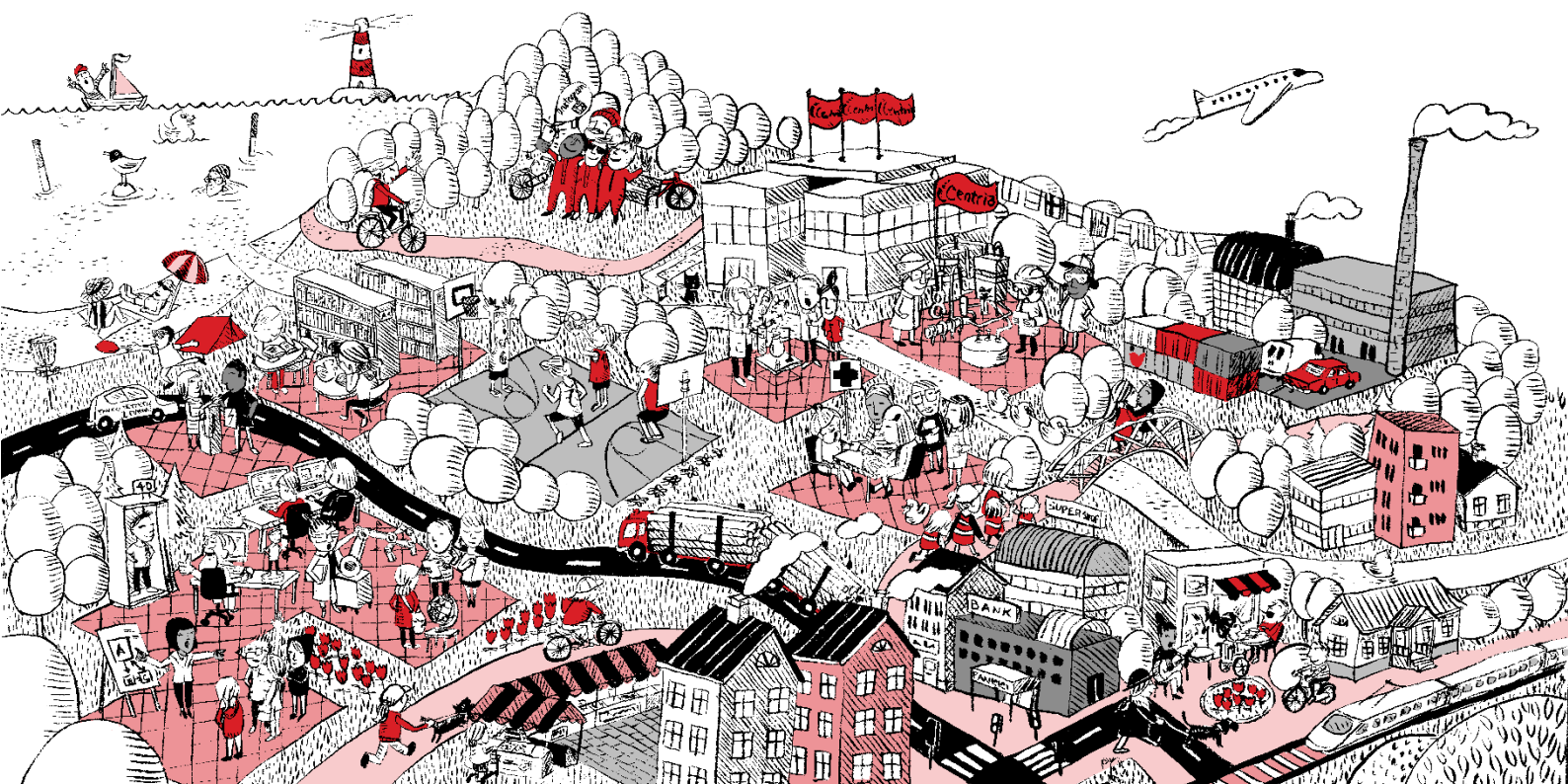


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# **WORKPLACE DIVERSITY FROM THE MANAGEMENT POINT OF VIEW**

**Kasco / Rewolt oy**

**Thesis**  
**CENTRIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**  
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**ABSTRACT**

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<p>Kasco/ Rewolt oy, personnel hiring services firm operating in the construction sector, like most firms in the industry makes use of diversity in its workforce with employees from six different nationalities.</p> <p>Workplace diversity from a management point of view seeks an understanding into the term diversity and how it can possibly be scaled in rendering a company more efficient if there is such a possibility.</p> <p>Literature for this research hinges on the concepts of diversity and management. Diversity in a workplace is analysed by exploring what the term stands for and the possible ways through which it presents itself. Avenues for implementing diversity in a workplace are equally explored and a case for it is made. The concept of management and its role is explored. Managing diverse teams and possible challenges spurred by diversity wrap up the literature for the thesis.</p> <p>A qualitative research method was used with interviews chosen as the data collection tool. Data collected was analysed through text analysis.</p> <p>From the research conducted, it is evident that diversity in the workplace is not harmful per se especially when handled properly and companies in different industries other than construction in Finland are encouraged to explore the possibility of boasting more diversity across their workforce.</p>		
<p><b>Key words</b> Diversity, diversity dimensions, implementing diversity, management, managing diverse teams, workplace diversity.</p>		

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The term diversity put simply means having different things together in one place. These could be people for example. The ability of these things to coexist despite their visible and underlying differences is an embodiment of diversity. Management on its part, is the body charged with running an organization such as, creating its vision and assembling necessary resources for bringing this vision to life. Management has an important role to play in any given organization as they set the rules for everyone within the organization to adhere to.

This thesis aims at understanding what diversity is, how it can be harnessed to promote an organization's economic growth and the role of management vis-à-vis diversity. If having a diverse team can help an organization attain its set goals, why not implement it? The objective of this thesis therefore is to assess how beneficial diversity can be in propelling a company attain its goals and to encourage the management of companies especially within the Finnish jobs landscape to give it a thought.

Literature reviewed for this thesis is based on the concepts of diversity and management. Understanding what diversity is, seeing the various dimensions under which it manifests, how to implement diversity in a workplace and its perceived benefits will form the theoretical framework on the topic of diversity. The concept of management will be defined, and the role of managers explored. Contemporary management styles used for managing teams and a comprehensive guide on how to manage diverse teams will make up the literature on management.

The empirical part of this thesis will be a qualitative method of analysis which will entail conducting a series of interviews with representatives of the commissioning company. In total, six interviews will be conducted with members of the commissioning company. The commissioner, Kasco/Rewolt oy is a limited liability company based in Helsinki, Finland. This company is into the staffing business within the construction sector.

This thesis topic is born out of a couple of contemporary issues plaguing Finnish society. Finland is a northern European country with a population of over five (5) million inhabitants (Statista 2019), deemed to have one of the best education systems in the world (OECD Better Life Index). This has attracted and continues to attract international students looking for higher education and other professional opportunities. Most of these international students face the arduous task of gaining employment

in jobs corresponding to their training, leading a staggering 2,000 to leave the country out of the approximately 3,000 students trained annually (Yle news 12 February 2019). This trend is especially worrying for the Finnish society as she continues to experience declining birth rates (Statistics Finland 2020). The call for concern here is on maintaining Finland's welfare system wherein everyone is being catered for, in the years ahead. How will this happen if the country does not have the required workforce to fund said services via the payment of taxes?

