

Bachelor Thesis, 15 ECTS

Department of Management and Organization

Stockholm School of Economics

Cultural Diversity Management

-A quantitative and qualitative study exploring the employee perspectives of cultural diversity management in a consulting firm

Abstract

The research presented in this thesis was conducted with the aim to examine cultural diversity management in a consulting firm belonging to a global group by reviewing cultural diversity perspectives of employees. The intention has been to examine if there are any differences between how junior and senior level employees perceive cultural diversity when working in culturally heterogeneous groups and how these possible differences can translate into guidelines for diversity management activities in an organization. The study has been conducted through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods – more specifically through analyzing the results from a survey of 210 respondents targeting cultural diversity conducted within the firm in 2014 and eight in-depth interviews with junior and senior employees during 2015. The results indicate that there is a gap between how seniors communicate and exercise cultural diversity practices and how juniors perceive cultural diversity within the firm. Based on these findings, areas that need to be targeted by organizations and their leaders have been identified. These include creating an inclusive work environment, targeting unconscious bias, language barriers in culturally heterogeneous teams as well as opportunities for improvement of diversity training. Analyses are supported by theoretical framework dealing with research within cultural diversity management, leadership and inclusion.

Key words: *diversity management; cultural diversity management; inclusion; leadership; inclusive leadership*

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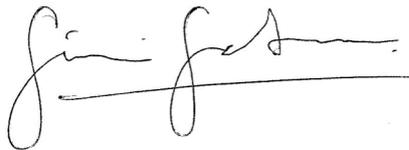
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reva-Gini Gautam', with a horizontal line underneath.

Reva-Gini Gautam

Stockholm, May 20th 2015

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1. Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction and background to the main theme of this thesis. Following, the problem, purpose and research question are presented together with a motivation to why cultural diversity management was chosen as a focus area for this thesis. Finally, a short summary of the study conducted is presented along with comments on perspectives, limitations and a disposition for remaining chapters.

1.1 Background

In difficult and challenging economic times, utilizing and identifying competence within the whole workforce becomes increasingly important. Considering the diversity of the workforce and fostering an inclusive working environment can bring benefits to the business and provide marketing advantages. As focus, previously and currently, often is laid on gender diversity in the workplace, a new approach has emerged over recent years – cultural diversity management. This refers to acquiring the necessary knowledge and dynamic skills to manage cultural differences within a firm appropriately and effectively, as well as developing a mind-set to see things from different angles without rigid preconceptions (Ting-Toomey and Chung, 2005).

Although it is somewhat unclear when and where the movement of diversity management took off, it is certain that it can be viewed as an evolving concept. A genealogical approach to the literature addressing diversity can contribute in proving that the EEO, Equal Employment Opportunity, and AA, Affirmative Action, movements in United States during the 1980s play a central role in the development of the concept. EEO and AA were an outcome of the Civil Rights movements, where African-American population sought political equality and improvement of socioeconomic conditions in the mid 1950s (Thomas, 1990)

In 1987, the report *Workforce 2000* was published by Johnson and Packer. The report projected demographic shifts from 1987 to 2000 in which the white male would no longer represent a majority in the workforce due to an increase of minority groups as a whole. It can be argued that the report was the beginning of the diversity management era due to the attention it gained and the awareness it spurred. (Johnston, 1991)

Following the report was a flood of research and literature aiming the topic and aiming to understand and value approaches concerning differences, diversity and multiculturalism, for which diversity has become somewhat of an umbrella term (Thomas, 1995). Most of the literature following *Workforce 2000* report traced its roots of diversity in the workplace to EEO and AA. This literature critically re-examined the effectiveness of the those laws that banned discrimination towards minority groups in the workplace and the enactment of legislation that compelled companies to hire more employees belonging to minority groups and have these employees positioned in higher ranks within the organisation.

During the 1990s, the diversity rhetoric shifted to emphasize the business case for supporting workforce diversity, hence the report *The Business Case for Diversity* (Kochan et al, 2003). The report, with the title later recognized as a concept, discussed that managing diversity effectively was a business necessity, not only because of the nature of labor and product markets today, but also because a more diverse workforce in relation to a homogeneous one,

produces better results.

