



Managing Ethnic Diversity in Rural Finnish Manufacturing: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

Ethnic diversity in the workplace has been increasingly studied in recent years, but its impact in rural manufacturing contexts has remained underexplored. The aim was to examine how ethnic diversity was managed in rural Finnish manufacturing companies and how it affected workplace productivity. The study was conducted using a qualitative method by interviewing managers and employees from small to medium-sized manufacturing companies located in rural Finland. Thematic analysis was applied to explore current practices, experiences, and perceptions related to ethnic diversity in these organizations.

It was found that diversity was primarily managed through informal methods, such as peer-to-peer support and buddy systems, rather than structured policies. While many participants expressed positive attitudes towards diversity and acknowledged benefits such as innovation and additional language skills, challenges were also reported. Particularly challenges were experienced in communication and integration due to language barriers and cultural differences. Efforts to support diverse employees were reactive rather than strategic, although some adaptation had occurred, including the limited use of English and inclusive marketing efforts.

The findings highlighted the need for proactive diversity strategies as the number of foreign workers increases. It was concluded that informal practices may not remain effective in the long term, and that rural companies would benefit from developing structured approaches to diversity management. The results contribute to existing literature by focusing on a rarely studied context and offer practical insights for improving integration and productivity in ethnically diverse rural work environments.

Keywords/tags (subjects)

Ethnic diversity; Diversity; Rural; Manufacturing; Productivity; Qualitative research; Integration

Miscellaneous (Confidential information)

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1 Introduction

Management practices significantly influence company productivity (Siebers et al., 2008). As companies grow, effective management becomes crucial while ensuring operational sufficiency. Today's economy is extremely globalized and interconnected in every aspect and companies face totally different challenges compared even to recent history. When organizations try to navigate themselves in this sea of new kind of challenges, their rules and policies inside the company also shift. So, this naturally also applies to the companies all over Finland.

Rural labor shortages are becoming a critical issue in Finland, especially outside urban centers (Slätmö et al., 2024). Finnish population is also aging as Hämäläinen et al. (2020) found while analyzing demographic trends in Finland. Young people are moving away from the countryside in the hopes of a better tomorrow in terms of higher education and future job possibilities that typically bigger cities offer (Niemelä & Seppänen 2019). Niemelä and Seppänen illustrated that big cities were more interesting to the youth because of better opportunities in employment and education.

This creates a scenario where companies in rural areas face a problem. Who is going to work for them in the future if most of the youth move away? The answer to this question could be immigrants. For example, Andersen & Holm (2021) argued a positive impact of immigrants helping with workforce shortages in rural Nordic regions, including Finland. This "solution" creates new opportunities as well as stumbling blocks. Whenever there is cultural and ethnic diversity, specific types of challenges arise. According to Cletus et al. (2018), cultural diversity-related challenges are some of the hardest opponents that modern-day organizations battle. The companies create certain rules and policies in trying to solve these challenges. I want to study what these policies in rural Finland are and how they correlate with companies' goal of making more money.

Migration in today's world is also significantly increased in recent decades (de Haas et al., 2020). In addition, Leino & Stenroos (2021) argued that the same phenomenon is happening in Finland. Migration means people's movement from one place to another in the aim to settle in a new location. It can be either involuntary or voluntary and can happen for multiple different reasons (European Parliament, 2020). These reasons include things such as economic, environmental, and social challenges in the migrants' home culture. According to a Finnish government website

(Valtioneuvosto [Finnish government], 2021), in 2019, more than 400 thousand people are living in Finland who are foreign-born immigrants. That is approximately 8% of the population in the country. So, the question is, how does Finnish society benefit from this group of people. In addition, especially from a business point of view, how would integrating foreign born residents into Finnish society benefit companies in need of a quality workforce.

Most immigrants in Finland, nearly 85%, according to Tilastokeskus (2019), live in larger city areas. This creates a situation where rural areas in Finland might have limited exposure to ethnically and culturally diverse people. Thus, business organizations in rural areas of Finland, because of this lack of experience or knowledge, might then struggle to integrate ethnic diversity into their company practices and policies that would enhance their productivity.

The ethnic diversity within can bring out multiple benefits to the company. For starters, ethnically diverse workgroup can bring different talents and strengths to the table. This can be seen in innovation, for example. Diverse teams can create unique and fresh ideas because of variety in their backgrounds (Nguta & Omuya, 2024). In addition, problem solving is enhanced because people from different cultures think a little different, so the groups' view to the problem is larger (Samuel & Odor). Multiple other studies have been published around this topic. In contrast to the benefits, ethnically, and culturally diverse workplaces also face challenges, such as language barriers or communication problems and conflict management challenges (Rathee & Dagar, 2024). To overcome these challenges and to achieve the benefits of multicultural and ethnic workgroups companies have different practices inside the organization. This all leads to the reasons behind my interest in this thesis topic.

While previous research has explored ethnical diversity and productivity in urban or large-scale organizational contexts, there is a clear lack of studies focusing on rural Finnish manufacturing companies. Existing literature often overlooks how smaller industrial firms in remote areas manage increasing workforce diversity in practice. My thesis addresses this gap by providing insights into how rural companies respond to ethnical diversity, and how these practices may influence workplace productivity.

Therefore, the main research question in this thesis is, How do rural manufacturing companies manage ethnical diversity and what impact does it have with productivity? In addition to the main research question, I have two sub-research questions, which will help me break down the main research question into more specific areas that can then be more deeply studied. The sub-

research questions are the following: What policies and practices related to ethnic diversity are currently implemented by rural Finnish industrial companies? And how do these ethnic diversity practices affect the company communication?

The benefits of my research are clear. The purpose of this study is to explore on how manufacturing companies in rural Finland approach ethnic diversity and how their company practices around ethnic diversity correlate with their business productivity. Thus, my thesis is beneficial to the specific companies I will examine. Additionally, companies close to the research companies could use my study when planning their future. With my thesis, they will be getting valuable information on possible issues they might face in their everyday workplace regarding ethnic diversity practices and how those issues could affect the company. Furthermore, they will receive information on what they currently do very well around the topic. Finally, the business literature gains research which offers practical insights into how small organizations manage diversity, and how they should approach the phenomenon.