With most immigrants struggling to gain a foothold in the Finnish labour market, leading some to leave in search of better professional opportunities elsewhere, perhaps the issue of diversity if explored by Finnish labour market operators could help solve this worry. This is in line with the main objective of this thesis which is to encourage managers explore the topic of diversity to boost company competitiveness.

## **2 WORKPLACE DIVERSITY**

The notion of workplace diversity has grown popular in many business milieus as legislation exists in some countries such as the United States of America (USA) compelling hiring managers of federal agencies, contractors, and subcontractors to conform to certain diversity norms with their workforce (Natter 2019).

### **2.1 Defining workplace diversity**

A workplace defined simply is a place or setting where one is employed or habitually carry out activities related to their work such as an office, a laboratory, shop, factory et cetera (etc) (The Free Dictionary). Understanding the direct impact diversity has on the workplace is essential in explaining the term. Diversity embodies coming to terms with the fact that no two persons have the same qualities hence, their peculiarity from one another especially when looking at individuals in a group. These characteristics would include race, ethnicity, gender, religion, political ideologies, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities or socio-economic status. Also, the way people perceive life from experience and their problem-solving capacities may sum up to such peculiar characteristics. (Natter 2019.)

According to Taunda (2017), diversity is getting different things, people, and places together. For example, assembling people from different races, genders, ages, and ethnicities is a great show of diversity. Two things or persons will hardly be alike due to differences in their cultural setup. Individual opinions can equally form a basis for diversity.

As seen, the term diversity covers vast array of pertinent issues thus leading to different dimensions when the term is mentioned. For the purposes of this work, such dimensions will be scaled down to focus on a few, in line with the research objectives. Diversity dimensions of race, ethnicity, age, gender, and religion, pertinent to our Finnish context will be examined subsequently.

## 2.2 Diversity dimensions

Different schools of thought classify the dimensions of diversity differently ranging from, a two-tier classification of primary and secondary dimensions (Eve 2008 [Loden 1996]), to a three-tier classification (DiAngelo 2008), a four-tier classification of personality, internal, external and organisational dimensions (Gardenswartz & Rowe 2003), and a five-tier classification of identity, primary, secondary, organisational and cultural dimensions (Dwinell, Farmer, Fairrer-Samani & Jones 2017). The majority however lean towards the four-tier classification but, the two-tier classification of primary and secondary dimensions will be suitable for the purposes of this study.



PICTURE 1. Dimensions of diversity. Adopted from, the business case for diversity- PowerPoint presentation by Lani 2012 [Loden 1996].

### 2.2.1 Race and ethnicity

Race as a powerful social construct affects the lives of millions of people globally and Finnish workplaces are not much of an exception. Victims of this unfortunate social construct often end up with deep rooted scars such as depression, with one victim, a foreign national in Finland describing her experience of trying to break into the Finnish job market as “depressing”. A product of the Finnish education system with a degree in nursing, good Finnish language skills auto-evaluated at C2 level and a Diploma in Personal and Fitness Training, had been unable to secure a permanent job as at February 12, 2019. They recounted their ordeal of being turned down at interviews simply because of their race, despite boasting an impressive resume as acknowledged by potential recruiters. (Yle News 12 February 2019.)

A euphemism of race, ethnicity has a somewhat different definition as cultural aspects are highlighted more than biology (Blackman 2017). Minute cultural aspects such as names have proven to have significant ramifications in the Finnish labour market according to a recent study by Ahmad (2019) which points to the fact that, if there is an applicant with a Finnish sounding name, they will most likely get hired over another applicant with matching qualifications who has a foreign name (Yle news 21 October 2019).

Both instances where race and ethnicity have acted as barriers to greater workplace diversity in the Finnish job market are largely unfortunate as a McKinsey & Company (2015) research points to the fact that companies with greater racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above their industry average (Hunt, Layton & Prince 2015).



### 2.2.2 Age

We live in an era where at least three different generations are legally able to integrate the workforce in most countries. These are the baby boomers, Generation X and the Millennials. These different generations are perceived to have different characteristics and abilities, largely shaped by the occurrence of scientific and technological evolutions during their upbringing. (Purdue University Global 2021.)

Varying perspectives influenced by age or generational gaps are believed to be better at things like innovation and decision making in a workplace. Younger generations are more dynamic than older generations, giving them the ability to stay within touching distance of technological trends which could transition into marketable opportunities their predecessors might overlook. Having a good age mix among employees, possibly cutting through the three generations mentioned earlier serves as a good recipe for workplace diversity as it is believed to bring much needed balance to the business. (Blackman 2017.) Some Finnish workplaces have been found wanting in this diversity dimension as unemployed over 50-year-old in the country reportedly struggle to find work despite their experience (Yle news 18 October 2019).

### 2.2.3 Gender

The diversity dimension of gender should not be limited to the Male / Female perspective on gender in the workplace. Businesses can sidestep traditional gender basis and create a niche for themselves by shining a light on people who identify within the minority gender community. This can be executed effectively by using inclusive language in company communications, void of traditional gender markings. Women on the other hand have for long been underrepresented in the workforce with their potentials being untapped or underutilized as they are largely limited systematically to junior career positions with lesser pay. (Blackman 2017.)

Notwithstanding, companies need to pay special attention to the male-female employment ratio as each gender brings in valuable contributions via their perspectives (TalentLyft 2021). Also, the patriarchy construct present in most societies creates an enabling environment for inequality between sexes in a workplace. Gender roles often favor the male sex, providing greater access to, and control of a society's resources. This is evidenced as women get paid 77 cents a dollar for every dollar a man earns for

performing the same or similar jobs, according to the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics. (University of Washington, Tacoma 2021.)

#### **2.2.4 Religion**

The wide number of world religions has sadly proven to pose a serious pandemic in the workplace as cases of religious discrimination are being reported globally. Creating an enabling environment in the workplace to accommodate various religions represented can be a daunting task. Employers can possibly manage this issue by giving some latitude of religious observation in the workplace. For example, allowing workers show up to work in attires convenient with their faith or creating a flexible working environment where people can stay off work if need be for religious purposes and not risk being sanctioned. (Blackman 2017.)

A case of religious discrimination is observed as a young muslim woman of Somali descent was allegedly denied employment due to her denial to give up wearing her hijab (headscarf) during work times (Yle news 22 June 2019).

### **2.3 Implementing diversity**

With the continuing debate on diversity, some managers may be asking themselves the question of how to go about implementing it. Marquis, Lim, Scott, Harrell & Kavanagh (2008) propose creating an effective diversity management program consisting of three key elements: leadership, initiative, and evaluation.