Amongst researchers following the footpaths of previous studies were Kelly and Dobbin who in the report *How Affirmative Action Became Diversity Management* engaged in establishing the argument that a diverse workforce should be seen as a competitive advantage rather than a legal constraint. The main message communicated was that diversity is organizations should not simply be promoted on the basis of legal mandates – but because it is an advantage for businesses (Kelly and Dobbin, 1998).

From then on, several studies addressing with diversity management and applications of the topics have been conducted. Researchers started to test a number of hypotheses on the business benefits of diversity and of diversity management. Despite active research within the area; diversity management is viewed upon as a relatively new and unexplored area.

Over recent years, the term diversity is being used more often. However, there is no single agreed upon definition of the term. To some, diversity might signify inclusion in ethnic, cultural and gender diverse groups; while to others, the term represents tolerance, acceptance or a general attitude. As diversity at times can be difficult to define, the definition of diversity management will also, inevitably, be somewhat ambiguous.

Today, diversity management may be described as a relatively new ideology that aims to benefit underrepresented minorities in organizations. In its essence, the rationale of diversity management is to improve organizational efficiency and competitiveness driven by business purposes and advantages on the market. It deals with enabling all employees in an organization to contribute with knowledge and resource to their fullest potential, in disregard to differences in culture, ethnicity and gender.

Diversity management emphasizes the significance of adapting organizational operations and managing differences within groups of employees together with the benefit it has on organizations in terms of efficiency, creativity and improved work environment (Guillaume, 2013). Thus, acknowledging and targeting diversity within employees has become crucial for firms.

It is, however, important to make the distinction between types of diversity management. Diversity management can be discussed using several approaches, including ethnicity, gender and cultural differences, as previously mentioned. However, as a result of changes in the demographic landscape, globalization and firms extending their operations beyond national borders, diversity management from a cultural perspective increases in importance. Thus, the cultural perspective of diversity management will be the focus area of this thesis.

1.2 The predicament of cultural diversity

As cultural diversity management is a relatively new approach to firms, however still highly ubiquitous, organizations are still establishing activities and practices within this, partially still undiscovered, area. There are several challenges in managing diversity as a whole, but even more when applying the cultural dimension. Cultural differences between people are complex, as they cannot be seen by the naked eye such as gender differences for instance. This makes cultural diversity somewhat of an emotive, yet highly significant, issue for organizations to exercise and implement.

1.3 Purpose

The main purpose of this thesis is to describe the cultural diversity management practices in organizations. This has been done through a case study of a Swedish consulting firm belonging to a global group, hereinafter referred to as “the company”.

By investigating senior and junior employee perceptions of cultural diversity practices, the aim is to explore if there are prominent differences in how diversity practices are being communicated, and as an extended translation, implemented. The approach utilizing senior and junior perspectives was chosen as it is believed to provide a comprehensive indication of cultural diversity management practices at two contrasting sides of the workforce spectrum, ultimately providing indices for areas of improvement.

This research question and study conducted has also been designed with the aim of providing indications of how an organization can implement and improve cultural diversity management practices based on employee perspectives.

The research will also be analysed from the focus of inclusion as several studies (Bilimoria, Joy, & Liang, 2008; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Groggins & Ryan, 2013; Nishii, 2012; Roberson, 2006; Shore et al., 2011) have addressed the importance of an inclusive work group environment as one of the key aspects for effective cultural diversity management.

1.4 Research Question

Building on the purpose for this thesis, the following research question has been identified:

1. Are there any differences between how seniors and juniors perceive cultural diversity management operations in an organization?

1.5 Why cultural diversity management?

Globalization, changing population demographics and increased integration on the heels of civil rights movements together with workplace equality can be seen as driving forces behind the emergence of diversity (Avery and McKay 2006). As the marketplace for goods and services becomes increasingly global, businesses must understand and embrace diversity in their operations as well as internally. Simply having a diverse employee population is no longer seen as enough for a company to succeed in today's challenging and growing global setting - it must respect cultures, ideas and philosophies in its operations.