I have a very clear research scope for the study. I focus on company policies and practices, and how these practices correlate with the business objectives of the companies. Therefore, I exclude many broader social and political aspects that are not necessary in terms of further advancing the goals of this study. Additionally, I do not judge the companies or the individuals I study; thus, moral, political, or philosophical issues are outside the scope of this study. Fundamentally, the goal of this study is to focus on business side of these phenomena. I am aware that social, cultural, and political aspects in this topic are extremely important, but these issues are beyond the scope of this study.

My motivation to this topic is quite simple. I have many personal motivation reasons in addition to the scientific reason that the topic is somewhat understudied. The personal reasons come from my own background, as I am originally from rural Finland. Many of my relatives or friends work in these industrial companies that I am going to study. These industrial organizations provide much to these rural areas in Finland. They pay taxes to the town where they are located, which in turn, substantially funds the towns' budgets. They also provide jobs to their workers. In addition, they attract and create investments to the region. Without the local companies, these rural towns in Finland would struggle or even disappear. As noted, youth are moving away to the big urban areas. I am one of these people who grew up in rural area and moved away to big city because of higher education. I am still extremely fascinated what the future brings to these companies.

The structure of my thesis is the following. After this introduction portion, I will shift my focus into literature review. In that part of the thesis, I will examine and highlight already existing academic literature around the topic. Then I present my methodology, where I will explain how my study is created. I will cover the research design, my data collection methods, data analysis methods related to my study. Next is the results section where the collected and analyzed data are presented to the reader in an objective manner. After results there is discussion where I will do the interpretation of the collected data and compare the data with existing literature referring to my literature review part. In addition, I will explain the limitations with the study and present recommendations for future research.

2 Literature Review

The purpose of literature review part in this thesis is to give a broad overview of already existing scholarly research related to my research topic. This section serves multiple purposes in the full thesis. First, it provides context on my topic. It highlights what in the field has already been studied and the results of that research, in addition to theoretical foundations those papers have introduced. In addition, it plays a vital role in explaining my research question about ethnic diversity and its connection to efficiency and productivity in business organization. Literature review also shows and explains any possible gaps in the already existing research and proves that my thesis is beneficial addition to the field. Through this section I will also demonstrate that I understand prior research around my own topic and through my research study, will build on it.

2.1 Key themes in the literature

Three key themes from prior studies form the basis of my literature review. The first draws on the correlation of ethnic diversity to productivity. I will explain the link between ethnic diversity in businesses and its positive affect on the company productivity. In addition, I will in my second theme explain the various diversity practices and policies that companies use and are demonstrated to be efficient through research. Finally, because managing diversity in business is not always positive and easy, I will outline the different kinds of challenges and obstacles companies face when managing cultural and ethnical diversity.

2.2 Correlation between ethnic diversity and productivity

In a study made in Norway, the authors analyzed whether changes in ethnic diversity affect the company performance. Umblijs et al. (2023) focused both on managerial and staff levels. They found that a positive connection between productivity and ethnic diversity in the workplace was apparent, but only under certain conditions, (and the results varied by industry. According to Umblijs et al. (2023), industries where innovation is in the center have significant advantage from diversity in staffing as compared to industries where innovation does not play a vital role. The results also showed a positive correlation between ethnic diversity and operating margin. Operating margin is a financial metric that shows how much profit a company makes on each unit of sales after covering its variable costs, for example, wages and materials, but before paying taxes (Vojteski Kljenak et al., 2019). In addition, according Umblijs et al. (2023), these positive correlations are not as apparent if the ethnically diverse workers are only hired for the low-paid positions in the company: The positive correlation is much clearer there when ethnic diversity is both in staff and managerial positions. For a company to benefit from ethnic diversity, the firm generally must have diversity in the managerial positions. In fact, the results showed that if a company hires immigrants only for low-level jobs, the company could face a negative impact on productivity.

A Kenyan study on the correlation between ethnic diversity and productivity also demonstrated a strong positive connection between ethnic diversity and employee performance (Nguta & Omuya, 2024). With data collected from the National Museum of Kenya, the researchers highlighted that a multicultural workforce embraces creativity and innovation inside the organizations. Employees from different backgrounds bring unique perspectives and new kinds of ideas which may benefit the organization through various ways. While this study focused particularly on the employee performance, it encouraged further research on how ethnic diversity can impact the entire organization's performance, not just the employee point of view.

Effectively managing diversity is crucial in today's business world, with the companies aiming to grow and compete globally. According to Samuel and Odor (2018), a workgroup containing diversity can improve creativity and innovation that can then lead to new developments. Companies that embrace diversity can more likely attract talented new workers. Because

diversity-focused companies have a wider pool of candidates, they can choose the most talented and skilled no matter what the applicants' backgrounds. Companies that prioritize diversity are better positioned to adapt to changes in globalized economy and stay on top of the business world (Samuel & Odor, 2018).

Companies have multiple metrics to measure their diversity practices and how successful they are (Layne, 2002). For example, company can track their demographic structure of the workers. By comparing the figures over time, businesses can measure if their attempt to gather and retain an ethnically diverse workforce has been successful. Layne also pointed to employee satisfaction surveys as the efficiency measurement tool. These surveys provide vital information to the company, including areas for improvement and where they already succeed. Participation in voluntary diversity training can also be measured. The number of participants tells significantly how the staff commits to the company's diversity goals. Comparing other companies and their diversity related metrics from the same industry organization can help assess how successful they are against other companies.

The phenomenon of diversity can provide all the earlier mentioned improvements such as enhanced innovation and cultural competence in Finnish context as well (Vanhanen et al., 2023). Vanhanen et al. highlighted key insights from both employees and employers' perspective in their literature review of how diversity affect work life.

In conclusion, research shows that ethnic diversity can enhance productivity, particularly when diversity exists at both staff and managerial levels (e.g., Umblijs et al., 2023). Studies also link diversity to increased creativity, performance, and cultural competence, especially in innovation-driven environments (e.g., Nguta & Omuya, 2024; Samuel & Odor, 2018). These findings support the scientific basis of my study, which explores how rural Finnish manufacturing companies manage ethnic diversity and whether it contributes to workplace efficiency.

2.3 Proven diversity practices

Promoting diversity in business organizations is not a brand-new phenomenon even though it is increasingly important in today's global economy. There are many studies made in the idea to

search which diversity practices and management plans are efficient in promoting diversity within the company. Creary et al. (2021) published a paper where they studied diversity, equity, and inclusion practices on different industries. The results show how important diversity practices are to a company and how, through successful diversity management, a company can create a positive workplace culture where ideas flourish. These practices can bring sense of belonging to the workers and create a feeling of commitment towards the organization.

