity to educate themselves. Managers and other senior level officers rarely pay attention to those kinds of details and that causes diversity training to become a negative necessity. Egocentrism is used when person simply base decisions on their own beliefs and to gain personal profit. In those situations, person decides to ignore other people's perspective and base decisions on their own point of view. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 37-38.)

In conclusion, these types of biases mentioned above, affect decision making whether people want it or not. Reflecting own behaviour in different situations, might be a good opportunity to spot the moments when decision making is affected by bias. It is hard to always stay objective and not let own personal prejudices or bias affect decision making. By understanding the following aspects of how human mind works and how people are almost always influenced by different types of biases, it is possible to make recruitment processes more equal and to create a safe environment for recruitment. In the next chapter, the theory of inclusive talent management will be presented and different methods to approach diversity are explained, so that the readers can understand why ITM is much needed in companies.

3.3 Inclusive talent management (ITM)

In chapter 3.1, the reasons why homogenous talent management won't be the best option in a long run were explained. In this chapter the focus is on inclusive talent management, and why companies should aim to that. Like mentioned earlier, homogenous talent management creates workforce, where workers share similar talents and represent certain groups of people. Inclusive talent management focuses on appreciating diversity and the main idea is to support those features that make people unique.

The definition of inclusive talent management is that all people regardless of their sex, gender, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation are valuable and have unique skill sets to offer. The main goal in inclusive talent management is that it allows everyone to discover their full potential and it supports people finding their own skills and strengths. In companies, this means that employees are allowed to practice self-reflection and development and companies support that by creating safe and nurturing environment to do so. (Meyers 2016, 4.)

Table 3. HTM and ITM approaches to global diversity (Frost & Kalman 2016, 81.)

Diversity	HTM	ITM
Language	English (or equivalent)	English (or equivalent) and local language
Age	Inter-generational conflict	Learning from each other and avoiding stereotyping
Gender/gender ID	Focus on single variable gender	Focus on women with gender one aspect of their identity
Flexible working	Flexible working as a female issue	Flexible working for both genders
Ethnicity	Compliance based	Ethnicity one factor
Religion	Prohibited or monopolised and seen in conflict with LGBTQ	Multi-faith permitted
LGBTQ	Prohibited or seen in conflict with religion	Inclusive culture allows LGBTQ individuals to come out
Disability	Medical model	Social and medical model
Veterans	Charitable	Unique skill sets to offer
Socio-Economic	Charitable	Moral as well as different skill sets to offer
Expatriates	Expatriates dominate	Expatriates and locals

ITM in international companies is a must. Ultimately, it is a better approach to truly achieve diversity and inclusivity. Language is probably one of the most important factors of inclusivity. Workers must be able to fluently communicate with each other and especially in international companies that have offices in multiple countries, language skilled workforce is needed. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 74-75.) Helsingin Sanomat conducted a survey to find out, what kind of experiences immigrants have when they apply jobs in Finland. The most important takeaway was, that employers often require fluent or close to native skills in Finnish which is nearly impossible to achieve for immigrants. It is illegal to require native language skills and it is often hard to define, what are those native language skills. Language is often used as an excuse to refuse to hire immigrant/foreign workers. Many foreign workers felt that Finland advertises itself as an attractive place to work, when in reality many foreign worker struggles to even get a job because of the language requirements set by the companies. (Kokko 2021.) When companies expand

and open new offices around the world, it is important to also include the local language to the selection of languages and to urge workers to use that language. That increases inclusivity and the local workforce can feel themselves included. Hiring people from certain age range can often lead to sameness and lack of diversity. People of different ages often bring different perspectives to the table, and it offers learning opportunities for everyone. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 74-75.)

Gender is another factor that needs to be seen through different perspective. Instead of strictly focusing on gender, it should be seen as one part of their identity. Meaning that gender is only a part of human identity and people should not be defined only based on their gender. However, MSCI research suggests that companies, who have women as directors have the highest employee productivity and those companies usually have wider talent pools (Eastman 2018.) Despite of the fact that gender equality has improved in the recent years, women still account only 37% of the GDP even though they make up to 50 percent of the global working-age population. McKinsey report illustrates that the number is even lower in different regions: India (17%) and Middle East (18%). These numbers suggest that female workers are still an underrepresented group in work life and economy. (Desvaux, Devillard, de Zelicourt, Kossoff, Labaye & Sancier-Sultan 2017.) This goes hand in hand with flexible working. Flexible working should be seen as an issue for both genders and not as a female issue. Too often it is assumed, that woman is the one staying home with the kids, when it can be other way around. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 74-75.) The Guardian article suggests that women, who accept the offer to mainly work from home, may damage their future careers. Working mothers might be missing out those spontaneous in-office conversations about career and career development, that may lead to promotions. Men often work full time in the office, so for them the risks to damage their careers are smaller. (Partridge 2021.)

Religion is often monopolised or prohibited in the workplaces. Some companies don't allow any visible signs of religion and have prohibited all religious activities. The other option is that religion is monopolised, and only certain religions are allowed. The more diverse approach allows multi-faith in workplaces and supports different religions. Religion and LGBTQ are often seen as a matter, that conflict with each other. The homogenous mindset says that it can be one or another, not both. It means, that the companies usually choose religion over LGBTQ, and say that they are conflicting with each other, so it is not possible to have both. ITM approach allows both of them to co-exist and supports also LGBTQ community. Like mentioned in the table, inclusive culture and approving environment allow LGBTQ individuals to come out. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 76.)

People with disabilities are often completely left out when recruiters search talented workers. Even those companies, that have set diversity as a goal, haven't often included disabled people into that group. According to Accenture 2018 white paper on accessibility, companies that have succeeded incorporating disabled candidates have seen 28% higher revenue. Other positive aspects were reduced turnover and lower recruiting costs. Disabled people offer unique talent and skill sets, that should be taken into account when searching talented employees. (Stadler 2019.) Same goes with veterans, that are often not considered as talented workers. Each of them has different skills and talents to offer and ITM approach supports hiring those candidates. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 77.)

According to American Psychological Association, socio-economic status is defined as combination of education, income, marital status, religion, age, and occupation that define one's social standing. People from different socio-economic groups face different challenges when searching and applying jobs. Companies might value degrees from certain schools and people from lower socio-economic groups might not had the same opportunities to get that education. This leaves certain socio-economical groups out and lowers their chances of getting hired. (American Psychological Association s.a.) Homogenous talent management sees socio-economic as something that could be charitable, whereas ITM sees it as morality issue. ITM recognizes that people with different socio-economic status have each unique talent. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 78.)

When international companies open a new office in different country, they often send expatriates to work there. Those workers are originally from somewhere else and just re-locating. It is important to hire local workers since they know the culture and local traditions better. Together expatriates and local workers create more successful business, when talent, knowledge of the subject and knowledge of the culture is combined. However, it is necessary to train the expatriates before re-locating them, so that the adaption the local culture and environment would be as smooth as possible. Inclusive talent management recognizes these issues and supports more diverse workforce. HTM would only use expatriates and ignore the opportunities with local workers. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 79-80.)

Table 3 illustrates, how ITM takes more inclusive approach to global diversity and how different diversity aspects are handled. In global companies, diversity is always present, and it is necessary to pay attention the differences among the workers. The key word is culture. By offering an emphasizing, warm, and welcoming culture, it has a positive effect to the work culture and environment. Nevertheless, it is still the employee's job to adapt to the work environment, but companies can and should support the adapting process. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 81.)

3.3.1 The benefits of ITM

Inclusive talent management has its benefits, and it supports organisational growth. Four key takeaways are listed to show, why companies should use inclusive talent management.

1. Customer growth and retention

Companies should be constantly reflecting the needs of their customers and adapt to the changing world. Customers know what they want and if the company fails to deliver, customers will find a new company. Diversity can open markets to new customers and help to enlarge the customer base. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 95-97.)