#### **2.3.1 Leadership**

The leadership of any corporation struggling with implementing diversity should put forth a formal commitment, translating into internal policy formulation guaranteeing executive decisions are guarded by said policy. By cultivating a mindset that takes diversity requirements into account such as long-term cultural changes, management will be able to highlight the level of inclusiveness needed for diversity to prevail. When a cross section of company top brass become vocal advocates for diversity

initiatives by spearheading diversity programs and communicating efficiently with employees on the topic, leadership will be leading by example as they demonstrate their stance in favor of diversity. When personnel with minority backgrounds can scale the corporate ladder on grounds of merit, a sense of reawakening is borne, and more people will be encouraged to pursue diversity programs. (Marquis, Lim, Scott, Harrel & Kavanagh 2008.)

Secondly, by making a formal plan to develop corporate objectives for diversity and integrating them into the business plan, leadership will be putting out another strong statement. This is achievable by developing diversity goals in tandem with company objectives and modes of operation. Enacting diversity principles as core elements of a company's DNA will help set the stage for the atmosphere needed for a diversity program to prevail. Also, if management can communicate unambiguous reasons showing the merits diversity brings to the table, employees will readily join the bandwagon as they will be keen to reap such benefits. Having each manager set up a diversity framework for their department will make the general corporate plan easier to implement. (Marquis et al 2008.)

Actual leadership involvement in planning and implementing an organization's diversity program is needed. Diversity rhetoric on the part of the leaders will do very little to bring about the change needed for diversity to reign. What is needed is a strong commitment on the part of management in spreading the diversity doctrine across all spheres of the company strata and into the minds of employees. This task might sound daunting for top executives due to time and energy constraints but is most significant in proving leadership resolve on the diversity question. (Marquis et al 2008.) Service Futures lends credibility to this as they think it is imperative for senior leadership in a company to get involved and be visible during the entire diversity project. Senior management visibility on a company's diversity project is portrayed through active participation in diversity training programs, workshops, and during question and answer (Q&A) sessions. This way, senior management leads by example. (Service Futures.)

Internal communication tools should be used to support the implementation of diversity programs and tell employees the benefits diversity will bring. When senior executives air out their resolve for diversity via formal channels such as mission statements, memos, public statements, and speeches, they set a good example for the rest to follow. Talking directly to employees and unveiling the diversity program before its implementation will better prepare them to be more receptive of management's plans than when they get confronted with it right away without any prior notification. Employee affinity towards diversity programs are reportedly less enthusiastic if they feel it has been imposed on them. This

may lead to a loss of motivation. Company executives should equally explain what managing diversity will entail for the enterprise and what it will not entail. Such information can be circulated in the form of an internal marketing campaign for diversity, with the goal of winning over employees and raising their spirits. (Marquis et al 2008.)

### **2.3.2 Initiative**

The wheels for workplace diversity are set in motion when initiatives are put in place to recruit, promote, and retain a diverse workforce. Leadership involvement as seen above, and diversity objectives will be in vain if no properly designed diversity initiative is articulated.

Recruitment seems to be the actual starting point for implementing diversity. This is true because there is no diversity if a company still faces problems with recruiting a talent with a diverse background. By recruiting foreign talent, an organizational structure that appeals to foreign talent is created. This acts as a big psychological boost to other culturally diverse talents and potential employees vis-à-vis the company. Having a heterogeneous recruitment team will also accelerate recruitment processes. This for the obvious reason that the network of a heterogeneous recruitment team will certainly boast greater diversity. A determination should equally be made on a potential employee's ability to work, learn, and develop within a culturally diverse environment. (Marquis et al 2008.) This initiative can be facilitated by (re)structuring the company through the creation of a diversity office and the appointment of a Chief Diversity Officer (Service Futures).

Promotion efforts within a company should take minority personnel into consideration. This by no means suggests that persons should be promoted up the corporate chain based on the simple fact that they are of a minority group and the said company is trying to make a statement for diversity. Rather, all promotions should be free, fair, and transparent, motivated on the grounds of merit and should not be biased in the case of a minority personnel. (Marquis et al 2008.)

Much effort should be made towards retaining the diverse workforce existing within an organization by providing effective mentoring and support services, creating an enabling diversity ecosystem, and putting promotion avenues within the reach of diverse personnel. According to DiversityInc (2003), companies can implement policies that will effectively encourage minority employees to stay with the company. Such policies could include, skill and managerial training, senior management commitment,

incorporating diversity as a core component of overall business strategy, boasting a large minority employee base, and providing financial support for diversity initiatives. (Marquis et al 2008.) Nandy (2017) re-echoes these views by stating that a company needs to train and sensitize its employees for them to buy into the diversity project. This helps create an enabling environment for employees with minority background, making their retention easy.

The next initiative implementation involves the professional development of minorities by establishing initiatives with a focus on developing minority background employee skills. Language and technical know-how needed for the proper execution of the job specific requirements should be provided. Such trainings are also believed to accelerate the successful integration of the international talent within the organization. Also, an assessment on each minority employee's development needs should be made and an individualized training, development and progression plan should be created. Working as a minority employee can lead to undue pressure on the shoulders of the employee. Management should assist such employees by providing mentoring programs and giving feedback on their performance. (Marquis et al 2008.)

The entire workforce should be educated using designated programs to create a diversity-friendly environment within the enterprise. Such training should cut across management to entry level personnel. A positive outcome for such training will be squashing stereotypes and breaking diversity barriers, enabling all groups to collectively address issues preventing the successful integration of minority employees. Trainings should also focus on how to work in diverse groups and appreciate personal efforts. By so doing, individual awareness on diversity issues will grow and employees will be better prepared for organizational changes preceding inclusiveness. On the management spectrum, teachings should be tailored on enabling managers make the most of diversity while scaling down on potential diversity related conflicts. An understanding on key aspects of other cultures such as style and behavior will help managers appreciate and respect such differences. Human Resource personnel should equally be equipped with tools focusing on diversity groups during recruiting campaigns, eliminating all forms of bias during the process. (Marquis et al 2008.)

### **2.3.3 Evaluation**

The final stage of implementing diversity according to Marquis, Lim, Scott, Harrel & Kavanagh (2008) is the evaluation phase which basically consists of accountability and program assessment.

Companies are encouraged to create compensation and performance evaluation programs which will serve as accountability mechanisms. When evaluating an employee's performance, performance on diversity related issues should equally be evaluated and incentives such as bonuses indexed on diversity initiative performance. This will enable the company keep track on the outcome of its diversity initiative and ensure all employees have the same degree of commitment towards diversity goals. (Marquis et al 2008.)

The use of formal quantitative and qualitative methods to design an organization's diversity policies and measure their effectiveness will enable an efficient assessment of its diversity program. As with most research practices, data collection as a diagnostic tool should precede implementation. This important step will be crucial in understanding the enterprise's current demographics, employee attitudes and potential problem areas. Employee input on diversity needs and priorities should be consulted. Such consultations via staff surveys and focus groups can be helpful in determining where diversity programs are most needed and what would constitute a reasonable diversity objective for the enterprise. Employees with an input in creating a company's diversity initiative will invest their best efforts for it to be a success. (Marquis et al 2008.)