The study also indicated how important it is for the managers to be involved in the diversity promotion. When managers take an active role in these practices, it helps the whole team to achieve better outcomes together. In practice this means the managers are supporting open discussions about diversity in the workplace and making sure that the atmosphere within the company is welcoming and where employees are free to offer their thoughts. Managers also need to lead by example. They need to set the tone towards positive environment and inspire others as well (Creary et al., 2021).

Another study made regarding different diversity practices indicates that the effectiveness of these practices is often somewhat inconsistent (Nishii et al., 2017). This study focused on the details of five specific practices: affirmative action, targeted recruiting, training, work-life integration, and mentoring. Affirmative action involves policies which aim to ensure that company hiring, and promotion processes are fair towards everyone. The ideology behind this is to fight against possible conscious and unconscious bias and discrimination in the work environment. Targeted recruiting on the other hand means intentionally seeking diverse candidates from minority groups to fill in job openings in the organization to promote diversity. The results show that the success of this depends on how well these recruits fit within the company's overall hiring strategy overall. Moving forward, work-life integration refers to practices which help employees to balance their work and personal lives. This includes options such as flexible working hours and remote work possibilities. These options could be important when the company has employees from different countries and or time zones. Last, mentoring means pairing more experienced workers with less experienced ones who seek guidance and support to start their career or position in the company. This practice could be exceptionally useful to those representing minority groups in the organization. The more experienced veteran could help with building networks and

provide access to possibilities that are otherwise unavailable. According to Nishii et al. (2017), all these practices could be extremely useful to companies promoting diversity.

Research highlights that successful diversity practices, such as inclusive leadership, mentoring, and targeted recruitment, can foster a positive workplace culture and increase employee commitment (Creary et al., 2021; Nishii et al., 2017). Manager involvement plays a key role in setting the tone and encouraging open dialogue, which strengthens team spirit. These insights are relevant to my study, as they help frame what kinds of diversity practices might be effective or lacking in rural Finnish manufacturing firms, where formal DEI strategies may be less developed.

2.4 Challenges when managing ethnic diversity

Various studies have proven that managing ethnic diversity within business organizations brings some challenges. Rathee & Dagar (2024) studied the impact of cross-cultural diversity on human resource management practices and found multiple obstacles organizations may encounter. The first mentioned challenge was a communication barrier. These are caused by differences in language and communication styles. These differences can then possibly lead to misunderstandings or even conflicts inside the company (Rathee & Dagar, 2024). Another possible challenge is cultural misunderstandings. This refers to possible differences in workplace norms, values or expectations which can then cause issues in the organization (Rathee & Dagar, 2024).

One key challenge with companies managing ethnic diversity is that it requires resources to be efficient. Companies need to focus on enhancing intercultural training inside the organization both for employees and managers (Aigner, 2014). Diversity practices also need consistent commitment and patience from both management and employees. Changes regarding diversity in workplace require a long-term effort to be efficient (Layne, 2002).

Aigner (2014) also highlighted in her study that some of ethnic minority employees felt discriminated against native employees. The results of this Austrian based study indicated that communication barriers and cultural differences can lead to a person feeling discriminated. The paper noted that these feelings of discrimination can negatively affect relationships within the organization.

In addition, Aigner (2014) wrote how religion contributes to the organizations. Religious differences in the company can lead to a variety of misunderstandings or conflicts because of certain religious norms and beliefs held by a person. Then, if the person interacts with someone from a different religion, they may have completely different beliefs and norms. Therefore, these differences can cause issues within work relationships.

According to Welman et al. (2022), organizational diversity can negatively affect performance if not managed appropriately. Poorly managed diversity can wreak havoc between employees and employer or between employees themselves. The researcher argued that diversity in business is a strong weapon, but it may turn against itself if not managed with proper resources and effort.

2.5 Theoretical frameworks on diversity management

Lumineau et al. (2021) published a paper where a multi-level diversity framework was introduced. The purpose of this framework is to help later research on international business and its management. The framework identifies three different types of diversity: separation, variety, and disparity. Separation means differences in attitudes and opinions between the staff members. Variety, on the other hand, indicates differences in knowledge and experience. Finally, disparity means differences in focus of valued assets (Lumineau et al., 2021).

The authors then encouraged further research into these types of diversity on three different levels: institutional, organizational, and individual. The institutional level refers to the cultural differences among countries that are instruments to encourage and influence international business strategies. The organizational level includes differences between organizations, such as companies and their cultural difference, which then influence partnerships between different organizations. Then lastly, the individual level represents individual differences in skills and experiences that effect teamwork with other individuals (Lumineau et al., 2021).

Another useful research regarding diversity management focused on opening the multi-layered connection between staff diversity and company productivity. Alharbi & Mamman (2015) presented a study where they introduced a framework that suggests why diversity in the workplace does not always link to the most productive and efficient outcomes. The framework

especially focuses on increased organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). This refers to actions from the employees that are not mandatory for their job but which help the organization to succeed and reach its goals. These actions include things such as helping their co-workers or staying extra time to finish a task after their shift has ended. The actions themselves could be small but are extremely important creating and enhancing group spirit and morale. Such behaviors also increase the overall productivity (Alharbi & Mamman, 2015).

The framework Alharbi and Mamman (2015) created points to the direction that the treatment the workers get in the company significantly affects the amount of voluntary employee contribution in OCB. Thus, the better the diverse workers are integrated into the company, the more they willingly engage in OCB. The management plays a big role on the matter. The results presented by Alharbi and Mamman indicate that organizational structure and how the staff are treated by their managers are vital when looking at OCB. A positive culture within the organization can create a snowball effect, thereby increasing voluntary actions that contribute positively towards the company's goals.

Overall, the reason behind the research and framework Alharbi & Mamman (2015) created is deeper knowledge on diversity in organizations and its role on employee behavior. The results do suggest that successful management is key to unlocking improved productivity inside the organizations.

2.6 Methodological reflections of mentioned studies

The mentioned studies used both qualitative and quantitative research methods, each offering distinct advantage but also limitations. Quantitative approaches, such as large surveys (e.g., Rathee & Dagar, 2014), allowed efficient data gathering from broad samples and provided measurable outcomes. However, these methods can sometimes oversimplify the complex human experiences, especially if the responses lack context or depth.