2. Employer brand and reputation

Job seekers are aware of companies' reputation, and they are actively seeking companies with good reputation. Graduates are looking for companies that value diversity, and talent is flooding towards those companies, who offer diverse working environment. Employees want safe environment and fulfilling career, employee engagement is the key to create real inclusion. Inclusion might help attract talent and to retain and motivate employees. Talent might not look the same as it did ten or twenty years ago, that's why it is important to look past surface and wider the scope. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 98-100.)

3. Productivity and growth

The focus should be on removing the barriers to growth. There are also other barriers than just taxes and inflexible labour markets. These barriers are for example subconscious bias, implicit associations, and sexist attitudes. Everyone should work on themselves to make sure that they don't help keeping up these barriers. To make the companies grow, investments towards the employees need to be done. With people, gaining value comes from the margin, from difference and by reaching out to include more people. It is necessary to leverage people's differences in order to extract their market value. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 100-104.)

4. Creativity, innovation, and better decision making

Companies should be pooling their resources and sharing talents to maximize creativity and innovations. Like mentioned earlier, diversity can help reducing groupthink and it promotes innovations. Inclusive talent management supports hiring from different socio-economic groups, meaning hiring people with different educational backgrounds. This ensures wider talent pools and more unique skill sets. Inclusion is also about creating constructive conflicts, where employees can openly discuss about their ideas, challenge,

and refine ideas. Diverse talent needs to be managed to avoid unwanted conflicts in group-settings. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 104-106.)

These four points prove that inclusivity and diversity support financial growth. Customers and job seekers use internet and other tools to find out information about companies and it is nearly impossible to hide unpleasant truths. Talent is flowing towards companies, who are willing to work to achieve diversity and customers bring money to companies, who share similar values with them.

3.3.2 ITM conclusion

Inclusive talent management tries to protect diversity and it is meant to help building more inclusive and diverse workforce. The main difference between ITM and HTM is that HTM sees diversity as a challenge, whereas ITM sees it as an opportunity.
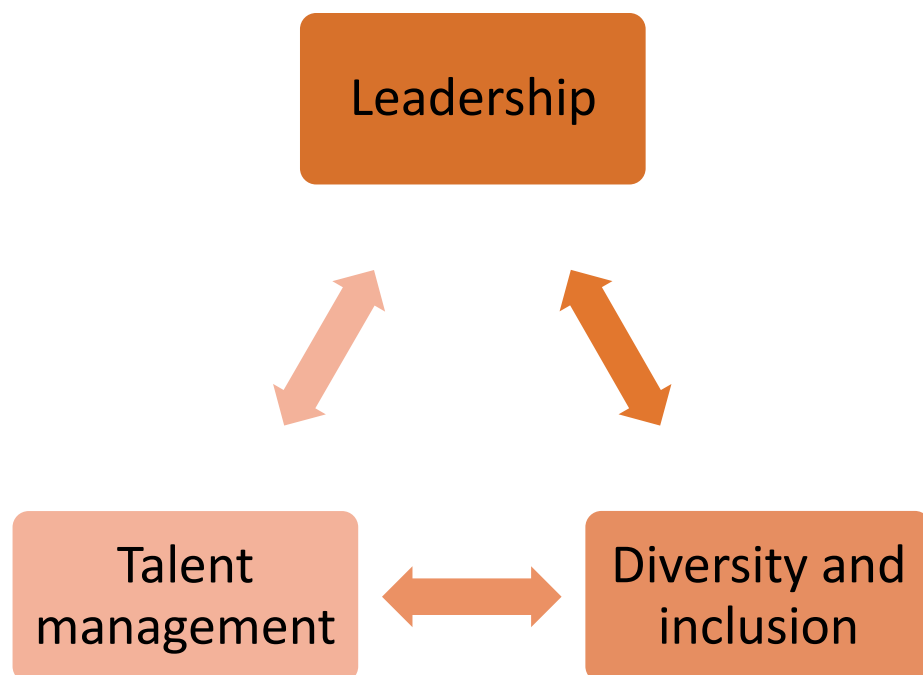

Figure 2. ITM conceptual framework (organisation) (Frost & Kalman 2016, 92.)

Leadership is the key to overcome the traditional view of talent. The organisation can increase its talent supply through adopting inclusive leadership. Diversity and talent should not be viewed as opponents but as concepts that support each other. One should try to understand different candidates and to adapt to different styles, and that can help the organisation to increase its collective intelligence and resource base. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 92.)
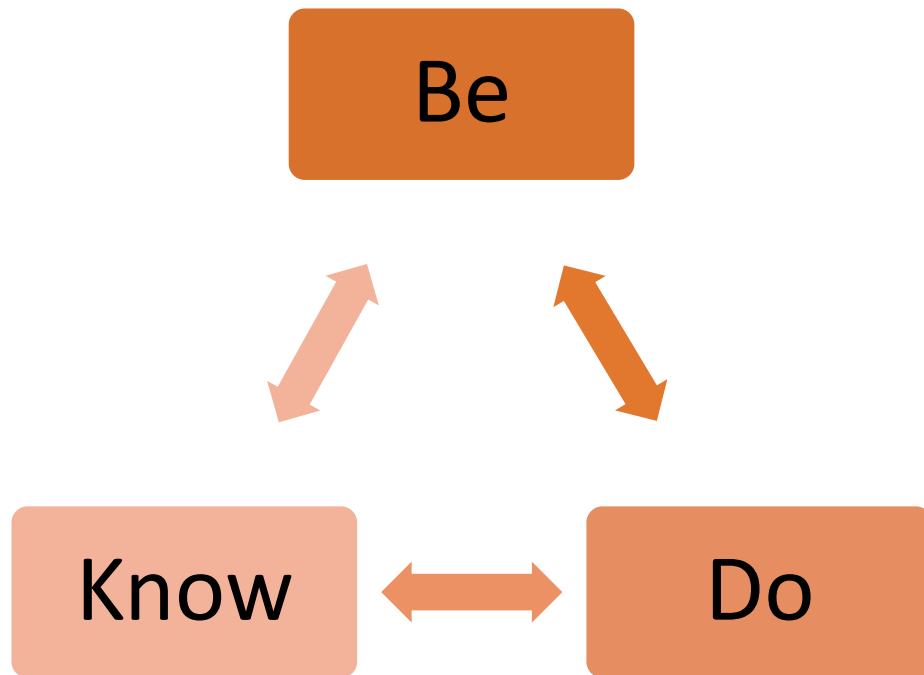
Figure 3. ITM conceptual framework (individual) (Frost & Kalman 2016, 92.)

Both organisation (talent buyer) and individual (talent supplier) can increase the talent value. By highlighting different capabilities, individual can increase its value to the organisation. Instead of trying to blend in, one should promote their unique qualities that make them a valuable asset. In the figure above, is explained how individuals could do that. The most important thing is to be themselves and bring out their best qualities. The know part is to understand, what one brings to the table and what kind of skills one has. Do means that individual can truly be themselves and use their knowledge. Leaders should take the responsibility of adapting and allowing others to present their whole selves. Organisation should take the lead to overcome segregated mindset of talent and diversity. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 92-93.)

4   Equal recruitment

After learning the benefits of inclusive talent management, the next step is to study, how those learning points can be implemented to the recruitment processes.

4.1   Attracting diverse talent

Inclusive talent management helps organisation to achieve a wider talent pool with more diverse skill sets. However, organisations need to be able to prove that they really value diversity, and it is included in the strategy. It is everyone's responsibility to improve diverse hiring and inclusive environment, every employee, recruiter, and employer should contribute to that. One of the very first steps is to recognize the skills and capacities that the organisation is currently carrying. Knowing the people and their skills and knowing the possible risks. Having a people plan (or strategic workforce plan SWP) helps to plan ahead and to reduce the moments of panic when all of sudden positions need to be filled as soon as possible. SWP is ultimately a long-term view that allows the recruitment to become proactive instead of being reactive. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 121-124.)