Diversity task forces should be consulted, and a recommendation made on their diversity initiatives and implementation timeframe. An ideal diversity task force is composed of persons representing a cross-section of genders, race, functional discipline and organizational levels. Such diverse task force is in a better position to come up with broader perspectives on diversity issues. Prior collected data should be used as a barometer for assessing the level of effectiveness of ongoing diversity initiatives over time. During the evaluation process, an assessment on employees' reactions to the organization's diversity initiative, learning aptitudes, implementation stage and perceived impact the policy has had on the business should be made. Employee feedback can be crucial in fine-tuning diversity policies for greater optimization of diversity objectives. And, for a seamless evaluation process, diversity initiatives should be designed to have noticeable or appraisable outcomes. (Marquis et al 2008.)

## 2.4 The Case for and Benefits of Diversity

The benefits of diversity might seem so glaring to its supporters and companies at the forefront of diversity implementation but not obvious, making it imperative for us to look at some of those reasons why a company should bother itself with implementing diversity and the benefits thereof.

It is without much argument that diversity's principal objective within an organization is to render it more efficient. Greater efficiency eventually translates into competitive market share and profit maximization. This certainly proves a point that the case for diversity is more business and profit oriented than a moral or case for social justice. Equality and non-discrimination are always at the forefront of diversity arguments. For a company, becoming more efficient should be the main goal as the former (equality and social justice) tend to be secondary objectives. The business case for diversity is more of a give and take situation, as striving to gain a greater market share will lead them to provide equal opportunities for minority groups because, organizations who value and promote diversity become more competitive over those who favor homogeneity. (Fischer 2009, 97-98.)

Looking at the bigger picture, diversity induces entrepreneurial action which in turn transforms society. Diversity can thus be said to act as an engine for growth in an economy. Prominent examples exist where financial success and societal growth have been spurred by diversity and inclusiveness. First- and second-generation immigrants in the United States (U.S) founded over 40% of today big tech companies we know such as Apple, eBay, Google, PayPal, WhatsApp. Such firms employed approximately 560,000 persons with sales revenue of \$63 billion in 2012. (The Shortcut 2019.)

Diversity is an invaluable tool for organizations wishing to get competitive in global markets. A company wishing to go global and conquer international markets will need to have aboard its team, members with culturally diverse backgrounds, making it easier for them to tailor their products and services to cater for the needs of the international markets they are aiming for. "Groupthink" is a syndrome that affects homogenous teams as their ability to think outside the box of their cultural confine is limited. Increased sales revenue, wider customer base, greater market share, and greater relative profits are all benefits associated with racial and gender diversity. This is backed by the fact that, people with knowledge of other markets are an asset to organizations wishing to internationalize their operations. (The Shortcut 2019.)

Enterprises will reap the benefits of diversity if they decide to use available international talent at their disposal. Negative demographic developments considering an ageing population has led to a labor shortage in most western economies. With this trend not looking to change any time soon, a company which decides in favor of diversity and inclusion will likely overcome this problem as they will have a wider pool of employees to recruit from, rendering them more approachable in the process to jobseekers from minority backgrounds. (Fischer 2009, 100.)

Another advantage of diversity is the production of better results due to internal dynamics when managed properly. This is known as the synergy hypothesis. This hypothesis holds the conviction that diversity will speed up group performance by changing group processes. Heterogeneous teams will be better at problem solving, creativity and innovation due to the variety of ideas at their disposal. (Fischer 2009, 100.)

Companies gain access to markets and legitimacy with partners and customers when they decide in favor of diversity. The fast pace of globalization is rendering our societies more diverse. Organizations are thus confronted with different partners and customers domestically as well as internationally. Companies put up a better image in front of their partners and customers alike if they boast a diverse workforce. Secondly, the demand for goods and services is growing within minority communities hence their market importance. It will be easier for companies to penetrate such markets if there is an availability of market knowledge within the workforce. A rather ironic twist in the turn of events sets in, in the marketing phase. Some markets respond positively if they can identify with the marketers that is, if they share ethnic or racial similarities. It is therefore imperative for an international company wishing to break into a new market to have at the forefront someone who has acknowledge on the market and can identify within the community. (Fischer 2009, 100.)



### **3 MANAGEMENT**

Having explored the concept of workplace diversity by looking at diversity dimensions, the case for and benefits of diversity among other topics, it is time to delve into the second main concept of the thesis: management. Herein, the definition and role of managers will be explored, as well as other sub-topics pertaining to management.

#### **3.1 Definition and the role of managers**

Knowledge Management Terms (2009) define management as:

Management is the organizational process that includes strategic planning, setting objectives, managing resources, deploying the human and financial assets needed to achieve objectives and measuring results. Management also includes recording and storing facts and information for later use or for others within the organization. Management functions are not limited to managers and supervisors. Every member of the organization has some management and reporting functions as part of their job.

The importance of management as a factor of production cannot be undermined as it involves coordinating people, which is a complex task as humans have their peculiarities. Managing human relations within an organization to achieve its set objectives is usually the responsibility of the management team. Each management team is composed a bit differently according to the needs of the organization. Managers are thus leaders on whom the organization rely upon to get things done via people (employees), needing the full engagement and support of the employees (Armstrong 2016, 1). According to Armstrong (2016), the role of a manager simply put is to ensure employees know what expectations the company has on them and to guide, motivate and engage those employees to gain their full trust and commitment towards the execution of the obligation.

#### **3.2 Management Styles**

Management style refers to the approach used by leaders in demonstrating leadership within an organization. Management styles abound and no specific style may claim monopoly in any specific situation. This therefore gives management the free will to choose and implement one or more leadership strategies deemed suitable in managing their teams. With the idea of an ideal management style being a farce, the appropriate management style in leading a particular team will depend on variables such as

the structure of the organization, the nature of the task, the nature of the individuals who make up the team and the team's general physiognomy, with the leader's personality being perhaps the most determining factor. (Armstrong 2016, 11.)

Rensis Likert, a teacher and philosopher promulgated four management styles at the end of the 1950s. These are direct management, persuasive management, participative management, and delegate management (Chartered Management Institute, 2015). These four leadership styles seem comprehensive enough for this study and will be examined subsequently.

Direct management otherwise known as autocratic management is more results oriented with the leader having a huge role to play. Employee autonomy is limited as they have no say in decision making processes and are expected to adhere to strict principles aimed at making them more effective. As the word to direct, leaders here give directives which employees are expected to follow rigorously. This management style has a lot to do with precision in its mode of operation and getting results. It places minimal trust on employees and generates the most hostile behaviors in them. With employees having to follow strict processes and do repetitive tasks, they are more prone to psychological burnouts which could take a serious toll on their motivation levels, potentially leading to an unhealthy work environment. A potential benefit of direct management is efficiency in achieving fast results. (Kaleem 2016; Goleman 2000.)