Different cultures embrace different perspectives of important workplace issues, such as time management, respect for authority, teamwork and responsibility to name but a few. Conflicting interpretations of transparency and ethics, methods of communication and reluctance to give and receive feedback may also arise with a culturally diverse workforce. These barriers need to be broken down in order for an organization to run efficiently and harmoniously. The responsibility falls on the organization's leadership to ensure that these issues are addressed and managed. The goal is to make each worker feel valued - and that their needs are being addressed and considered.

When applying the notion of diversity management in firms within Sweden it can be argued that gender diversity has gained the most attention. A reason for this may be gender equality strongly permeating various aspects of Swedish society, where Sweden ranks as one of the world's most gender-egalitarian countries. Inevitably, the gender diverse aspects of society will reflect on organizations. Thus, gender diversity has taken a strong part of diversity management in Swedish organizations.

Arguably, the aspect of a diverse workforce in cultural diversity management is something firms in larger, cosmopolitan cities do not have to worry about – simply due to the demographic landscape of different countries. In the UK for instance, the demographic landscape is much different from the Swedish with a longer history of immigration and culturally diverse society. Thus, the importance of cultural diversity management in a specific country will also depend on the social and demographic conditions in the area.

Cultural diversity management can be seen as an increasingly important approach within diversity management in Swedish firms. For example, low public debt and an economic growth rate over the past 15-20 years has exceeded the growth rates of both the United States and the EU-15 (Growth and Renewal in the Swedish Economy, McKinsey 2014), resulting in Sweden as an attractive market for different nations. Furthermore, according to a report published by OECD (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) an increase of foreign students in Sweden is prominent. Inevitably, this results in a changing work environment dynamic, with more ethnicities and cultural backgrounds being represented in the workplace.

Building on these arguments, studying cultural diversity management is also interesting from a research perspective due to its relevance and emergence in firms; together with the high potential that firms might have if they leverage cultural diversity in the optimal ways. Looking at these practices and examining whether or not there is a gap in how cultural diversity management practices are perceived by employees has implications on how firms can develop and improve their activities within this area.

1.6 The study conducted

To fulfil the purpose of this thesis, a case study has been conducted where the focus has been laid on junior and senior employee perceptions in a Swedish consulting firm belonging to a global group that works actively with cultural diversity management. This is to explore how leaders within the firm communicate cultural diversity practices and in turn, how juniors perceive these activities.

The study was executed using the quantitative data from a survey within the area of diversity management held at the company in June 2014 together with interviews where senior and junior employees have been asked questions regarding the organization's diversity activities from a cultural perspective.

The theory presented in this thesis is primarily within the area of Diversity Management, Cultural Diversity Management, Leadership and Inclusion.

1.7 Possibility for further applications

With the purpose of exploring cultural diversity management, the intention of thesis is not only to provide insight to the organization studied, but to also provide guidelines for other organizations as well as future leaders and managers on how to approach cultural diversity management. This is applicable to organizations in Sweden, where cultural diversity management activities have been known to be overseen, but continue to increasingly permeate business operations.

1.8 Perspectives and Limitations

The perspective of this thesis will be from an employee point of view, in comparison, for an overall comprehension of the workforce viewpoint. This perspective is relevant as all cultural diversity management practices do not occur solely at a higher management or leadership level, but also on a work group level where value is created and delivered to the customers.

A pertinent insight kept in mind during analysis of data is that the study has been conducted in the Swedish branch of a global firm. Thus, the results and findings do not reflect the entire organisation, nor the cultural diversity management of the firm as a whole.

1. 9 Disposition

Chapter 2 presents a theoretical framework within the area of cultural diversity management

Chapter 3 describes the methodology for the study conducted

Chapter 4 presents the empirical evidence and findings from the study

Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the empirical evidence

Chapter 6 provides conclusions with regards to the purpose and the research question

Chapter 7 provides a discussion of the results from the study; the reliability and generalizability of the study, research contributions, practical implications and future research suggestions

Chapter 8 presents the references

Chapter 9 includes the appendices.