In contrast qualitative methods like interviews and case studies (e.g., Aigner, 2014) captured richer insights into experiences and organizational practices from the professionals working on the field. The weakness of this approach is that the answers are harder to replicate and generalize. Some of

the mentioned studies used both qualitative and quantitative approaches (e.g., Nishii et al., 2017) and therefore can combine the strengths of both approaches.

2.7 Gaps in the existing literature

The gaps in the academic literature around the topic are relatively clear to define. After conducting literature research both in English and Finnish first alone and later with the help of a librarian I can say that there is limited research done focusing specifically on the areas outside the big cities. Studies focusing on urban areas are made (e.g., Youn et al., 2014; Bettencourt, Samaniego, & Youn, 2012) but these studies are not applicable to rural settings because the urban areas have very different labor markets and social dynamics compared to rural areas (Lichter & Brown, 2011).

Another gap of research is Finland-specific context. It was noted by Vanhanen et al. (2023) that studies on impact of diversity at the company level are largely absent from Finnish research.

Most of the existing literature comes from other western regions like the United States (e.g. Nishii et al. 2017; Youn et al., 2024; Alharbi & Mamman, 2015), but some of the research has done in the Africa (e.g. Nguta & Omuya, 2024; Samuel & Odor, 2018) and Asia (e.g. Rathee & Dagar, 2024) as well. The research made in these regions might not be applicable to Finnish context due to difference in culture, labor market structure and laws. Studies also often focus on the social and cultural aspects of diversity in the workplace, whereas my research focuses primarily on the financial and operational impact of the phenomenon. These rationales demand Finland-focused research to address the realities of the rural and small-town Finnish businesses.

2.8 Summary of knowledge base

Ethnic diversity to business organizations is like a double-edged blade. If company management handles it well, it can provide a major advantage (see, e.g., Creary et al., 2021; Nguta & Omuya, 2024; Nishii et al., 2017; Samuel & Odor, 2018; Umblijis et al., 2023; Welman et al., 2022). Unfortunately, it can also be a disadvantage if the company does not recognize the reality and handle the challenges it causes (see, e.g., Aigner, 2014; Rathee & Dagar, 2018; Welman et

al.,2022). Focusing on diversity in today's world improves a company's ability to stay afloat in the globally expanding economy.

Multiple research studies show that increasing diversity within an organization can lead to massive steps forward, especially in innovation and efficiency if it is integrated into the everyday work environment. Research study results indicate that a key to unlocking full potential from diverse workgroups rests upon effective and successful management (Alharbi & Mamman, 2015; Creary et al., 2021; Umbljis et al., 2023). My research aims to explore whether these results from previous literature apply to Finnish rural businesses.

3 Methodology

Methodology means the justification for the selected methods used to answer a specific research question (Betts, 2024). It covers the theoretical framework and various factors that guide the path within the research process. It helps the researchers to choose a certain method on how to collect their data and how to analyze it in order to gain successful research results (Betts, 2024).

In this section I will cover my research design and justify why my chosen approach helps me to reach my goal of answering my research questions. In addition, I will describe how I gathered my data and explain why I chose the selected methods of data collection. In the third part, I will describe how I will process and analyze the collected data.

3.1 Research design

3.1.1 Research approach: qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods?

There are many different paths how to conduct research. When creating a study, the researcher needs to make certain choices on how to get to their end goal, which is the answers to their research questions. The first choice a researcher needs to make whether the study is going to be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods.

According to Sithole (2025), a qualitative study is a research method that focuses on understanding the experiences and perspectives of the study participant. It also takes into consideration their social and cultural aspects. Qualitative approach can use data collection methods such as interviews and observations. These methods allow the researcher to get more detailed and deep information from the study participant. However, a qualitative approach has its challenges, for example, subjectivity and potential researcher bias. In addition, the participant's anonymity and privacy must be taken into consideration and protected. Nevertheless, qualitative approach is good tool to explore humanistic issues and social phenomena (Sithole, 2025).

On the other hand, quantitative study focuses more on numerical data on analyzing certain phenomena (Alford & Teater, 2025). The benefits of quantitative study are clear outcomes and statistical significance. The results and factors affecting the results are then explained with numbers which are simple to interpret, for example charts and percentages. In addition, it is more suitable for analyzing large sample sizes due to its efficiency compared to qualitative approach. To finish with mixed methods, it is the mixture of both earlier mentioned approaches.

Ideally my research would have used both qualitative and quantitative research approaches and hence would have been mixed methods. My study focuses on ethnical diversity practices in the companies and its correlation with company productivity. While researching around the topic of ethnical diversity in my opinion the qualitative approach was the best way to get to most accurate answers. In contrary, while focusing on the productivity of the company, quantitative approach could have suited the best when comparing quantifiable metrics such as numbers of financial statements. To gain the most multi-layered possible outcome of the study I would have then used both approaches only for different parts of my research.

In practice, the study had to settle being only qualitative. This was because most of the study participant company's financial statements were not public and even as a researcher, I was not able to access them. However, the chosen qualitative approach suited very well my research questions. It allowed for a deep understanding of the organization culture and its effects on business performance. These topics are not explained and measured only with numbers and required a qualitative approach.

3.1.2 Research paradigms

Under the core ideas in methodology of the research there are paradigms to help to reach the goals in this study. Research paradigms are philosophical frameworks that guide how the research is conducted and which angle it is taken to approach the research (Ryan, 2018). In this research, I emphasize the interpretivist approach. According to Ryan (2018), interpretivism is a research philosophy that focuses on understanding the subjective experiences and perspectives of individuals. It embraces a relativist point of view of reality and suggests that there is no single shared reality. Rather, each individual possesses a unique perspective, and thus the interpretative approach contributes to researchers' efforts to gain insight on a specific phenomenon or a more general understanding of the world.

This philosophy is used often in qualitative research because the aim of qualitative research is to understand people's perspectives and experiences and the reasons behind them (Ryan, 2018). The findings in this research are representing the subjective experiences of the business participants rather than objective truths, and therefore interpretivism is the most suitable paradigm for this research.

This research uses deductive reasoning. As such, I began the research process by first going through the literature and theories and then testing them in practice (Bryman 2016). Deductive reasoning fits my research best because my interview questions are designed to test if the theoretical concepts presented in my literature review reflect those of rural manufacturing companies in Finland. The interview questions are also designed to explore if the results of other studies addressing workplace diversity align with results from this research.