Sometimes companies aim to be diverse, but they have no idea, if it they are or aren't. That is, because they haven't set any targets or ways to measure the diversity. Actively collecting the data helps the management to analyse whether they have reached the targets. Data can be collected via staff surveys, engagement surveys, or on-time-sheets boarding. When collecting and publishing the data, the company improves their transparency and that is a one way to attract talent. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 124-126.)

Shaking up the selection criteria and rewriting the job descriptions can help to attract new and diverse talent. Too often companies are stuck with the same old methods that they have used many years and young talent is not interested. Instead of strictly focusing on language skills, technology skills, and the skills that are needed for the job, recruiters should include other factors to the mix. When combining the needed criteria with stated and scored criteria, can the recruiter truly find the best fit for the company. Stated criteria can be for example language skills or fit for the company. Scored criteria is usually set of tests or assignments that test the applicant's skills in certain areas. In some cases, these criteria could be used instead of CV, when evaluating the applicants. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 126-129.)

4.2   During the recruitment

In chapter 3.2 human bias was observed. The conclusion was that everyone has bias, and even when people are trying to be objective, they most likely are not. Prejudices and

stereotypes affect to the thinking and people make decisions based on those. For example, in United States, recruiters often assume that applicants, who have attended certain schools are better at the job than applicants who didn't go to that school. However, there are very little results that support that statement and nowadays companies don't require certain educational background. There are some ways to reduce the effect of bias by raising the awareness of bias. When recruiters are aware of their own prejudices and bias, they can learn to think more inclusively. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 130-131.)

Using mixed panels can help improving diversity. Recruiter panels that have more than two members with different backgrounds usually make more diverse choices. The ideal situation would be that each recruiter with different background and department will individually interview the candidate and after individual interviews, the recruiters will get together as a group and interview the candidates. This approach would guarantee the most diverse results and it would also mitigate the groupthink. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 133.)

Hiring teams not individuals can boost diversity. Humans are more likely to make diverse choices when they are put together as a group. When candidates are interview as a group, the focus shifts to the skills and performance instead of attractiveness. Usually, this method also saves time and money because several candidates can be interviewed at once, instead of doing multiple rounds of 1-1 interviews. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 134.)

5 Equal employment in Finland

During this chapter the reader will gain better understanding of how equal employment is visible in Finland and what are the current problems related to the topic. First it is necessary to take a closer look at the legislation behind the equal employment. The second part analyses current problems in Finland. The third part gives insight, how good relations affect behaviour and how it is related to equal employment.

5.1 Legislation behind the equal employment

For the past 50 years, there has been unparalleled global trend in anti-discrimination and equal employment legislation. These policies have instituted legislation to protect unrepresented groups against discrimination and harassment. (Caven, Nachmias, Ridgway 2019, 15.) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is ultimately the core of all equal employment legislations. This declaration was given in 1948 by United Nations. It includes a part that is relevant to equal employment:

- Everyone has the right to work
- Everyone has the right to equal pay for equal work
- Everyone has the right to rest and leisure

In Finland, non-discrimination act was established in 2004 to protect employees from discriminating behaviour and to promote equality. The Equality Act (established in 2005) protects against gender related discrimination. (Mor Barak 2017, 16-29.) Non-discrimination act was created to make sure, that no one is discriminated because of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, origin, nationality, language, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, health, or disability (Ministry of Justice s.a.a.). Those legislations are supervised by occupational safety and health authorities, non-discrimination ombudsman, and in criminal cases general courts (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland s.a.). The prohibition of discrimination based on gender was extended to include discrimination based on gender identity in 2015. Discrimination towards gender and sexual minorities has been shown in previous studies and researches, when examining multiple discrimination. A situation where one is discriminated because of his or her age and gender is a typical example of multiple discrimination. In those occasions, there needs to be at least two reasons that caused the discrimination to happen. (Kanninen, Lilja, Rask & Virkola 2022, 10.)

Sometimes it might be hard to prove that discrimination has happened and there aren't other factors affecting to the situation. Usually, those cases are word against word situations, and it is the applicant's job to prove that discrimination has happened and that requires undisputed evidence. There are still some deficiencies in the law. For instance, if

a woman candidate suspects that she faced discrimination based on her gender, the equality act guarantees that she can require a statement from the employer. However, if a candidate suspects that he or she has faced discrimination based on their ethnicity, law doesn't guarantee that he or she can request a statement from the employer. (Mäntymaa 2019.)

5.2   Current situation

Prime Minister's Office published a report that shows the current situation of discrimination in Finland. According to that report, women still face more discrimination than men. However, both female and male employees agree that discrimination based on gender has reduced during recent years. A more recent phenomenon is that people experience discrimination based on gender ID (transsexuality) and gender characteristics (intersexuality). Almost 50 % of the Eurobarometer survey respondents answered that gender ID might put people into unfair position when applying a job. (Kanninen, Lilja, Rask & Virkola 2022, 23.)

Pregnancy and the plans to go through infertility treatments sometimes put women into unfair position. YLE news reported that Simpukka, association of infertility conducted a survey, and the findings suggest, that women have faced discrimination when they have tried to combine work and IVF treatments. A common case is that after the IVF treatment, when a woman would need to take sick leave, employer refuses to pay salary for those days. Several women responded that when they were asked to give a reason for sick leave, they wrote down something else so that they would get paid. However, if an employee tells employer that she needs sick leave, employer has a right to ask why. This puts employees into unfair position, because employers can't ask about plans to get pregnant, employee is forced to talk about those plans. 16 % of the respondents said that the discrimination happened during recruitment. When recruiter or employer found out about IVF treatments, they refused to give a promotion or full-time contract. (Terävä 2021.)

Ethnic discrimination is another common form of discrimination in Finland. Immigrates and foreign workers are in different position when applying a job in Finland. They face racism and discrimination starting from the recruitment phase. Over half of the Eurobarometer survey respondents stated that ethnicity has a negative impact to employment and finding a job. Discrimination is also common among linguistic minorities (i.e., Arabic, Somali and Russian). Workers with poor language skills reported that they have faced discrimination and unfair treatment when getting work benefits and promotions. Like mentioned earlier, people with foreign sounding names struggle to get job interviews and to get hired.

FinMonik-research suggests that especially men with African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Latin American background face the most discrimination (attitudes towards them among colleagues and employers) compared to other backgrounds. Monimuotoisuus barometer survey respondents said that ethnic discrimination happens because of people's prejudices and stereotypes. (Kanninen, Lilja, Rask, Virkola 2022, 34-40.) Finland is one of the most racist countries in European Union, suggests a study commissioned EU. The entrenched structures of society are slowing down the eradication of racism and for example, a native white Finnish man might not recognise the same problems that immigrants face every day. Nevertheless, it is everyone's job to dismantle racists structures. By teaching and educating people to recognise racism and to how to react when witnessing racism, are prime examples of how to build more equal society. (Koskinen 2020.)

The most common forms of discrimination in Finland based on survey conducted by Prime Minister's office, are age and health discrimination. Both young and old age were the basis of discrimination. However, the crimes caused by discrimination were most of the times related to the gender and health. According to the survey, ethnical minorities and older people were less likely to be called up for an interview. The researchers agreed that they couldn't find a single tool that would reduce recruitment discrimination. However there has been an experiment in Helsinki, where anonymous recruitment was introduced as a method to reduce discrimination. This method gave positive results that indicated that anonymous recruitment could be used as a tool. Especially the discrimination of older people reduced when using this method. Although the research suggests that there aren't any proof that anonymous recruitment would have any impact on gender equality in recruitment. (Kokkonen 2020.)

5.3   Good relations

Good relations can be defined as relations between population groups. The goal is to make minorities, social, and structural issues visible that those groups face on their everyday lives. The aim is to affect people's sense of security, attitudes, participation, and interaction. Several different policies have been created to protect and nurture good relations (i.e., social, health, environmental, security and equality). United Kingdom is a pioneer in this field, and they have also used theories of group behaviour and social psychology to support their policies. Non-discrimination is important part of good relations, no one should be left out because of their age, gender, sexuality, disability, or ethnicity and at the same people should be seen as individuals and not a member of certain group. Good relation policies can be used for example to combat hate speech, to educate people

about human rights, and to take measures to increase inclusivity. (Ministry of Justice s.a.b.)