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter briefly describes with a short description of the literature search process, followed by chapters providing in-depth descriptions of diversity management, inclusion and leadership for diversity.

2.1 The Literature Search Process

The literature search process for this thesis has primarily taken place in journals including the International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management, the Journal of International Business Studies, the Journal of World Business, the Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology and the International Journal of HR Management, where key search words included *diversity management, cultural diversity management, leadership and inclusion, inclusion and inclusive work environments*.

Furthermore, reviewing the references in articles to further search for other relevant studies is a method that has been used in the literature search process. The literature search process has also partially motivated the choice of perspective for this thesis, as employee perceptions of cultural diversity management could not be found. Throughout the search process, faculty members at Stockholm School of Economics have also been consulted to find relevant studies within the area.

2.2 Defining Diversity Management

Diversity management can be defined as the voluntary organizational actions that are designed to create greater inclusion of employees from various backgrounds to the formal and informal organizational structures through deliberate policies and programs, emphasizing to value the difference amongst people in organizations. (Kamp, Hagedorn and Rasmussen, 2004.) It is a systematic organization-wide effort based on the premise that for organizations to survive and thrive, there is an inherent value in diversity. Cultural diversity is when differences in race, ethnicity, language, nationality, and religion are represented within a community, or as in the case of this study, an organization. (Cox, 2001).

Diversity management refers not only to those groups that have been discriminated against or that are different from the dominant or privileged groups, but to the mixture of differences, similarities and tensions that can exist among the elements of a multicultural mixture (Thomas, 2005). To elucidate the notion of diversity management dealing with a collective mixture of all workers, and not only the recent additions to an organizational workforce, a jar of jellybeans can be used as a metaphor.

“To highlight this notion of mixture, consider a jar of red jelly beans and assume that you will add some green and purple jelly beans. Many would believe that the green and purple jellybeans represent diversity. I suggest that the resultant mixture of red, green and purple jellybeans, instead, represents diversity. When faced with a collection of diverse jellybeans, most managers have not been addressing diversity but, instead, have been addressing how to handle the last jelly beans added to the mixture. The true meaning of diversity suggests that if you are concerned about racism, you include all races; if you’re concerned about gender, you include both genders; or if you’re concerned about age issues, you include all age groups. In other words, the mixture is all inclusive.”

-Thomas, 1995.

Moreover, two different types of diversity managed can be noted; intra-national diversity management and cross-national diversity management. The first type refers to managing a diverse workforce of citizens or immigrant within a single national organizational context. Cross-national diversity management refers to managing a workforce composed of citizens and immigrants in different countries. Out of the two, the latter approach is considered of greater interest for the defined purpose of this thesis, where diversity management in a single national organizational context is studied.

2.2.1 Diversity Paradigms

To underscore the purpose and characteristics of diversity management, a number of paradigms have been developed in recent years. Two of the most prominent approaches are the Human Resource, HR, paradigm and the Multicultural Organization, MO, paradigm. Although the focus of this study in first hand will be on leadership and diversity, it is also important to acknowledge HR and MO perspectives. Diversity strategies deriving from HR activities for instance link recruitment, selection, development and retention of a diverse workforce to business goals and competitive advantages (Yakura, 1996). Furthermore, it has been stated that the outcome of diversity efforts should be systematic and structural organizational transform, as organizational changes require significant commitment of resources and leadership (Litvin 2002; Cox, 2001).