3.2 Data collection

3.2.1 Gathering the data

My plan for data collection was simple. The plan was to interview both employees and managers of companies in the rural manufacturing industry in Finland. The number of participating companies, and therefore interviewed managers and employees in this study, is six. I chose these six individuals because I wanted to get both managerial level and employee level experiences and

insights. At first, I approached to the companies about their possible participation through email and did not get anyone to participate. Most of the companies answered that they did not have any time or resources to participate to my study. Afterwards I approached my acquaintances who worked for the companies operating in the field and through them I managed to get the participants to the interviews. However, I did not know personally know any of the participants priorly to the research.

The design of the interview is semi-structured. This means that I had prepared questions for the interview, but there was a possibility to be flexible and ask follow-up questions when needed and the schedule allowed (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The interview length per participant was 30-45 minutes. The main themes in the interviews were workplace practices, ethnical diversity, and company culture. The interviews were all done with online videocalls and recorded with participants permission. The recordings were stored on my laptop and recorded with Microsoft Teams recording tool which created a simultaneous transcript of the interview. In addition, the recordings were deleted once my thesis was published.

All the prepared interview questions were sent to the participants beforehand both in English and Finnish. Both languages were provided because the thesis was completed in English, but the interviews could have been done in either language, depending on the participant's preference. Those participants who selected Finnish as the interview language were informed that I would translate their answers into English following the analysis so that I could include their specific thoughts in the results section.

3.2.2 Rationale for the selected data gathering methods.

The data-gathering method were chosen after carefully reviewing my research options to gain best possible results. In short, these methodological choices best suit my research. The qualitative approach provides options to dive deeper into my informants' personal experiences and perspectives that allow for a greater understanding of social, cultural, and business dimensions.

The interview method was employed as the primary data collection method because it allows the participants to express fully their opinions and experiences around the topic. These workplace

cultural themes would be difficult to obtain and understand if using only numerical data. The interviews were semi-structured to encourage open discussion between the participant and me as researcher, thus helping me understand the issues more deeply. Such a choice gives balance between participants expressing freely their opinions while still maintaining a clear structure that ensures each interview addressed the same basic topics.

The participants also had the freedom to choose the language of the interview, either English or Finnish. Because Finnish is the native language of all participants, I felt it important to offer the possibility of explaining their ideas and opinions comprehensively without struggling with a foreign language. Although the thesis has been presented in English, I am a native Finnish speaker and bilingually sufficient in English. Therefore, I can switch between languages when needed and can carry out the interviews in both languages.

3.3 Data analysis

To be able to understand the results, it is important to select proper methods to analyze the data. These results will be analyzed using thematic analysis. According to Katz et al. (2024), thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify and analyze patterns in collected textual data. It is extremely useful for understanding experiences and perspectives in social science research. I chose thematic analysis method for my research because it suited my goal for the research, which is capturing rich and detailed experiences and perspectives. The thematic analysis was conducted with the assistance of Microsoft Excel. When the data was imported into Excel, I manually coded and systematically identified any possible patterns from the results myself.

Following Katz et al. (2024), My first step in my data analysis is to transform the recorded interviews into text to ensure that the results are accurate. This is done simultaneously as the interviews progress with the assistance of Teams recording tool. The interviews are reviewed multiple times to completely understand the answers of the participants. Short and relevant excerpts are then collected for coding. Excerpts are selected based on their relevance to the research questions, particularly regarding how ethnical diversity is perceived to impact workplace productivity. These excerpts were chosen because they contain either repeated ideas, striking expressions, or rich descriptions of workplace experiences. The frequency of each theme will be

examined and organized using Excel functions such as charts and tables. This helps with visualizing and understanding the results better. The themes will be compared to similar themes in prior research. Differences and similarities will be highlighted and noted. In addition, any possible unexpected findings or findings that contradict with the norm will be identified for consideration later in this thesis.

By structuring the data with Microsoft Excel, the data remains organized, and it is simple to analyze even through multi-layered social and cultural answers from the participants. In addition, it is important to keep track on how common the coded themes are and how often they reoccur.

4 The Results

The results section is where I will present the key findings of the study. The aim of the research is to explore how rural industrial companies approach ethnic diversity and how it subjectively correlates with company productivity. The results are based on qualitative interviews I conducted with six professionals working in small to medium size industrial companies located in Finnish small towns. A thematic analysis was carried out to identify common patterns and differences with participants' answers. The results are organized based of the same categories they were presented in the interviews. Despite the individuals having the options to answer the questions however they wished and to add new or different perspective toward the topic, the participants remained significantly in line with the themes of the questions. These sections include approaches to ethnical diversity in rural industrial companies, impact on productivity and efficiency, communication and integration practices, challenges and tensions, and role of local context.

4.1 Overview of the participants

The six participants in the study were employees and managers of rural small to medium size manufacturing companies. Three of the participants had managerial level positions and three were employees of the company. The reason why I included both rather than focusing on one is that I could not find enough managers to agree to an interview. Even though the employees might not be as informed about the managerial issues and company level strategies, they do bring a different perspective to the study. All the participants possessed several years of experience in their

companies. The working years within the organization varied from three to fifteen. In addition, the participants were all Finnish by their ethnic and cultural background. The participants are each identified by a number. The following table provides the information on each individual participant.

Identification code	Role in the company	Age	Gender	Number of years in the company	Industry of the company they work for
Participant 1	HR Manager	47	Woman	15	Manufacturing
Participant 2	HR Manager	61	Woman	13	Manufacturing
Participant 3	Production Manager	56	Man	8	Manufacturing
Participant 4	Employee	21	Woman	3	Manufacturing
Participant 5	Employee	27	Man	5	Manufacturing
Participant 6	Employee	31	Man	7	Manufacturing

Table 1. Participant information

The managers were particularly focused on human resource management in their organizations, but expertise in production supervision was also present within the participants. Some of the

participants worked on a team and others worked independently in their companies. Although, my analysis of their responses did not indicate any difference in their perspectives based on how they worked within their company.

The companies the participants represent operate in both domestic and global markets. The company headquarters are in Finland, more specifically, in towns with the population up to 20,000 people.

4.2 Main themes from the data

4.2.1 Approaches to ethnical diversity in rural industrial companies

The overall approach and stance towards ethnic diversity in the organizations were described relatively positively by every single participant. None of the participants indicated that ethnicity itself would be a problem to a person being hired. Their answers were explicit in that everyone would be welcomed to their represented companies, no matter their background. The participants agreed comprehensively that their organizations supported ethnic diversity.