The next type of management focuses on the interaction between managers and their employees with a strong involvement from management. This style is known as persuasive, charismatic or coaching management. Just like direct management, it has that aspect of close employee supervision and control but to a somewhat lesser extent. This management style differentiates itself from direct management as it is rather employee oriented than result oriented. Also, employees enjoy some degree of autonomy with managers placing more trust on them, aspects lacking under direct style of leadership. Persuasive management believes in employee participation as their opinions are sometimes consulted and taken into consideration. Management however reserves the right to all decision making. Leaders under persuasive management use the relationships they create with employees to become role models for them in the workplace. With this management structure, employees get a feeling of belonging to a group due to the established relationship with the manager. Such a tightly knit team could become too closed that they shut themselves from the outside world. This could prove detrimental. (Kaleem 2016; Goleman 2000.)

Participative management also known as free rein or laissez-faire management lays emphasis on manager-employee relations with minimal intervention from the manager. This management concept is focused on bridging the gap between leaders and their employees by focusing on building trustworthy relationships. The yam and the knife are usually in the possession of employees under participative management as they have a great say in decision making processes, can dictate their work methods and explore their creative ends. Most suited for when a group of experts are working together, the manager's role here is very supervisory as he integrates with the team and lets it explore methods suitable for its functioning other than trying to direct or impose his. This leads to a great air of motivation among employees but, such a management style is usually not void of its own challenges. This "laissez faire" system demands real commitment, great independent capacity, and highly creative individuals for it to be successful. (Kaleem 2016; Namiq 2018.)

Finally, Pytlik (2020) has this to say on delegate management. Also known as advisory or democratic management, this style focuses on team results with minimal involvement from management. Decisions are taken in consultation with employees due to the trust placed in them, in tandem with maintaining a team spirit. The accountability and involvement of each team member is greatly implored under this leadership scheme. Managers and employees set objectives and methods for attaining them together as a team. Effective communication is a cornerstone for the success. Communication should be vertical and horizontal, that is, between employees and from leaders to team members and vice versa. Employees here feel empowered because of their involvement resulting in a good working environment. A potential downside for such a system might be the birth of buddy management due to the lack of a defined corporate structure. (Goleman 2000.)

### **3.3 Managing Diverse Teams**

It is of little importance assembling a team that cuts across the various diversity dimensions seen earlier if management cannot harmonize the various characteristics present in each team member in achieving the company's objectives. For this to happen, team leaders or management need a comprehension on the four dimensions under which teams operate as propagated by Gardenswartz & Rowe (2003). A manager who grasps a successful understanding of these four dimensions makes great strides towards knowing how to lead his team to success (Gardenswartz & Rowe 2003). This therefore means that the composition of the team (whether homogenous or heterogenous) is of little importance here as human complexities are always in play when it comes to team management. However, a manager or team

leader who understands these four dimensions of team building is better placed at managing any team, especially a heterogeneous one. The four dimensions of team building as per Gardenswartz & Rowe (2003) will be discussed below, with additional input from Gwynne's (2009) managing culturally diverse teams.

### **3.3.1 Task: Focus on the Product**

There is always an underlying reason for assembling a team which is usually to produce something. This could be goods or services. Notwithstanding the nature of the product, the task of producing the product is usually the basis under which the team is put together. Hence, all team members are expected to bring their focus on the product which is their end goal. This demands unambiguous clarity and to ensure this, answering the following questions would be a good starting point: What is our reason for being? What are we supposed to be accomplishing? and What are our goals and objectives as a group? When these questions are answered sufficiently, team members get a clear vision of what task awaits them. This way, they are better motivated and committed to it, can set their course, and working method. In a situation where team members do not get to understand the task, productivity and progress are badly hit due to their lukewarm attitude and inability to focus on the task. (Gardenswartz & Rowe 2003, 66-67.)

### **3.3.2 Relationship: Focus on Human Dynamics**

Since teams are made up of humans, focusing on the various human relationships that exist within a group will help bring it together towards achieving its task. Diversity in teams produces a wide range of human relationships, usually negative and positive. The existence of positive human relationships within a group leads to a healthy working environment wherein team members feel supported and the group's morale is boosted. The ensuing cooperation and team spirit from such positive human connections lead to higher productivity as communication is effective giving creativity a chance. Consider an opposite scenario where team members find it difficult to bond with one another maybe due to vices such as jealousy or long-standing animosity, they may have difficulties achieving team goals despite their individual commitment to the task. Finding answers to the following pertinent questions will be important in moving forward: How well do we communicate and get along? How well do we support one another, especially during difficult times? And, what are our rules for how we want to treat one

another? Answering these questions and creating forums where team members can get together with the goal of working on their relationships and building other soft human tools such as patiently listening to one another without pre-judging will help reinforce a feeling of oneness. (Gardenswartz & Rowe 2003, 68.)

Gwynne (2009) highlights this under the fusion approach based on two main aspects of collaboration: coexistence of differences and meaningful participation. Teams which successfully allow meaningful participation from all members by creating an enabling environment for their differences to coexist reportedly have a greater creative edge and attain their goals most effectively. The great take away from the fusion approach is allowing every member to contribute towards achieving the team's goals. (Gwynne 2009.)

### **3.3.3 Shoulder to Shoulder: Working Together**

The feeling of working together in a group, often reinforced by having to meet a deadline as a team or, to overcome an obstacle together leads to greater cohesion within a team. People often find the strength to unite in the face of adversity. No matter the degree of diversity present within a team, a shared assignment can get them together easily during which their heightened ambition to find a common solution will get them working in close collaboration with each other, "shoulder to shoulder". As a group, having answers to questions such as: Where do we need to work together? Where are we independent? and Where can we help each other? is usually a good point to start. The essence of working together, shoulder to shoulder is to break certain invisible barriers often created by diversity as team members commune and can rely on one another for help. (Gardenswartz & Rowe 2003, 68-69.)

According to Gwynne (2009), breaking down a team to sub-teams or sub-units of 3-4 persons will go a long way in reinforcing the notion of working together, shoulder to shoulder. When teams are broken down to sub-teams, every member has the possibility to contribute freely as the task is split and divided among sub-teams. Sub-teams should be reconstituted to make the most out of individual specialist skills. In case of conflict, a neutrality approach should be taken by the team leader by putting the contentious issue up for voting. (Gwynne 2009.)

### **3.3.4 Process Intervention**

Another avenue through which teams can grow is by intervening in the way they work together. This mechanism is called process intervention and entails bringing members of a team together via retreats, training sessions or group meetings where they will gain special experiences out of their daily work routine. Process intervention seeks to assist team members in building relationships, develop understanding among themselves and empower them with conflict resolution tools. This is important as team members might not find the time to tackle such issues whilst during their daily routine. An atmosphere of divisiveness, distrust among members is never the wish of any leader as such frictions could give disastrous consequences on overall output. A process intervention under such circumstances is necessary under the guise of a regular weekly workshop for the team. Trust-building exercises will be the order of the day, same with when trying to tackle other issues. Such working sessions will help squash interpersonal squabbles among members and help them coalesce with one another. Questions to put forth to team members under such circumstances are: Where are we blocked in our task accomplishment or in our relationships? What is keeping us from achieving our goals and creating barriers in communication? and How do we deal with conflicts that emerge on the team? (Gardenswartz & Rowe 2003, 69-70.) When team members walk into a process intervention workshop ready to answer these questions, they are setting the stage for its success as the working session will witness a great deal of genuine sincerity if members are committed to finding lasting solutions.