Typologies in the MO on the other hand can help provide organizations with a vision of the model they need to strive for when designing their diversity management strategies, in which leadership is an essential ingredient (Barak, 2014)

The HR Paradigm

Conventional HR practices sometimes tend to produce and perpetuate homogeneity in the workforce as a result of the A-S-A (attraction-selection-attrition) cycle, (Schneider, 1987; Schneider, Smith and Paul, 2001). In its essence, the A-S-A translates to three key points. First, individuals are attracted to organizations that appear to have members similar to themselves in terms of personality, value, interests and other attributes. Secondly, organizations are more likely to select those who possess knowledge, skills and abilities similar to the ones their existing member possess. Thirdly, over time, those who do not fit in well are likely to leave. (Bretz, Ash, Deher, 2006). Owing to these three factors, the organization's talent pool and the long-term growth and renewal can be negatively affected. Here, the need for diversity management practices in order to overcome these barriers and reap the rewards of a diverse workforce becomes essential. To deal with these issues, four HR approaches to diversity management have been developed (Kossek, Lobel and Brown, 2006).

1. *Diversity enlargement* where the goal is to change organizational culture through changing the composition of the workforce
2. *Diversity sensitivity* where focus is put on overcoming adversity and promoting productive communication and collaboration
3. *Cultural audit* where organizations identify obstacles faced by employees of diverse background and modify company practices accordingly
4. *Strategy for achieving organizational outcomes* that deals with achieving organizational goals through diversity management.

The MO Paradigm

Cox, 2001, presented the MO diversity management paradigm that included three types of organizations; the monolithic organization, the plural organization, and the multicultural organization. According to this paradigm, diversity management should strive to create multicultural organizations in which members of all sociocultural backgrounds can contribute and achieve their full potential. The typology of the monolithic-multicultural organizational continuum presents types of organization that are scarcely found in reality, but are useful from an analytic standpoint. As previously mentioned, this typology can prove to be helpful to organizations when designing their cultural diversity management strategies.

1. *The monolithic organization* is an organization that is demographically and culturally homogeneous.
2. *The plural organization* is an organization that has a heterogeneous workforce, relative to the monolithic organization, and typically makes efforts to conform to laws and public policies that demand and expect workplace equality.
3. *The multicultural organization* is presented as more of an ideal than an actual type because companies rarely achieve this level of integration. The MO is characterized by a culture that fosters and values cultural differences, equally incorporates all members of the organization via diversity. The MO has full integration, structurally and informally, is free of bias and favoritism towards certain groups. However Cox indicates that it is important to understand this type and use it to create a vision for effective diversity management.

2.2.3. The benefits of cultural diversity management

So why should a firm invest in diversity practices from a cultural approach? Based on previous research within the area of diversity management, there is a vast array of evidence of the benefits diversity management can bring to a firm. Here, these various benefits deriving from diversity management have been considered in three categories; firm performance benefits, workforce benefits and competitive advantages.

Firm performance benefits

In his research of how diversity in firms can be measured Hubbard developed the diversity scorecard. Here, it was indicated that a perceived intangible asset, such as diversity, in fact could generate tangible benefits like improved company performance and a boosted bottom line (Hubbard, 2004). Building on this, Rahim et al held that diversity practices might help companies to develop their own “mirrors” to reflect global demographic trends that in turn can have an impact on the global market (Rahim et al, 2003).

Furthermore, diversity is believed to lead to innovation, outside-the-box thinking, improved governance, enhanced decision-making and enhanced problem solving skills. It enhances the rate of creativity and innovation in the individual (Cox 2001). Empirical evidence also supports the idea that diversity climate has a positive effect on work outcomes: diversity climate decreased absenteeism and lead to higher performance (Avery, McKay, Wilson, & Tonidandel, 2007).

Workforce benefits

As the employees often are considered the greatest resource of a firm, especially in a management consulting, seeing how cultural diversity management affects the workforce is also of great relevance. Diversity enables the employers the chance to receive the most skilled and qualified candidates as building blocks of their company when they hire the employees belonging to different cultural thoughts and varied backgrounds (Kerby & Burns, 2012). Pooling the diverse skills of culturally distinct workers benefits companies by strengthening the team's responsiveness to varying conditions (Woods et al, 2010). Thus, diversity embraces difference of opinions feelings and ideologies (Llopis, 2011). When managed properly, diversity can therefore influence the strengths and harmonize the weaknesses of each worker to make the impact of the workforce greater than the sum of its parts (Robinson & Dechant, 1997). Furthermore, minority employees might be better able to communicate with and understand the needs of minority customers, thereby increasing the quality of customer service and relations. Diversity in a firm also promotes mutual respect between the employees, which may work to lessen the degree of and facilitate the resolution of any conflict (Lee, 2011).