Participants 1 and 5 noted that managers within their companies have discussed how they should reconsider their approach to the ethnical diversity within their company in the future. They foresee a future when a smaller Finnish speaking workforce is available for employment compared to the current situation. Therefore, they argued that they prepare now for the future to lessen the impact of potential negative consequences from not anticipating the changing employment situation.

According to the participants, the older generations' stance towards ethnic diversity is rather more negative, as compared to younger generations. In addition, participants 1, 2 and 3 argued that prejudices are more common amongst older generations. Participant 3 noted that prejudices occur especially at the early stages of employment. Participant 2 said that employees from certain cultures and countries are treated differently compared to other ethnicities.

4.2.2 Positive Impacts on Productivity and Efficiency

The positive impacts were relatively simple to determine by the participants. For example, all the participants argued that the additional native language skills that diverse workers offer have improved customer satisfaction and service when these individuals are interacting with customers, who are not native Finns either. This improved customer interaction has been especially visible in the international context with customers from outside of Finland.

Moreover, two of the participants described that the workplace productivity at their companies was improved because employees from certain ethnic backgrounds work harder compared to native Finns, reflected in this quote:

I have experienced that workers from certain ethnic and cultural backgrounds are more diligent compared to, for example, some others. Another thing that comes to mind is that workers from another country can help other foreign workers to adapt—not only to our workplace but also Finnish society overall. So, yes it has had some impacts, and I think more positively than negatively. [Participant 6]

Participant 3 noted about the improvement in innovation at the company, reflected in this quote:

I think the ethical diversity has improved the overall problem-solving and innovation skills in the company. It is always great to have alternative perspective, it gives more options to choose the best solution. In addition, these workers have given ideas from their culture which have been used in our advantage for example in marketing. [Participant 3]

Beyond these few areas of discussion, the participants did not mention any other positive changes or impacts on productivity. In fact, the participants were overall somewhat brief on any concrete examples on the topic.

4.2.3 Communication and Integration Practices

Few of participants mentioned that their company functions in both the Finnish and English languages. Concrete examples provided of where the bilingualism can be seen where the company's goals and values are presented in both in English and Finnish for everyone to fully

understand them. In addition, participant 3 noted that introduction materials in their company can be read with different languages such as English, Russian, and Arabic. The reason for this is to be able to integrate new workers from foreign cultures better into their organization. Furthermore, according to the participants, the use of English is strategically planned in the workplace sometimes, and at other times, it takes place just between members of the staff trying to help and understand each other.

Another example of the use of English given was the annual trainings where the job environment and equality among employees are major theme. These trainings are completed with both languages so that everybody can participate and learn from them.

Even though some of the participants described their organization's use of English takes place daily in the company, all of them confirmed that the main working language currently is Finnish. On one hand, some participants said that the ability to speak Finnish is required of all the employees of the company.

Now, our company's official working language is Finnish, and the ability to speak it fluently is required from all the staff members. [Participant 1]

On the other hand, some participants said that Finnish was not completely mandatory. They noted that the certain positions were able to be filled with only- English speakers. Reflected in the following quote:

Employees speaking only English are often utilized in different tasks where they can manage even without the ability to speak Finnish. This helps with the workload overall and the Finnish speaking employees can focus on the tasks where Finnish language skills are mandatory. [Participant 5]

Every participant argued that all new employees are introduced to the job with the same practices. The only major difference in the introduction is the language, which can be done in English or Finnish. Finally, feedback regarding new employee orientation methods and training practices have been collected from both employees and employers in all the participants' companies with the goal to improve training methods and materials. A common answer among the participants was that a the most successful method is to make sure everybody feels welcomed, no matter the ethnic background.

Participant 4 mentioned that ethnic diversity is especially visible in their company's marketing strategies. The biggest example given was advertising, where the company wants to promote diversity heavily, reflected in the following quote

In our marketing you can see people from all age groups, ethnicities, genders, etc., people. This is because our marketing wants to send a message about our company equality values.
[Participant 4]

4.2.4 Challenges and Tensions

The language barrier is a major challenge that every participant mentioned. Approximately half the participants emphasized that the language barrier is an extreme challenge within their company. The other half mentioned language barrier as a somewhat minor challenge. Participant 4 stated that,

Language barrier is sometimes a major problem. Sometimes it is very hard to understand assignments or assist other employees if common language is missing. It can be frustrating to both sides when we do not speak the same language.

Participants described that there are also challenges in recruitment when the applicant does not speak Finnish.

The immigrants who don't speak Finnish cannot communicate with the clients or with coworkers when they do not speak a common language. Most of the positions we have here at our company require explicit understanding of the situation and communication. The lack of common language, unfortunately, means that we cannot take them into consideration in our recruitment process. [Participant 1]

In addition, participant 3 mentioned that differences in religious practices have brought challenges among employees. Furthermore, certain strong patriarchal values inherent in some cultures have caused friction among employees and managers. Participant 3 stated,

Certain strong patriarchal values brought by their culture and religion have caused issues when the manager has been a woman, and the employee has been a man.

There have been situations where the employee has not wanted to take orders or assignments from the manager because she is a woman.

Fortunately, according to the participant, the manager has found a way to manage such scenarios.

The participants also described that different prejudices might harm the common work ethic and team spirit. Participant 5 reflects this in the following quote:

I have noticed that some Finnish employees and managers have prejudices towards the foreign employees. However, the foreign employees also sometimes have prejudices towards the Finns. These scenarios could cause friction in the work environment.

Although every one of them specified that these scenarios were relatively rare, and they do not often cause any serious concern or friction in the company. Notably, only one participant could recall a situation where two people could not work together because neither of them could put aside their prejudices.

4.2.5 Role of Local Context

The environment of a small or rural town is vastly different as compared to the larger towns or cities, where ethnic diversity is more common. According to the participants, both advantages and disadvantages exist in local environments where exposure to diversity is rarer. Participant 3 noted that his employees accessing, for example local municipal or school-related services in English or in a language other than Finnish is a significant challenge in a small town. In addition, Participant 2 mentioned the possible challenges non-Finnish workers could find in accessing hobbies and other pastime activity groups in the town or region. Participant 1 noted that something as common as attending a child's parent—teacher meeting or school activity increases in difficulty if someone from another culture does not know the language or the local traditions sufficiently. In addition, they noted that, in a small population area, everyone knows everyone else very well. Thus, it might be more difficult to enter the already existing groups, reflected in the next quote:

Social networks are very strong and tight in smaller communities. Therefore, it can be hard for newcomers to break into groups which are already formed through years.