Leaders who are committed to seeing their teams attain their goals will find it relatively easy if they can understand and implement the four dimensions of team building as the dimensions cater for the needs of all working groups especially those of diverse teams.

### **3.4 Challenges in Managing Diverse Teams**

The underlying difficulty in managing something cannot be overemphasized. Workplace diversity presents itself as a double-edged sword to managers as they cannot accept one and reject the other. Having seen the obvious advantages (one edge of the sword) diversity brings to a workplace or company, it is time to look at the other edge of the diversity sword, the challenges faced by managers because of diversity in the workplace.

Challenges faced by managers in workplaces because of diversity usually manifests in the form of problems between employees. This is usually the result of several misconceptions with diversity being the crux of it all. As an organization grows more diverse, it will eventually get to a point where employees will form affinity groups, creating an informal or shadow organization within the workplace. This may lead to a misinterpretation of certain managerial actions by the different affinity groups. Employees also have the tendency to mistreat one another simply because they can, thus diversity may not always be the root cause of problems between employees. (Borrego & Johnson 2012, 291-293.)

Diversity in societies today is fueled by immigration which is becoming a hot potato on most discussion panels. Opinions on the issue are increasingly getting divisive and polarizing as native inhabitants tend to blame misfortunes such as unemployment and deficits on immigration. Such a discussion that ignites a feeling of hate and insensitivity towards immigrants will end up in the workplace as what happens in society finds its way into the workplace. Anti-immigrant campaigns and discussions going on in society will be interpreted by immigrant workers as discrimination against them. Intense sensitivities are created by such polarization at different spectrum ends usually leading to a challenging workplace situation for the manager to handle. (Borrego & Johnson 2012, 293-295.)

Polarizing the issue of immigration in society also raises the challenge of racism and stereotypes. Racial stereotype involves discrimination based on negative preconceptions associated with a certain race. Radical extremism in some parts of the world has led to the propagation of stereotypes against individuals originating from that part of the world, for example. This challenge is more daunting as it could set in during the initial phase of recruitment, with the repercussion of barring the way to a potentially qualified candidate. Despite our best wishes and efforts in combatting racism using laws and other legal framework, an individual could act in a racist manner unintentionally. A hiring manager will feel greater affinity towards hiring a candidate with whom they share racial ties to the detriment of other candidates with the same or slightly higher qualifications. (Yvanovich 2020; Reynolds 2019.)

Another challenge experienced by managers because of diversity is that of envy, explained by Adams (1965) in his equity theory. Going by Adams equity theory, an individual assesses his or her input in comparison with that of another colleague. If both colleagues earn the same reward for the same amount of input, then a spirit of equity and fairness or satisfaction reigns. However, if a colleague realizes their colleague has a higher reward for the same input or the same reward for a lesser input, a feeling of unfairness sets in and they feel the other colleague does not deserve what they earn. Although not peculiar to situations where diversity is at the forefront, envy has the disastrous effect of leading

individuals to undertake actions in a bid to curtail the success of others. (Borrego & Johnson 2012, 295-296.)

Managers usually face the problem of communication within a diverse team. This problem is multifaceted as it has the language issue and that of interpretation or understanding. One thing diversity brings together is a mix of different cultures and of course, languages. With English serving as a bridging language in our globalized world for the most part, the sticking point with communication is usually that of interpretation and understanding. Since most persons in the workplace will have English as a second language and not as mother tongue, misunderstandings abound. This, for the simple fact that communication falls within different cultural confines. Certain groups have a manner of expression peculiar to them which could easily be misinterpreted by someone from another culture. (Garnero, Kampelmann & Rycx 2014; Dove 2019.)



#### 4 KASCO / REWOLT OY

Kasco oy is a limited liability company founded in 2015 and entered into the Finnish trade register on December 17, 2015. With domiciliation in Vantaa, a city in the Uusimaa capital region of Finland, it operates mainly under its auxiliary name of Rewolt henkilöstöpalvelut. Kasco / Rewolt oy is into the personnel rental services business specifically within the construction sector. (Finder.) That is, they hire workers (people qualified to work in the construction sector in Finland) and rent them out to construction firms or sub-contractors for a certain period depending on the hiring company's needs. This business model is quite convenient for construction firms and sub-contractors as they can easily find workers on short notice or for short gigs without having to worry about employing and giving them work contracts.

Kasco oy is owned by Mikko Kasurinen who doubles as the company's accountant while Jussi Helekorpi is the sales and human resource personnel (Rewolt Henkilöstöpalvelut). These two persons basically make up the company's administration with a workforce of fifteen (15) people. Kasco's fifteen-man strong workforce boast great diversity with six (6) nationalities represented, Afghanistan, Cameroon, Finland, Iraq, India, and Pakistan. Diversity in Kasco / Rewolt oy is visible from different dimensions such as, race and ethnicity, religious affiliations, nationality and first language. With this position, Kasco's business model seems to be in line with the purpose of this thesis, which is to encourage other businesses to assess the idea of having a diverse workforce in rendering them more effective.

As seen in the literature above, diversity is a coin with two sides which if not managed properly could have devastating effects on the one hand and, great positives on the other hand if managed correctly. Diversity would manifest negatively on a company's operation or productivity if they are more focused with implementing it for the mere sake of equality. If implemented objectively with the aim of increasing productivity, then diversity will produce positive results by rendering the company or team more productive. (Shemla 2019.)

## 5 THE STUDY

This research has two parts, a theoretical framework and a practical part which consists of the methodology implored in carrying out the research. In chapters two (2) and three (3), literature sourced from books, e-books, reports, and online articles were used and duly credited for the literature review. What proceeds will be the practical part of this thesis for which a qualitative research method has been chosen. This research method is chosen due to its suitability for research questions that require explanation and understanding of a social phenomenon (Richards & Munsters 2010). This research method will help us assess the role of diversity in a workplace, tying with the research objective of understanding what diversity is and its role in rendering a company competitive. The data for this thesis will be collected by interviewing six members from Rewolt, the thesis' commissioning company. Interviewees were sampled on a random convenience basis as they all are part of the commissioning company. Because we live in trying times with the Covid-19 crisis which refuses to go away, three of the six interviews were conducted, and video recorded through WhatsApp video calls and the other three were conducted and tape-recorded face to face. All interviews have been transcribed, and the data collected from the interviews analysed by text analysis.

### 5.1 Qualitative research method

A qualitative research method is used when addressing research questions requiring an explanation or understanding of a social phenomenon and its context (Richards & Munsters 2010, 5). Qualitative research as a research methodology makes use of non-numeric data and information obtained from an investigation. This investigation could take the form of question answering or evidence collection. This research methodology is suitable when trying to obtain cultural information pertaining to ethics, opinion, conduct and communal context. Qualitative research methods provide us with textual description of issues experienced by people via recorded interviews conducted with them. (Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest & Namey 2005.)