Diversity Management as a competitive advantage

Diversity practices also have an impact on a firm's competitive advantages. These are of great importance to a firm as it allows earning of excess returns for shareholders, and without a competitive advantage, a firm has limited economic reasons for its existence and growth (Cox and Blake, 1991).

2.2.4 The different areas of Cultural Diversity Management

As demonstrated in Figure 1, the term managing diversity refers to a variety of management issues and activities related to hiring and effective utilization of personnel from different cultural backgrounds (Cox and Blake, 1991). In firms where cultural diversity practices exist, these activities are often very much integrated in the rest of the firm's operations. Thus, the diversity approach is permeated throughout the entire firm and it may therefore be difficult to distinguish different areas of diversity management for leaders to focus on. This model has also been important for this particular thesis by providing examples of categorizations for the interviews.

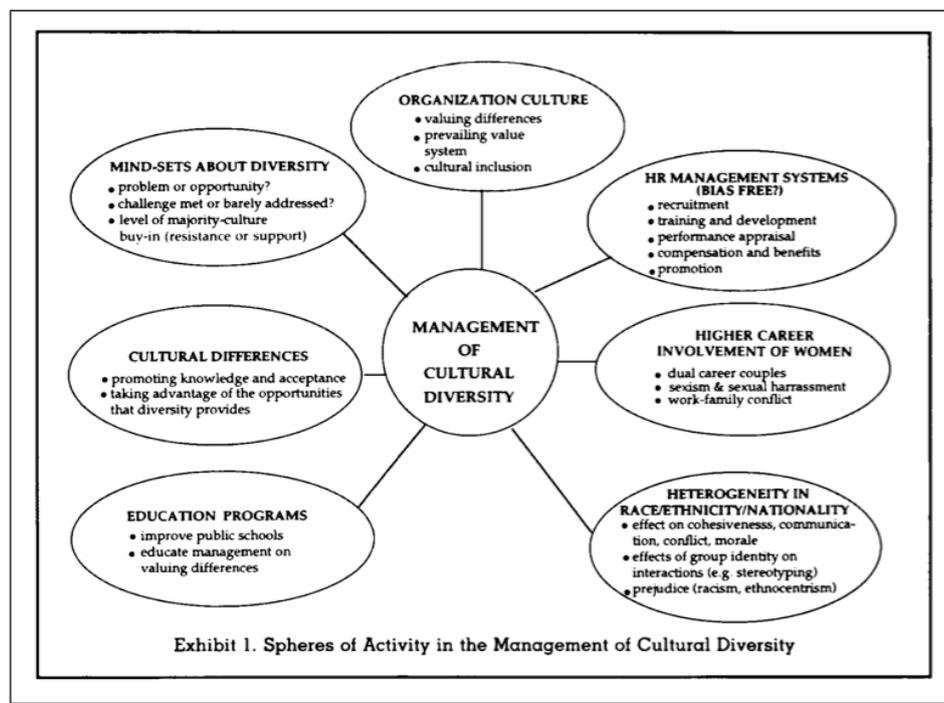


Fig 1. The areas of management of cultural diversity. Cox and Blake, 1991

2.2.5 Unconscious bias

Unconscious bias has been discussed as an important aspect of cultural diversity practices. A bias is the result of a mental process by which the brain uses associations that are so ingrained they play no part in our intentional behavior. This is due to the fact that we cannot control associations we are not aware of making. The unconscious bias refers to the biases that occur automatically when triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations based on background, cultural environment and our previous experiences (Ross, 2008). An example would be the bias of minorities, such as employees from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, in key roles in organizations. Here, these biases affect people in minority groups and they become subject to unconscious beliefs about career advancement that could be holding them back by doubting their actual abilities and strengths by assuming that characteristics obtained by majority groups are needed to reach high positions in organizations. In business contexts, unconscious bias can be costly and can cause decision-making that is not objective, resulting in risks of missing opportunities such as employing someone highly competent that belongs to a minority group. (Ross, 2008)