[Participant 1]

The participants 1,2 and 6 stated in the interviews that there are advantages and disadvantages around the topic. Other people in the area might not be as used to ethnic diversity which can negatively affect community acceptance. In contrast, adjusting to the new culture and environment in a small or rural town can be done in peace and without pressure or rushing. As Participant 5 noted,

Ethnic diversity in smaller towns is less visible here. There are far fewer people from different ethnic backgrounds here compared larger cities. So, it can be difficult to relate to or adapt to diversity here. It may be harder to join already existing social networks when those groups are quite small and tight. On the other hand, it is easier to get to know and get familiar with diversity in a smaller group. Smaller groups can also offer more personal help with day-to-day problems.

In conclusion, the participants highlighted that rural environments offer both advantages and disadvantages for ethnical diversity. Limited language services and fewer social opportunities can make integration difficult for non-Finnish employee. However, participants noted that smaller communities can provide more personalized support in daily life.

5 Discussion

This study aimed to explore how ethnic diversity is approached in rural manufacturing companies in Finland and how the approaches correlate with company efficiency and productivity. Through qualitative interviews with managers and employees, the research found out that most companies relied on informal peer to peer strategies while trying or integrate ethnically diverse workers, with varying success. The participants underlined benefits of having diversity in the company, for example, increased innovation and extra language skills; however, they still highlighted challenges in communication and integration. Furthermore, we revisit the research questions of this study:

1. How do rural manufacturing companies manage ethnic diversity and what impact does it have with productivity?
2. What policies and practices related to ethnic diversity are currently implemented by rural Finnish industrial companies?

3. How do these ethnic diversity practices affect the company communication?

In the following sections I will discuss these themes in depth, drawing connections to already existing literature and exploring their implications for diversity management in rural manufacturing companies.

5.1 Ethnic diversity approaches

The approaches to ethnic diversity were relatively similar in all the studied companies. The participants gave answers which indicated that they and their organization were very supportive towards ethnic diversity and that everybody would be welcomed to the company. The overall stand of the participants was very open-minded, and nobody implicated that they would be against workers who were not native Finns. This also enhances the public image of the company that they are accepting and non-discriminatory, and hence avoiding any possible PR challenges.

The companies lacked formal, comprehensive, and structured diversity policies that would have been strategically planned from the management. They indicated rather informal solutions to specific problems, often handled with peer-to-peer support. The current diversity management in these companies was very reactive to the challenges rather than proactively preventing the problems from occurring. The reason behind this is that the ethnical diversity currently is not strongly present in the company ordinary functioning. These companies function with mostly all Finnish workforce so even if a few workers are not native Finns, the diversity-related challenges can be dealt with individually.

The participants, especially those with management positions, were aware of the lack of diversity related policies. They mentioned that, within the company management, there has been talks about how, in the future, they must create more structured and comprehensive diversity strategies. For the sake of continued success of their business, it is crucial that the organizations understand that they need more direct and transparent policies regarding diversity within the company. This is especially crucial when the workforce becomes more and more ethnically diverse. Even though the companies were aware of the lack of diversity strategies, and creating them takes resources; they still need to take concrete actions through which they, as an

organization, can handle the rising challenges. As Layne (2002) explained, long-term effort is required to make changes in diversity management.

5.2 Communication and integration

The studied companies appear to be adapting slowly to a multilingual environment. As the results showed, the companies use the English language as tool in addition to the usage of main language Finnish. For example, the usage of English in the company values and annual trainings indicate a conscious choice to shift from informal peer-to-peer support to at least partially structural adaptation to non-Finnish speaking workers.

The studied companies also used diversity as a marketing tool, for example, in their advertisements. This could reflect on organizational efforts towards more diverse work culture, or it could be just an effort to enhance the public image. According to Beckert and Koch (2025), companies use diversity images in external communications such as advertisements to promote inclusion efforts.

The integration and onboarding processes in the studied companies are largely the same regardless of the background of the employee. The only adaptation mentioned is the language, which some companies will switch to English if needed. Feedback is collected from the onboarding processes so the studied companies can track the quality of integration and make enhancements when needed. This shows that the companies are willing to adapt to new scenarios and want to improve their actions. In conclusion, the studied companies do not have structured and formal onboarding philosophies or policies that would be tailored to the non-Finns. Every single new worker is integrated and trained with the same methods, with only language the difference.

The most effective informal integration method was buddy systems and peer-to-peer support. These were effective since through them the new worker can get personalized help and solutions to the challenges when trying to integrate into the company. This works in the companies currently when the non-Finns are rare. However, it could be difficult to maintain the buddy system as the most effective policy when the number of workers originating outside of Finland possibly

increase in the future, as these programs take resources from the mentors (van Riemsdijk & Basford, 2021).

5.3 Positive impacts on productivity

Ethnic diversity brings out multiple benefits to the companies (e.g. Creary et al. 2021; Nguta & Omuya, 2024; Samuel & Odor, 2018; Umblijis et al., 2023; Welman et al., 2022). The benefits are relatively straightforward, and therefore the participants had no problems figuring out what they were. One of the most significant advantages of diverse workforce is enhanced innovation. The previous studies made around ethnic diversity in the workplace argue the same. For example, according to Nguta and Omuya (2024) and Samuel & Odor (2018), diverse workgroup can have largely improved innovation and creativity in the team. The results of this study regarding enhanced innovation therefore align with common consensus in the literature.

Two of the participants mentioned that workers from certain ethnic and cultural background were more hardworking compared to native Finns. The reasons behind this could be cultural. According to Enbuska et al. (2021) immigrant workers were described more diligent and motivated towards work compared to native Finns. The participants did not want to identify the cultures they were referring to, but they perceived certain cultural groups as more diligent than others. As a researcher, these views should be interpreted carefully and not generalized. However, these phenomena have been studied widely. For example, Geert Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory argues that, in collectivistic cultures, working hard is seen as a duty to the group as compared to individualistic cultures where working hard is seen as a choice or a way to achieving personal goals. An example of collectivistic cultures would be China and Japan; whereas Finland would be an example of individualistic countries (Hofstede, 1980).

5.4 Challenges on productivity

Although ethnic diversity in business has many benefits, unfortunately the benefits do not come alone. There are few key points where ethnic diversity causes challenges to the efficiency and productivity to the business. These challenges need to be understood and handled effectively so that the business can bloom (Welman et al., 2022).