A qualitative method of research is most useful when one tries to understand human behaviour in certain situations which usually requires asking the "why" and "how" questions. Types of qualitative research include but are not limited to, ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and case study. (Raghunath 2018; Vashishtha 2019.) Most of these different types of qualitative research make use of

interviews as their tool for data collection which is especially common in academic milieus and could sometimes act as the sole method of data collection (Merriam & Tisdell 2015, 106). This method of data collection (interviews) is what has been used in obtaining data for this research.

Interviews can be used when carrying out narrative or phenomenology types of qualitative research (Vashishtha 2019). An interview is the act of asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study conducted face-to-face, through the phone or with the help of some other electronic device such as a computer (Cohen & Crabtree 2006). Interviews are very much preferred as a data collection tool in qualitative research as they may provide much more detail, enable personal contact which will bring many valuable reactions which cannot be secured otherwise and, interviewees may easily be chosen by a chance sampling method (Starch 1923). Merriam & Tisdell (2015) mentions three types of interviews to be highly structured or standardized, semi structured, or semi standardized, and unstructured or informal interviews. Questions asked in standardized interviews and the order in which they are asked is always predetermined before the interview while a semi structured interview is in the middle of a structured and unstructured interview (Merriam & Tisdell 2015, 109-110). Interviews conducted for this thesis were semi standardized as interviewees had to define the world of workplace diversity in their own unique ways or how they perceive it. Interview questions are available at the end of this thesis as appendix 1.

After having collected data with the help of semi structured interviews, the data was transcribed into text and the analysis phase proceeded. Data analysis was possible due to text analysis. Textual analysis in qualitative research is carried out through various means. Atkinson (2017) cites qualitative content analysis and rhetorical criticism as two methods of analysing text in qualitative research. Qualitative content analysis simply means explaining what is in a text while rhetorical criticism explains how a text should be read and understood within a larger social context (Atkinson 2017, 84).

## **5.2 Reliability and validity**

The principle of reliability in qualitative research is based on the fact that any significant result must be attainable after repeated number of trials and not a one-off finding. Different researchers should be able to carry out the same study, under the same circumstances and arrive at the same conclusion. This adds much needed pedigree to the finding, making the hypothesis readily acceptable to the wider scientific community. (Shuttleworth 2008.) In the words of Merriam & Tisdell (2015) however, reliability

in social sciences is problematic as human behaviour is constantly changing and the experiences of many people do not necessarily reign supreme over that of an individual. A particular study cannot be discredited simply because a replica does not produce the same results as there can be numerous interpretations for the same data. The fact in issue with qualitative research is thus, whether the results are consistent with the data collected. (Merriam & Tisdell 2015.) To put this in simple terms, the concept of reliability in scientific research means “repeatability” or “consistency”, as a particular study should give us the same consistent results, repeatedly (Trochim 2020).

Validity on its part embodies the experimental concept in general by demonstrating if an outcome meets all the elements of the scientific research method (Shuttleworth 2008). The process of arriving at a conclusion involves scientific research, making validity a necessity in all kinds of studies. Choosing a suitable timeframe and an appropriate sampling method when carrying out a study guarantees its validity. No respondent should be constrained in making specific choices as the validity of a measure can be projected using convergent, face and content validity. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007.)

As Shuttleworth (2008) puts it, the principles of validity and reliability make up the principal foundation of a scientific method. Combined, they are key to what is accepted as scientific proof by both scientists and philosophers.

## 6 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Six individuals were interviewed for the data collection and empirical part of this thesis. All interviewees are part of the commissioning company, Kasco/ Rewolt oy. The six interviewees are nationals from five different countries namely: Finland, Cameroon, India, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Interviewees were asked the same seven (7) questions, bordering on diversity issues such as their general understanding of the term diversity and how they perceive it in a place of work. Also, if their current professional sector has elements of what they would consider as a diverse sector or workplace. Which team between a homogeneous and heterogeneous one can produce better results. If organizations need worry themselves about being diverse and who in such a case between the state and businesses should feel responsible for implementing diversity. The final question sought to understand if they would encourage the notion of diversity in other professional spheres. For purposes of anonymity and confidentiality, respondents will take on the following labelling: Interviewee one (1), interviewee two (2), interviewee three (3), interviewee four (4), interviewee five (5), and interviewee six (6).

On what interviewees understand of the term diversity, two interviewees think of it as differences visible in things and, the mixture or combination of different things together. Another on their part thinks diversity has to do with differences in the appearance of animate or inanimate objects, interviewee 4 thinks of diversity as differences that exist from which we can easily divide or classify things, interviewee 5 thinks of diversity as a state of variety either in terms of people or their skillset whilst interviewee 6 views diversity as the presence of non-identical people, animals, and places. Using the inductive method of analysis, it is safe to conclude that all interviewees have a well-founded notion of the term diversity as their responses mostly hinged on one key word, differences.

Quizzed on the next question, interviewee 1 understands diversity in a workplace as having it function under the tutelage of these differences that bring about diversity while, interviewee 2 considers a diverse workplace to be one with people from different backgrounds which could be cultural or in terms of nationality. Interviewee 3 on their part believes diversity in a place of work is when we have different people who could either be male or female, physically challenged or full-bodied persons working together. To interviewee 4, diversity in the workplace is when there is the presence of multiculturalism. Interviewee 5 describes diversity in the workplace as having people from different countries, ethnicities and even sexes working together. Finally, interviewee 6 views diversity in the workplace as the

inherent difference in people's behaviours, their language, culture, and mentality. When these differences are harnessed to coexist in the workplace then diversity is present.

The third interview question asked interviewees if the construction sector in Finland boast sufficient diversity especially within the capital region of Helsinki and its environs. Five of six interviewees answered positively with interviewee 4 having this to say:

Yes, this sector has a wide range of workers from different backgrounds and nationalities such as: Russians, Estonians, Brits, Filipinos, Africans, Finns, just to name these. I have come across many people from different nationalities across the many different construction sites I have worked in.

However, interviewee 6 had a rather interesting point of view on the issue of Finland's construction sector boasting sufficient diversity especially within the Helsinki region thus:

I beg to disagree. The construction sector in Finland is a massive industry which consist of separate arms. A certain kind of persons (countries) are believed to monopolize certain arms. The site helpers usually share same cultures, so are the plumbers, electricians et cetera (etc).

When asked to shed light on the above statement, interviewee 6 said most site supervisors on construction sites they have been to are Finns with the rare exception of a few Estonians or Russians occupying similar positions. They proceeded by saying that blue collar workers like electricians or plumbers are often Estonians, Russians, or some other eastern European nationals while the site helpers, that is, those who need little or no training to do their job are mostly third country nationals. To them therefore, the construction sector functions under a tier system which defeats the genuine purpose of diversity.

On which team is most likely to produce better results between a homogeneous and a heterogeneous team, interviewee 2 said:

I think the feedback sometimes is better when we have guys from different backgrounds working somewhere so yes, heterogeneous teams.