Good relations are there during everyday life and they play a part how well people can handle challenges. Someone with strong good relations might survive better in life than someone with poor good relations. A disabled man, whose family has supported him and encouraged to study and do sports despite of his disability, has been actively part of his community. He has faced some challenges and accessibility has been a problem sometimes. However, with the help and support of his community he has managed to get a job and participates in different charities. A young woman just quit high school. She didn't see any point to study since it didn't do any good to her parents either, both of them are unemployed at the moment. She is annoyed that she can't afford to get cool new clothes and things that her classmates valued. She would rather stay at home and play online games than go to school, where her classmates are constantly judging her. These two are prime examples of how good relations affect to the quality of life. Good relations can be divided into four different categories: attitudes, safety, interaction, and participation. (Ministry of Justice s.a.b.)
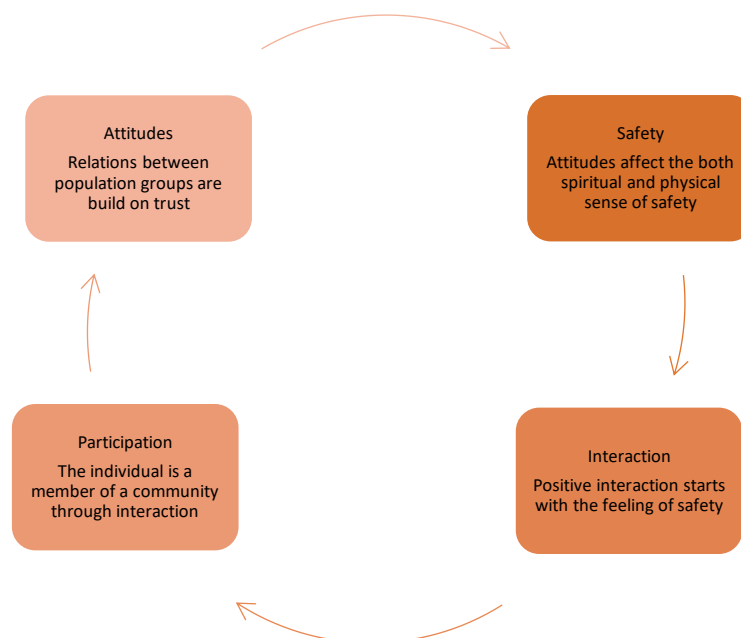
5.3.1 Good relations indicators

Figure 4. Good relation indicators (Ministry of Justice s.a.c.)

As seen in the figure above, attitudes are the base of good relations, every relationship is built on trust and without it, it is almost impossible to build a healthy relationship. Attitude includes mutual respect towards one another and the feeling that everyone is respected and valued as they are. Prejudices and personal images are also part of attitudes, each

people have a unique viewing of the world. People have prejudices towards certain groups of people and those can affect, how they treat other people. Trust is a key part of attitudes, the level of personal trust towards other groups and the level of trust between groups and authorities. People should be able to trust that authorities treat every population group equally and groups are treating other groups equally. How an individual views diversity and how much they value diversity, is part of attitude. Respect, prejudices and images, trust, and valuing diversity together build the attitude, that defines how people treat each other and it affects to the sense of safety. Personal experience of safety and how person's sense of socioeconomical and mental security or insecurity affect the perception of safety. Own experiences of discrimination and hate/violent crimes affect people's sense of security and their attitudes. Identity and the ability to be oneself is part of safety, everyone should be able to feel comfortable to be themselves wherever they are. Awareness of rights is part of safety. The awareness of fundamental and human rights and the access to justice is helps one to feel more secure. Safety enhances the chances to have positive interaction with other population groups. The sense of isolation or belonging define whether one feels connected to the community (family, friends, city, and workplace) and society or whether they feel lonely and isolated. Receiving and giving support is strongly connected to this and defines the sense of belonging or isolation. When one has strong sense of belonging and they feel like they can receive support from their friends and loved ones, they are most likely to give back support to others. Personal characteristics define, how well an individual can interact with people and the confidence to connect people with diverse backgrounds. The context and experiences of interaction with diverse range of people affect to social networks and friends. When interacting with other people, one participates to the community and society. Participation happens when one's attitude is positive, sense of security is guaranteed, and one feels safe to interact with other people. Like in the example, when one feels that they have an influence and can decide their course of life, the outcomes are usually more positive. The perception of influence and influence through participation affects to the desire to participate. Personal habits and motivation are important parts whether one is interested to participate or not. Same goes with non-inclusion, if one has experienced that they are not included, it might affect to the motivation to participate and connect with the community. Participation can also be seen as a political task, taking part of voting, and trusting political institutions. The indicator was developed in UK, and it can be used to rework the relations between different population groups. By improving each actor individually, it can help to boost the good relations as a whole. (Ministry of Justice s.a.c.)

5.3.2   Good relations conclusion

Everyone can take part of improving good relations, it concerns everyone, and it affects everyone's life. There are multiple ways to improve good relations: as an individual, civil society organisation activist, or professional. Organisations can do their part and contribute; they can improve good relations inside and outside of the company. Like explained in the chapter 3.3.1, good relations and diverse attitude are also beneficial for the company. Different actors in society can improve good relations in different ways. Governments can communicate with citizens about diversity and make sure that enough information and knowledge is offered. Governments can also fund projects that support improving good relations. Businesses can ensure that the communication around diversity stays open and both customers and employees can trust that the workplace supports diverse environment. Equality planning is also a one way to improve good relations in organisations. In Finland, companies of 30 or more workers are required by law to make such a plan. The meaning of the plan is to show, how companies will strategically implement good relations and equality in their company. (Ministry of Justice s.a.d.) Good relations support equal employment and vice versa. When companies ensure that they respect diverse communities and value diverse workforce, it is high-likely that recruitment processes are equal.

6 Conducting the research

In this chapter the research methods will be introduced and analysed. For the collection of data in the empirical part of the thesis, a survey was conducted to get insight of people's experiences and opinions about equal employment.

6.1 Selecting research method

The research method in this thesis is quantitative research with data collected from primary and secondary resources. The primary data was collected from a survey. This research method was chosen, because it allows to collect data from large amount of people with low costs. The sampling method was simple random sampling with total of 70 number of responders. In the survey the targeted group were people that are older than 18 and still active in work life. The wide scope was chosen, because the author believes that people from different age groups might have different experiences and opinions about the topic in question. However, the largest number of answers came from the age group 25-34. It was presumed that there would be more women answering to the survey than men. The results prove that over half of the respondents were women. To make the survey as inclusive as possible, it was conducted in English and Finnish. This option guaranteed that everyone would have equal opportunity to answer the survey.

6.1.1 Questionnaire process

The questionnaire of the research was designed in a platform called Webropol. The survey was designed to be as short as possible, to make sure that people finish the whole survey. It can be challenging to get enough responds when collecting data from large amount of people. Therefore, the author chose only seven questions that were included in the survey. To make it easy for the respondents, most of the questions were multiple choice questions and there were only two open-ended questions. All questions were mandatory to eliminate the possibility of people not responding to all the questions.

The survey was structured so that the first two questions were background information about the respondents. The third and fourth question focused on recruitment experiences and to find out if the respondents felt that their recruitment processes were handled equally. It felt important to find out if companies' values have been visible during recruitment process. The fifth question focuses on that aspect, and if the respondent answered yes, the optional sixth questions asked them to specify how it was visible. The final question was an open-ended question, where the respondents were asked to explain, how they would improve recruitment processes so that those would be more equal.

The objective of this survey was to examinate, what kind of recruitment experiences people have had and if they thought that those processes have been handled equally. Another objective was to find out, how people would improve recruitment processes to make them more equal.