The first and most significant challenge ethnic diversity brings is communicational challenges. Finnish is still the main working language in all the participant companies. Every single participant mentioned language barriers as a factor negatively affecting their company's efficiency. The companies operate in settings where clear communication is important for both safety and productivity; the lack of common language between employees occasionally led to production delays or misinterpret instructions. Language barriers can slow down the workflow and create misunderstandings. As Rathee and Dagar (2024) noted, language barriers can hinder or obstruct workflow and lead to increased misunderstandings.

The participant companies often rely on the Finnish speaking employees to translate or support the employees who do not yet speak Finnish. While peer-to-peer support is extremely valuable, this could cause the bilingual employees more work as a translator and hence potentially reducing their own work productivity. As van Riemsdijk and Basford (2021) noted, it takes significant amount of resources to mentor some other employees, especially when the number of mentored employees grow.

Another challenge is the lack of diversity management skills among the company supervisors. As pointed out by literature (Creary et al., 2021), a key to unlocking the benefits of a diverse workforce requires proper and effective diversity management by the supervisors of the company. The managers currently rely on informal support because the companies do not have structured diversity strategies. If the managers are not experienced in cross-cultural teamwork, the informal support might not be effective and could cause inconsistent results.

Some companies encountered minor team dynamic issues due cultural misunderstandings. These could cause issues in company efficiency if they are not handled through clear communication or training. This challenge has been studied before. For example, Aigner (2014) argued that religion possibly can bring differences into the companies.

Although not as key as the earlier mentioned diversity challenges, multiple smaller scenarios may cause challenges when companies work around the ethnic diversity. For example, these studied small to medium size companies might lack HR capacity to fully invest large resources and time into handling diversity challenges proactively (Moake et al., 2021).

5.5 Ethical considerations and Limitations

5.5.1 Ethical considerations

When conducting research, it is important to remember that there are significant number of ethical factors. In my thesis, all the company names and identities of employees are anonymized for the sake of privacy. All the information I gathered were kept confidential and were not shared outside this study. I also communicated clearly to the participants how I am using the data and explained the purpose of the research. The interviewed personnel fully volunteered in the research and always had right to withdraw from the research. In that case, I would have not used any of their data. It is important to ensure objectivity when presenting the findings. All the questions in the interviews were framed and presented with respectful language. In addition, all the collected data were deleted from my computer once the thesis was published.

5.5.2 Limitations

Some limitations are considered regarding my research. The first limitation is the research approach as qualitative interviews. The interviews I conducted in this study provide rich qualitative insights. However, the information is subjective and does not provide a full picture of the topic.

The second limitation is a lack of variety in the companies participating in the study. Like all researchers, I must limit my research by defining the scope of my research. In this case, my scope focused on rural manufacturing companies in Finland. My research findings are not necessarily applicable to all fields in Finland. I studied only manufacturing companies, so the results and findings could generate different findings for other fields of business, even though they would also operate in the rural setting.

The sample size of the study is also small, so generalization is reduced. I interviewed people from six different companies. Even though the companies were from different rural regions of Finland, it is impossible to generalize, apply or assume that the results apply to all companies in the field in Finland. Lastly, the results only showed a snapshot of the phenomena during the data collection period. It does not track changes or focus on how the discussed matters evolve over time.

5.6 Future research recommendations

While diversity in business has been considerably studied prior, certain elements of the topic are yet to be explored. My study was conducted within one interview round which sets limits. It creates and shows a snapshot of the topic currently. For any future research, a longitudinal study could possibly bring out interesting results compared to my study. A longitudinal study could track individual and organizational development around the ethnical diversity strategies and broaden the results of the experiences of participants around the topic. This could show clear footprints on how the companies have evolved with their practices with time.

I would also recommend a quantitative study around this topic. My study focused on qualitative aspects of the integrating non-Finnish workers into rural companies—with the benefits and challenges identified. However, focusing on the quantitative data from companies in this process could also create an objective understanding of some of the company experiences that my qualitative study does not. With quantitative methods, for instance, it might be possible to connect the subjective findings of the workers with actual concrete productivity metrics, such as revenue per employee.

Another future study recommendation would be to implement the same study in companies with different contexts. For example, my research scope excluded any company located in densely populated areas. So, it would be interesting to discover how the change of context to medium-sized or large-scale city would affect the results. In addition, any future research could compare the two contexts and highlight their differences and similarities.

In addition, I would recommend future research where the study participants focus on a migrant workers' point of view. Participants in this study were native Finns and talked about the phenomena from their point of view. One might expect that the experiences and perspectives would be different when interviewing people from non-Finnish origin working in Finland. Furthermore, a study focusing only on managers and supervisors could provide a clearer picture of the leadership around the topic within the organizations in the field.

6 Conclusions

Overall, my study contributes valuable insight into how rural Finnish manufacturing companies currently navigate ethnical diversity and the implications these practices have on workplace communication and productivity. The findings show that while structured diversity management is still emerging, the companies are already experiencing both clear benefits and challenges. For the academic literature, this study highlights the need to better understand diversity implementation in rural settings. For rural manufacturing companies, the results highlight the importance of proactively developing inclusive practices before ethnical diversity increases significantly. For both Finnish and non-Finnish employees, this research offers a clearer picture of how integration may progress in such environments, and how future efforts can build more inclusive and innovative workplaces. With the right strategies and support, rural manufacturing companies can become great environments for supporting the benefits of ethnic diversity.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview questions

1. How would you describe your company's general attitude towards ethnic diversity?
2. What kind of practices or procedures does your company have regarding diversity?
3. How do you think the location of your company affects the general attitude towards diversity?
4. Can you give an example on how ethnic diversity has been addressed in your workplace?
5. In your experience, has ethnic diversity had an impact on productivity or efficiency in the company?
6. Have you noticed changes in teamwork or work processes due to diversity?
7. Can you describe a situation where diversity had a positive impact or brought challenges to your company?
8. How do you assess the impact of diversity on innovation or problem solving in your company?
9. What kind of challenges related to ethnic diversity have you encountered in your company?
10. How are possible misunderstandings or conflicts handled in multicultural teams in your company?
11. Has anyone raised any concerns related to culture or language barriers and if so, what kind?
12. Has the introduction or training considered a multicultural work community?
13. What practices have worked well (or poorly) in building team spirit across cultures?

14. How do you think the local community views workers with a foreign background?

15. What specific benefits or challenges does the local context bring from a diversity perspective?