On their part, interviewee 1 had this to say:

I really do not think the productivity or how efficient a team functions is down to heterogeneity or homogeneity. I have been faced with situations wherein people from the same

background did better than those from different nationalities and in other instances, people from the same background did not do as good as those from other nationalities.

Interviewees 3, 4 and 5 all think a heterogeneous team will perform better while interviewee 6 thinks a homogeneous team will prevail over a heterogeneous one. Quizzed on, interviewee 6 said their response is based on their experience working in the construction industry in Finland and on how the industry is generally set up and functions. According to them, since the industry functions on a tier basis where certain groups are believed to pertain to a particular tier, it is easier for homogeneous teams to produce better results as these tiers are usually made up of people with a lot of similarities than differences.

Moving on, all interviewees think positively with regards to organizations considering diversity and its wider implementation within their organizations. Interviewee 1 had this to say:

I do not think so. I think companies should be worried more about finding or matching the right jobs with the right persons or talents. If this means getting someone from a different background who is qualified to do the job, obviously.

Interviewee 1 is therefore of the opinion that, focusing on diversity is of little importance. If companies were to look at the bigger picture by trying to get the most qualified available persons to fill in vacancies, that, in itself would solve the diversity question. This is especially true as companies or managers will pay little attention to details such as an applicant's background which most often than not, creates biases against diversity.

As to who should have a greater role between the state and businesses on pushing the diversity agenda, four of six interviewees strongly think that the responsibility for implementing diversity lies greatly on the shoulders of the management of each company. One interviewee thinks this responsibility should be shared as both the state and company management each have invaluable roles to play. Interviewee 4 rather opined in favour of a national legislation as companies might have little motivation to do so if no legislation is in place as they would rather stick to what they know.

On the concluding question, all six interviewees are of the opinion that, the diversity doctrine should be encouraged in other sectors and works of life in Finnish society. To this effect, they are willing to act as ambassadors of the diversity doctrine if they happen to switch into other sectors and are opportune to be part of the decision-making organ. Interviewee 4 holds this view because they think diversi-

ty can be beneficial to every organization notwithstanding its structure and sector of operation, if managed properly. Interviewee 6 would strongly advise other companies in favour of diversity especially those in the telecommunications and other interactive industries.

Through analysis of the interview material, it is safe to say that all interviewed persons have a basic understanding of the term diversity and how it might present itself in a workplace. The term diversity as seen earlier does not boast a one fits all definition or lens to view it from. Although interviewee 6 had a varied opinion as to whether Finland's construction sector boast sufficient diversity, it was still evident from their in-depth explanation that diversity is very much alive in this sector but, it could be termed "shallow diversity". Shallow diversity because the system per their opinion is structured in such a way that certain groups are confined to certain functions with little possibility of making it up the food chain. Equally, opinions on which team between a diverse and homogeneous one is most likely to produce better results were varied. The answers were three in favour of a diverse or heterogeneous team as against one in favour of homogeneous teams. Two respondents chose a rather caution line to trade on, giving both teams a fair chance at survival. Although it can still be deduced based on this that diverse teams will likely perform better, the most important point to note should be that of interviewee 1 which points to the fact that, a team's performance is not necessarily down to its composition but other dynamics.

All respondents think positively about companies considering the diversity issue because of its many perceived advantages. Although interviewee 1 initially seems to side-step on this point, it is later evident that they in fact, are in favour of diversity as they stress that companies will not have to bother about diversity if they chose to eliminate biases that hinder it in the first place. It is also deductible from responses that management should be at the forefront of diversity talk and implementation. Legislation might yield little fruits without the willingness of businesses to engage it. Finally, the overwhelming positive response of interviewees in favour of widening the scope of diversity into other sectors of Finnish working life caters for the needs of this thesis which is to positively explore the idea of workplace diversity in the wider professional sphere in Finland.



## 7 CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to understand what diversity is, how it can be harnessed to render an organization more competitive and what role, if any, management must play in all this. These objectives were triggered by two main issues present in Finnish society: the low level of immigrant integration in relation to employment and a looming labour shortage caused by declining births in recent past. Finland is a state built on the reputation of a very functional welfare system. For the Finnish state to maintain this reputation in the years to come, they will need an active labour force as the system is mainly sustained out of the payment of taxes by working individuals. What better alternative to achieve this other than an effective integration of immigrants into jobs if the birth rate stays true to its downward trend of decline as seen in the last couple of years? For this reason, it is imperative for the issue of diversity to be explored by various economic operators in the different fields as the looming labour shortfall is unlikely to leave any stone unturned.

To collect data for this project, six interviews were conducted within the commissioning company, an actor in Finland's construction sector, one of the few industries at the forefront of immigrant integration into the Finnish labour market. These interviews were conducted with the purpose of understanding what it is like for an industry that boast a wealth of diversity in terms of its workforce. Evidently, the integration of immigrants into the construction industry has not led to a collapse of the sector. Rather, interviewees viewed the diversity present in the industry in terms of its workforce positively as they unanimously said they would like to encourage other industries to become more diverse with their workforce.

As explored in the literature of this work, diversity in the workplace is generally perceived to carry more benefits than disadvantages. Interview respondents hold similar views as they think that companies should be open to exploring the idea of diversity. They view diversity in the workplace positively as they believe it has the potential of rendering an organization more productive especially when managed properly. Respondents to a greater extent believe managers should be the ones at the forefront of the diversity debate. Managers should stand for diversity not because they want to make a moral statement on inclusion but, rather because they fully understand what diversity implies and its positive ramifications when managed effectively. The issue of diversity is generally a win-win situation and should be viewed as such. Relating to our Finnish context, if more industries decide to view and explore the issue of diversity, they stand the chance of becoming more sustainable and competitive, the

employed immigrants will feel more satisfied with their lives while the state will gain more tax revenue. More tax revenue means expenditure on income support diminishes and the state can concentrate on improving other services. More sectors are therefore encouraged to boast the diversity of their workforce to tap into these perceived benefits.

Workplace diversity from a management point of view to a larger extent can be said to have achieved its main purpose of exploring and understanding the issue of diversity in the workplace and encouraging other actors in different sectors to think about implementing greater diversity in their sectors as evident in the construction sector. A perceived shortcoming, however, stems from the fact that, there is no guarantee that other economic operators will be receptive to the idea as this work is purely commissioned on an academic basis. Being purely academical, resources on getting it into the public domain where the economic players are present is limited hence, posing a major stumbling block to the thesis' objective.

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**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1) What is your understanding of the term diversity?
- 2) What does diversity in a workplace mean to you?
- 3) Does Finland's construction sector boast a sufficiently diverse workforce especially within the capital region of Helsinki?
- 4) Based on your experience from working in the construction industry, which team between a homogenous and heterogenous one is most likely to produce better results?
- 5) Is it necessary for companies to worry about implementing diversity within their organization?
- 6) If that is the case (affirmative response in question 5), who should the responsibility lie with (nationally with legal framework on minimum diversity requirements or at management level with companies deciding on it)?
- 7) Would you encourage other companies or industries in different sectors to think in favour of implementing diversity in the workplace?