6.2   Collecting data

The primary empirical data was collected through a survey. The survey was created in platform called Webropol and published in March 2022. The author shared the anonymous link in Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram platforms to reach as many respondents as possible. The survey was also shared in group chats among other students and family members. In total 70 finished answers were collected. Although 70 responses were collected, the amount of data was not enough to make the results reliable, and this could potentially affect the validity and reliability of the research.

6.3   Analysing the results

The aim of the survey was to collect insights of people's recruitment experiences. The survey included both quantitative and qualitative elements. To make sure that respondents would answer to every question, most questions had ready-made answers and all but one of the questions were mandatory. However, the risk exists that a respondent can answer to open-ended question with a comma or a single letter if they don't want to answer to that question. The survey had two open-ended questions. In average, it would take approximately four minutes to answer to the survey.

The first part of the survey was general information such as age and gender. The second part focused on recruitment experiences. And the final part focused on how respondents saw companies' values and how would they personally improve recruitment process.
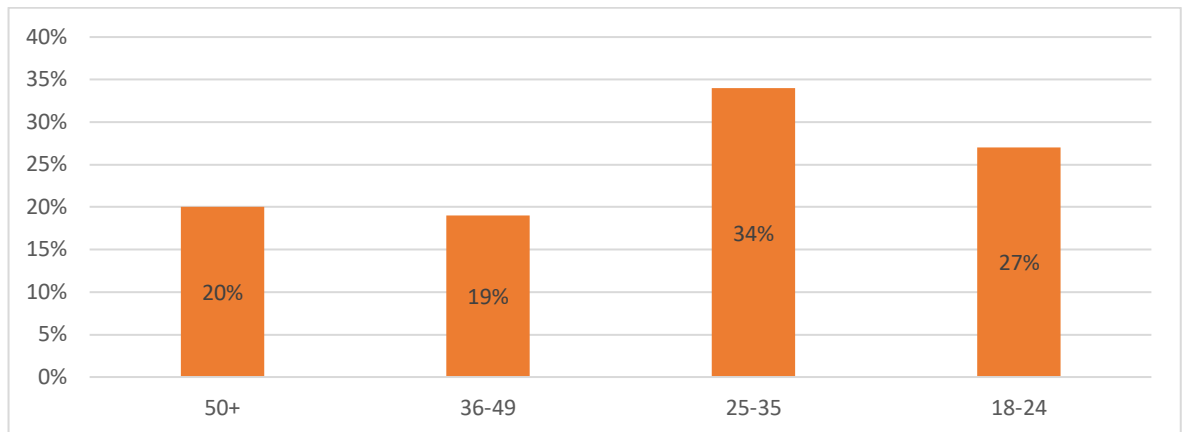
6.3.1   General information

Figure 5. Question 1 – Age groups of respondents.

In the survey the biggest age group was 25–35-year-olds (34 %). The second biggest group was 18-24-year-olds (27 %). It is noticeable that the differences between different age groups aren't big and especially there were almost equal number of respondents from age groups of 36-49 (19 %) and 50+ (20 %), the difference between those groups was only one percent. There was no specific target group so it can be said that the survey reached its audience.
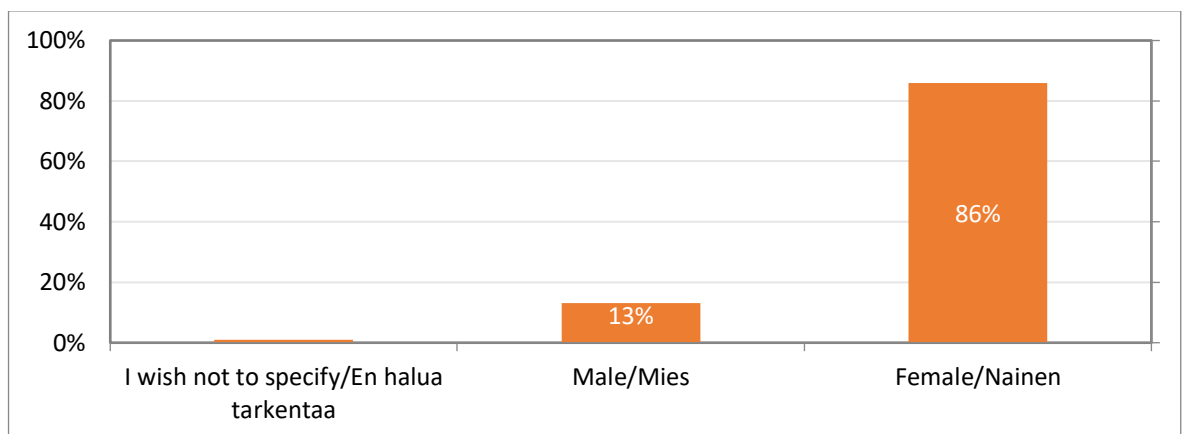

Figure 6. Question 2 – Gender of respondents

Well over half of the respondents were females (86 %) and 13 % of the respondents were males. Only 1,4 % didn't want to specify their gender. As mentioned earlier, it was presumed that most of the respondents would be females. However, once again there was no specific gender target. The gender can be relevant to the results, since it is a well-known fact that females face discrimination more often than men. Furthermore, it is important to get variety and get responds from both genders.
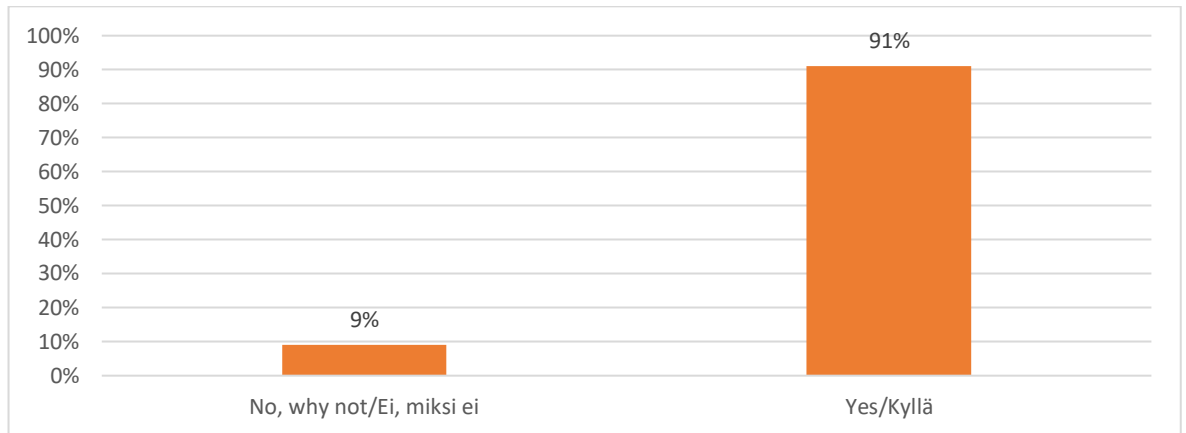
6.3.2 Recruitment experiences

Figure 7. Question 3 – During the recruitment process, have you felt that the recruitment process has been handled equally?

The second part of the survey offered more insight of how the respondents have experienced recruitments. The first question in this part, was to find out if the recruitment processes have been handled equally. Over 90 % of the respondents stated that they felt that their recruitment was handled equally. Nine percent of the respondents answered no to the question. In case of the answer no, this question had an open-ended question, where the respondent was able to tell why they felt so.

Option names	Text
No, why not/Ei, miksi ei	Not always, often Finnish-speaking talents are preferred even Finnish is far from mandatory for the job based on requirements listed and job itself.
No, why not/Ei, miksi ei	No, from my experience I have worked in male dominated places of work
No, why not/Ei, miksi ei	Because of inappropriate questions
No, why not/Ei, miksi ei	Jokaiseen hakemaank työpaikkaan onnaina palkattu mies. Koen sen johtuvan iästäni ja siitä että olen nainen. Naisen oletetaan perustavan perheen ja saavan lapsia 25-30 ikävuosien aikana. Koen että ollessani 25 vuotias, todetaan työpaikan kistannuksen näkökulmasta miehen olevan edullisempi/pitkäaikaisempi ja varmempi työntekijä. Tämä on tosin vain mielipide, mutta keskusteluani eri yrityksien johtohenkilöstön kanssa, eivät he asiaa ole kiistäneetkään.

Picture 1. Open-ended question – Why the employment process was not handled equally?

The first respond suggests that the recruiter favours Finnish-speaking candidates even though in some cases it is not even justified to require such skills. This illustrates the same results that were seen in Helsingin Sanomat article, where foreign workers weren't hired because the recruiters wanted a native Finnish speaker instead. Like mentioned before, recruiters might use language as an easy excuse to refuse to hire foreign/immigrant workers. (Kokko 2021.) Two answers suggest that the recruitment process was not handled equally, and they were discriminated based on gender. In both cases, the hired candidate was male and the other respondent states that she believes

that possible pregnancy and plans to start a family affected to the decision-making. Once again, the results are in line with the data collected by Simpukka association. It is a fact that women might face discrimination when they are planning to start a family and even though it is illegal to ask about pregnancy, some employers make assumptions based on their own experiences and prejudices. (Terävä 2021.) One of the respondents stated that the recruiter had asked inappropriate questions but didn't specify, what kind of questions those were. Inappropriate questions could be related to the religion, race, sexual orientation, marital status, health, political activity, or plans to start a family (Kyngäs 2018).
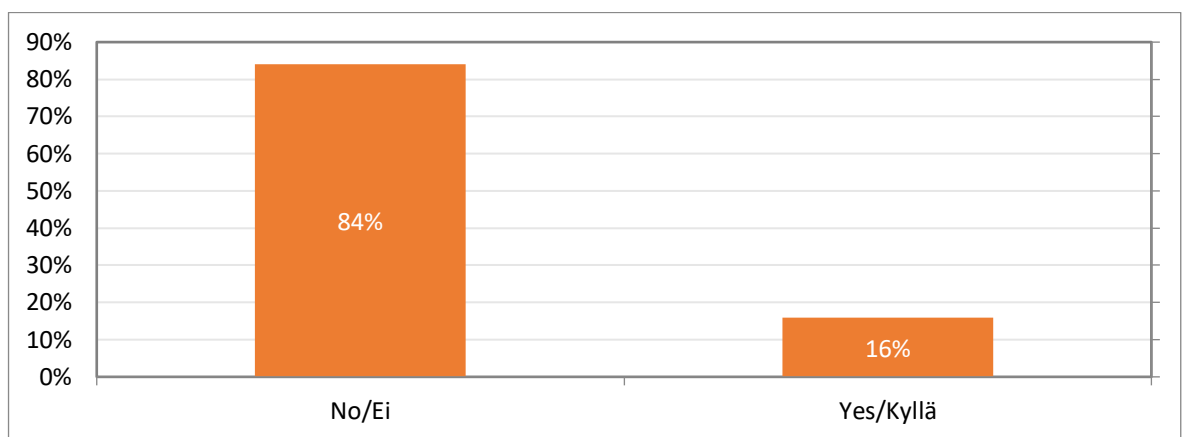

Figure 8. Question 4 – Has a recruiter asked any inappropriate questions during a job interview? (For example, questions related to gender or race.)

In the previous question, most of the respondents answered that their recruitment experiences have been equal and only 9 % of the respondents felt that their process was not handled equally. However, in the question four, almost double the number of respondents (16 %) answered that recruiters have asked inappropriate questions during a job interview. This result conflicts with the fact that some of those respondents still felt that the recruitment process was handled equally. If a recruiter asks inappropriate question, usually can be assumed that the recruitment process was not handled equally. Although, it needs to be stated that it can only be assumed that the respondents refer to the same experience and their answers should be in line with that. The vast majority (84 %) said that they haven't been asked any inappropriate questions. The purpose of this question was to find out, if there would have been a pattern that suggests that inappropriate questions have been asked often. Based on the answers, it can be stated that inappropriate questions are not that common.
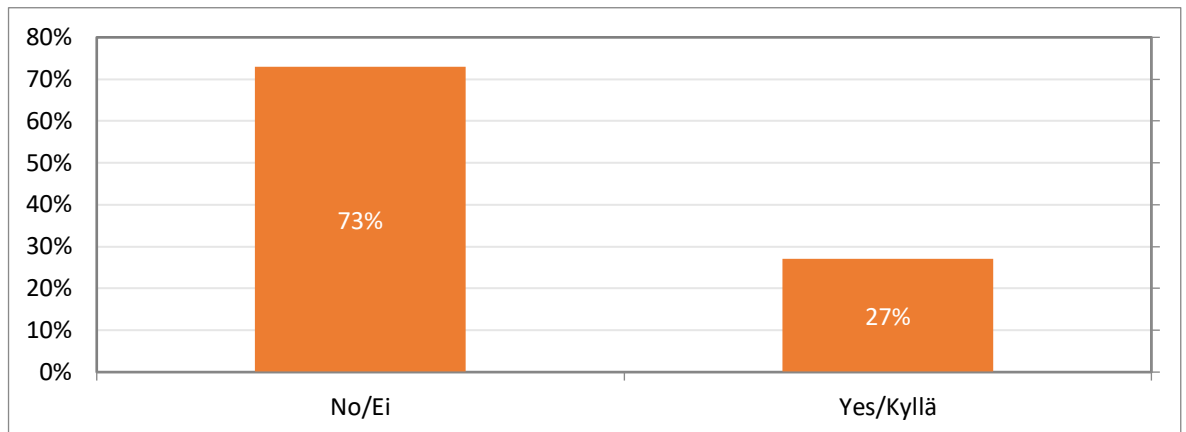
6.3.3 Company's values

Figure 9. Question 5 – Have company's values (e.g., diversity and/or equality) been visible to you during the recruitment process?

The aim of this question was to find out if company's values have been visible during the recruitment process. 73 % of the respondents answered that they felt that company's values haven't been visible during recruitment. Meaning that for example, if a company states on their webpage that they value diversity, can that value be seen during recruitment. The number of negative answers can suggest that companies could improve their values and, in some cases, make them part of their strategy. ITM approach supports the visible values especially when it comes to equality and diversity. Visible values attract talented workers and people search for jobs that represent their own personal values. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 98-99.) 27 % of the respondents said that they felt that those values had been visible during recruitment. In the question six, for those who answered yes, were asked to explain, how those values were visible.

If you answered yes to the previous question, would you please explain how.
Jos vastasit edelliseen kysymykseen kyllä, kertoisitko miten.

Number of respondents: 18

Responses
Documents for new hires to get acquainted Open communication about those during interview phase (at my current place)
Once, an interviewer called me "gypsy" because of my background, I took it well, I'm not offended by it, but was the first time someone said that to me.
I am a female candidate of a foreign background. By inviting me to the interview, the company showed that they are accepting female foreigners. I was not asked any questions related to my gender or ethnicity, so the interview was handled professionally.
Monikulttuurisuus, erilaisia ihmisiä on työpaikallani töissä. Eri kulttuurisia ja kielisiä. Kaikkia kohdellaan tasa-arvoisesti.
Yrityksen nettisivuilla on eritelty heidän arvot ja toimintamallit
Explaining the strategy they carry out and the values they follow.
Työskentelin kansainvälisessä yrityksessä jossa monikulttuurisuus ollut vahvasti läsnä.
Ne ovat tulleet hyvin selville yrityksen verkkosivuilta sekä muutenkin yrityksen imagosta.
My experiences have been that in some cases the values are already mentioned on the job advertisement and if they are the values are advertised clearly as a part of the company's strategy. If when company's values reflect my owns, I usually apply for the position. Usually in these kind of cases during the recruitment process the company's values have been made very transparent throughout the whole process and mentioned even in the interview.
Yrityksen arvomaailma, erityisesti tasa-arvoisuus tuli selkeästi esiin verkkosivuilla ja mainonnassa. Myös työhaastattelussa tasa-arvoisuus tuli esille yrityksen arvoista puhuttaessa.
Firma on ollut historian saatossa useassa erilaisessa pyörityksessä lehdistössä. Johtuen asekaupoista/epäilyttävistä toimista taustalla. Tämän johdosta on ollut "erittäin suuret" lanseeraukset tasa-arvoon ja imagon muuttamiseen. Ulospäin näky on näyttävää ja hienoa, mutta totuus toki on vähän toinen. Mitä hakuprosessiin tulee, ala on miesvaltainen tekniikan ala. Henkilöstörakennetta kun katsoi muutaman vuoden taaksepäin, ei naispuoleisia juurikaan näkynyt lattiatasolla. Nyt viimevuosien rekryt on paljon enemmän tasa-arvoisempia. Ainakin sukupuolijakauma lattiatasolla on muuttunut ihan toisenlaiseksi. En ole ihan varma onko osa rekryistä tapahtunut noudattaen tätä "tasa-arvon" kunnisasanomaa "isomman määräyksestä" vai sillä pohjalla kuka olisi pätevin/koulutetuin tehtävään. Hieman molempaa olen kuullut tekijöiltä kuin rekryjä suorittavilta tahoilta. Rekryäminen on yleensä pieni lautakunta mikä koostuu useammasta henkilöstä (miehiä ja naisia)
Rekrytoijat kertoivat yrityksen arvoista hieman haastattelussa
Arvot näkyvät usein kysymysten muodostuksessa haastatteluissa. Usein niitä myös tuodaan esiin houkuttelutekijinä.
Actually have never applied to a job
Usually stated on the website and then understood "between the lines" in conversation.
Yrityksen työpaikkailmoituksessa on kerrottu yritykselle tärkeistä arvoista. Lisäksi yrityksen kotisivuilta on löytynyt laajemmat kuvaukset yrityksen arvoista.
Not until after hired, did I realize things were not equal. Also, all men interviewers and not one single woman on the
Organisaation strategia oli tilanteessa keskeinen.

Picture 2. Open-ended question and the responses.

All 27 % that replied yes to the question five, answered to this question. The most common answer to the question six was, that if the company's values have been visible in job advertisement or in their webpage, it is usually visible in recruitment as well. Few respondents said that the values were part of the company's strategy, so it was obvious that the values were visible, and they were discussed during recruitment. Open discussion of values was a visible sign of the presence of the values. Few respondents said that once they have started working in the company or when they were invited to the job interview, it was clear that the company's values are visible. For instance, one respondent said that once he or she started working in the company, he or she saw that there were employees with diverse backgrounds. Two respondents said that they found out the real values after they were hired, and in both cases the values didn't reflect their own personal values.

6.3.4   How recruitment could be improved

The final question was an open-ended question, where the respondents were asked to describe, how they would improve recruitment processes to make them more equal. 70 answers were collected, meaning that 100 % of the respondents answered to that question. However, 13 of the respondents didn't know, how they would improve recruitment or that they were happy with the current situation. 25 respondents suggested

that recruitment could be more equal if it was handled anonymously. One option could be, that applications and CVs would be anonymous, so that the recruiter can't make assumptions based on the name or picture. This has helped to reduce the discrimination especially among older people, according to the research conducted by Prime Minister's Office. (Kokkonen 2022.)

8 respondents suggested that companies should be more transparent with their actions. Transparency can include for example salary information. Sometimes companies try to hire employee with the lowest salary request and in order to do that, company doesn't hand out any information about the salary. Frost and Kalman support the idea of transparency, they said that improving transparency can help to attract more diverse talent and diverse workforce overall. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 125-126.) Salary transparency could also help reduce the gender pay-gap.

3 respondents hoped that companies' values would be more visible during recruitment. Especially if company mentions that they value diversity or inclusivity, those values should be promoted everywhere and make sure that job applicants find the job descriptions that match their own personal values. Company and brand reputation are connected to the values. Transparent actions and values that are visible during recruitment phase, help attract and retain talented workers. Employees are trying to find something that is meaningful, and the feeling of inclusion and belonging is in the key position in employee engagement. Companies need to appeal to the applicant's individual diverse characteristics and promoting company's values is a one way to do it. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 98-99.)

5 respondents would add diverse recruiter panels and group interviews. These were combined in the responses. It was stated that there should be a certain number of recruiters with different backgrounds in the panel instead of only male or female panels. Both statements are supported and recommended ways to enhance equal recruitment. Frost and Kalman agree that when candidates are interviewed as a group instead of individuals, the recruiters focus more on skills and performance and are more likely to hire more diverse people. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 133-134.) Related to gender discrimination, 5 respondents said that questions related to pregnancy and starting a family should stop. These questions are mainly asked from women, and it is illegal to ask, if a female candidate is planning to get pregnant or start a family. Diverse recruiter panels could help reducing the amount of inappropriate questions. Especially the questions related to pregnancy are usually asked during 1-1 interviews. A group setting raises the threshold to ask inappropriate questions, because recruiters' actions would most likely be called out.

Few respondents didn't have any improvement suggestions, but they pointed out that as long as we are humans, there will be bias and prejudices. Which is completely true, it is nearly impossible to get rid of prejudices or bias. However, there are ways to reduce the effect of bias during recruitment. It can be reduced through conscious leadership (self-awareness) or through unconscious system adjustments (nudges). (Frost & Kalman 2016, 130-131.)

Other improvement suggestions were inclusive job marketing and properly trained recruiters. Often certain types of jobs are advertised for students. That already creates a very limited target group, and it includes a suggestion that the candidate would be young. However, this kind of advertisement excludes other population groups, such as unemployed, stay-at-home moms, or part-time pensioners, who would be interested to do the job. They are not likely to apply jobs that openly states that they are looking for certain candidates even though the job doesn't require that. Recruiters should be properly trained, and diversity training would be a good educational addition. Awareness of tools that can be used so that recruiters could be as objective as possible.

One suggestion says that companies should define their goals better. What is the thing that the company is really looking for and what kind of candidate would be the most ideal for that position? Clear and well-defined goals help the applicants to understand, what are the requirements of the job and what is expected from the candidate.

7 Findings and outcomes

Based on the survey, not that many respondents have experienced discrimination during recruitment. Only 16 % of the respondents stated that recruiters have asked inappropriate questions during job interviews. However, the questionnaire did not indicate, where the questions were related. It can be assumed that the discrimination has been low among the respondents. Overall, the respondents seemed pleased with their recruitment experiences.

It can be assumed from the survey results, that women still face more discrimination than men. The theoretical background and previous studies support this proposition. Often gender related discrimination is related to the intentions of getting pregnant and starting a family. The respondents indicated that inappropriate questions were in few cases related to their gender.

The findings of the survey suggest that anonymous recruitment would be the most ideal option to improve equal recruitment. Anonymous recruitment would put every applicant into equal position when it comes to hiding names and pictures. This method also reduces the biases and prejudices of the recruiter because it would be harder to base assumptions on people whose name and picture is hidden. Related to this, a respondent said that candidates should be chosen only based on qualifications regardless of other factors (those factors could be gender, age, sexual orientation).

Another promising option could be training and education. Several respondents suggested that proper training with up-to-date information would enhance the equality. Various sources are full of information and tools to train more inclusive and diverse workforce. Training and changing the recruitment methods require time and money, sometimes companies must try several different recruitment methods to find out, which one would be the best fit for the company and deliver the desired results.

The objective of this thesis was to find out what kind of impact equal employment has during recruitment processes. The survey results combined with theoretical framework suggest that equal employment has a positive impact to the recruitment. Law protects job applicants and employees, but discrimination still happens and equal employment itself doesn't protect against it. Laws or equal employment itself should be improved to guarantee that discrimination would not happen as often as it happens now.

7.1   SWOT-analysis

Based on the survey and theoretical framework, the SWOT-analysis was created to show what companies could improve and what is threatening the improvements.

Table 4. SWOT-analysis

Strength	Weakness
- Lot of information available, how recruiters can improve their methods - The empirical part shows that 91 % felt that their recruitment process was handled equally, meaning that more and more people are satisfied with their experiences - Wider talent pools and diverse workforce	- Racist attitudes that affect to the recruitment process - Negative attitudes towards diversity and it appears negatively inside the company
Opportunity	**Threat**
- Anonymous recruitments, applications without name and picture - Using three level criteria (stated, needed, and scored) instead of CV - Proactive hiring and strategic workplace plan (SWP) - Talent and diversity go hand in hand, diverse workforce brings in more diverse talents	- If companies don't start valuing diversity, talent will go elsewhere, and the financial growth might stop - Risks of financial crisis increases when decisions and companies are too homogeneous - Changing attitudes and strategies require time and money, companies might not be willing to invest to those

The conclusion of the SWOT is that there are a lot of diverse companies and recruiters that are trying to find diverse workforce. New methods have been developed to ensure that recruitment could be as equal as possible. At the same time, there are companies, who are not willing to change their habits and open up their minds to new opportunities. New ways to reduce racism need to be invented and racism should be tackled proactively.

The opportunities are related to recruitment methods and how to improve them. Anonymous recruitment can offer lot of positive opportunities for both, candidate, and employer. CVs could be forgotten, and companies could create criteria that defines the needs and required skills. Those criteria sets would together define which candidate would be the most suitable. These methods are related to ITM recruitment approach, where companies are encouraged to try new recruiting methods. (Frost & Kalman 2016, 127.) Talent and diversity go hand in hand. Inclusive talent management approach has proven that companies with diverse talent pools are more likely to be successful.

Proactive hiring and SWP ensure that the company is prepared for the future, and they know what kind of talents they have, and they might need in the future.

The threats are that if companies don't soon realize that diversity is part of the future, they will start losing valuable talent. Companies need diverse set of skills and talents to success. Homogeneous companies are more exposed to financial risk than companies with diverse workforce. Change does not happen overnight, and it requires time and money. Companies might want change, but they are not willing to invest for it. ITM results can usually be seen in a long-run and short-term results might not show any significant changes.

8   Conclusion

In the beginning of this thesis, one main objective and one sub-objective were presented, and those objectives included questions:

1. What kind of impact equal employment has during recruitment process?
2. How could companies make their recruitment processes more equal?

The answer to the first question is that equal employment has been created to make sure that the recruitment process would be as equal as possible. In real life equal employment ensures equal recruitment processes most of the time. Still quite often, discrimination happens and employers practice unfair treatment. Even though law protects the employees and job applicants, it is still their responsibility to request a statement of unfair treatment. Equal employment also encourages companies to hire more diverse talents and to support the good relations.

Companies could and should make their recruitment processes more equal. The ways to do that could be anonymous recruitment and rewriting job criteria. Both of these methods support diverse hiring that is not affected by human biases or prejudices. Training and educating recruiters can also promote equality, when recruiters have enough information and education about human bias and cultural differences, they can learn how to make decisions that are not affected by own prejudices. Proactive hiring with clearly defined goals and transparent operations improve equality and at the same time these improve the company's reputation. There is certainly not a single way to eliminate discrimination. The best results come from combining different methods and finding the combination that suits the company's needs best.

8.1   Reliability and validity

The survey created for the thesis was shared in multiple social media platforms. Responding was fully voluntarily and the survey was shared as much as possible to get enough number of responses. To ensure the liability all parts of the survey, including questions and answers can be found in the thesis. The data was collected mainly in Finland, but the possibility exists that some respondents are from somewhere else. That factor should not affect to the reliability of the results. The results of the survey and the theoretical background are corresponding with each other closely, suggesting that the findings from the survey match to the current situation in Finland and results are reliable.

The validity of this research can be challenged by analysing the data. The analysis is based on authors own interpretations of the data, and everyone can make their own interpretations. The data of the survey can be challenging as the background of the

respondents is unknown and that can affect to the reliability of the results. The respondent rate was too small to from the reliability point of view.

8.2   Self-evaluation

The thesis process has been rewarding even though sometimes it felt like the biggest challenge. The best and most interesting part was to collect the theoretical framework material. It was a learning opportunity for me at the same time. Conducting the survey and collecting answers was interesting and obviously I had my own opinions and ideas, what the responds could look like, and I'm pleased to notice that my own experiences are not far from others'.

I struggled to manage my timetable and sometimes I found it hard to even find motivation to read materials or write the thesis. However, I am proud of myself that I was able to push myself to work when it was necessary. I was writing the thesis while living in the United States which limited my chances to go to the school library and get the needed material. I am pleased that I found enough material to support my findings and to present the important theoretical background.

After finally deciding the topic, I didn't have to adjust it too much. I only decided to limit the geographical part to concern only Finland. Otherwise, the scope would have been too wide and the chance that there would be irrelevant information would have grown. There is a lot of information and studies about equal employment. However, it turned out to be hard to compare the existing material because surveys were created differently and simply the wording of the questions varied a lot. By carefully selecting the material, I was able to create the most reliable theoretical background that supports my thesis topic. Overall, I am satisfied with my work and the thesis.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Survey

The impact of equal employment during recruitment process

📋 Mandatory questions are marked with a star (*)

I am BBA-student from Haaga-Helia UAS, writing my thesis about the impact of equal employment during recruitment process. Please note, that this survey is conducted anonymously and the author will not be able to identify anyone based on their answers. All material will be treated confidentially and are only used for the thesis purposes. Please be kind and answer all of the questions below. You can answer in English or Finnish.

Olen tradenomiopiskelija Haaga-Helian ammattikorkeakoulusta. Kirjoitan opinnäytetyötäni tasa-arvoisen palkkauksen vaikutuksista rekrytointiprosessin aikana. Huomaathan, että kysely toteutetaan anonyymisti, eikä kirjoittajalla ole mahdollisuutta tunnistaa yksittäistä henkilöä vastausten perusteella. Materiaali käsitellään luottamuksellisesti ja sitä hyödynnetään ainoastaan opinnäytetyössä. Olethan ystävällinen ja vastaat kaikkiin alla oleviin kysymyksiin. Voit vastata kysymyksiin joko suomeksi tai englanniksi.

Kind regards/Terveisin,
Wilma Nurminen

1. Age/Ikä *

◯ 18-24

◯ 25-35

◯ 36-49

◯ 50+

2. Gender/Sukupuoli *

◯ Female/Nainen

◯ Male/Mies

◯ I wish not to specify/En halua tarkentaa

Equal employment means, that all employees/job applicants are treated equally regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, or religion.

Tasa-arvoinen palkkaus tarkoittaa sitä, että kaikkia työntekijöitä/työnhakijoita kohdellaan tasa-arvoisesti huolimatta heidän iästä, sukupuolesta, etnisestä taustasta, seksuaalisesta suuntautumisesta tai uskonnosta.

3. During the recruitment process, have you felt that the recruitment process has been handled equally?
Oletko kokenut rekrytoinnin aikana, että rekrytointiprosessi on ollut tasa-arvoinen? *

◯ Yes/Kyllä

◯ No, why not/Ei, miksi ei _____

4. Has a recruiter asked any inappropriate questions during a job interview?
(For example questions related to gender or race.)
Onko sinulta kysytty työhaastattelussa epäasiallisia kysymyksiä?
(Esimerkiksi sukupuoleen tai etniseen taustaan liittyvät kysymykset.) *

◯ Yes/Kyllä

◯ No/Ei

5. Have company's values (e.g., diversity and/or equality) been visible to you during the recruitment process?
Ovatko yrityksen arvot (esimerkiksi monikulttuurisuus ja/tai tasa-arvoisuus) olleet sinulle näkyviä rekrytointiprosessin aikana? *

◯ Yes/Kyllä

◯ No/Ei

6. If you answered yes to the previous question, would you please explain how.

Jos vastasit edelliseen kysymykseen kyllä, kertoisitko miten.

_____

_____

7. How would you improve recruitment process to make it more equal? Miten kehittäisit rekrytointiprosessia tasa-arvoisemmaksi? *

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____