Although biases have a negative connotation, they do serve an important function. They help fill in the gaps by looking for patterns and making assumptions, enabling quick action and make sense out of vast amounts of information. Thus, bias could also be defined as fast thinking. This becomes an issue when fast thinking is used where slow thinking should be used. In other words, where thinking should be deliberate, rational and logical. Organizations making great strides in their diversity and inclusion strategy work with their leadership teams to address unconscious bias. Attempts to mitigate this during their selection and decision-making processes may also take place. Bias can, however, not be eliminated as it is an ingrained human behaviour. Instead organization's focus should be on acknowledging and managing unconscious bias. (Ross, 2008)

It is also worth mentioning that there are different types of unconscious biases, some more applicable than others, in the area of cultural diversity in organizations:

Affinity Bias entails being subjective and warming to others similar to you, and having a tendency to hire and develop people in your own image (Ross, 2008)

Perception bias such as stereotypes and assumptions about certain groups can obstruct objective judgment of certain groups. (Zeelenberg, Wagenmakers, 2006)

Groupthink and the need for group acceptance: Neuroscientists using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) have shown that when we are excluded from a group, this activates the same parts of the brain that are activated when we feel physical pain. One can argue that, if people try too hard to fit into a group, mimic others, or hold back on contrary opinions, they lose part of their identity. The organization then loses out on their creativity and innovation (Pope, Price and Wolfers, 2014).

2.3. Inclusion

As several authors have noted that the effective management of diversity requires the creation of an inclusive work environment, research within the area of inclusion is essential in studying and understanding the cultural diversity management practices of organizations. An inclusive work environment, or a climate for inclusion, integrates rather than merely values diverse individuals in work groups (Nishii, 2012; Shore et al 2013; Ely and Thomas, 2001). Thus, inclusion becomes a cornerstone in a firm's diversity management activities.

Inclusion is commonly defined as the degree to which an employee perceives that he or she is an esteemed member of the work group, experiences fair and equitable treatment, and feels encouraged to contribute to the effectiveness of the work group (Nishii, 2012; Shore et al., 2013). Furthermore, recent empirical work supports the idea that a climate for inclusion that facilitates the interpersonal integration of diverse employees at work, that assures all people are treated in a fair and equitable way, and actively seeks and integrates dissimilar employee input (even if this might upset the status quo) helps increase employee satisfaction and staff retention by facilitating the constructive resolution of conflict that may occur (Nishii, 2012)

2.3.1 The inclusion framework

Shore et al present a framework of inclusion in which it is proposed that uniqueness and sense of belonging work together to create feelings of inclusion. It is here argued that uniqueness will provide opportunities for improved group performance when a unique individual is an accepted member of the group and the group values the particular unique characteristic (Fig. 2) (Shore et al, 2013)

	Low Belongingness	High Belongingness
Low Value in Uniqueness	<p>Exclusion</p> <p>Individual is not treated as an organizational insider with unique value in the work group but there are other employees or groups who are insiders.</p>	<p>Assimilation</p> <p>Individual is treated as an insider in the work group when they conform to organizational/dominant culture norms and downplay uniqueness.</p>
High Value in Uniqueness	<p>Differentiation</p> <p>Individual is not treated as an organizational insider in the work group but their unique characteristics are seen as valuable and required for group/ organization success.</p>	<p>Inclusion</p> <p>Individual is treated as an insider and also allowed/encouraged to retain uniqueness within the work group.</p>

Fig. 2 – The Inclusion Framework. Shore et al, 2013.

2.3.2 Inclusion related to innovation, effectiveness and well-being

A conceptual model presented by Guillaume et al, explains how certain factors can facilitate or hinder the implementation of a climate for inclusion, explaining the processes by and conditions under which employee dissimilarity within diverse workgroups is related to innovation, effectiveness and well-being. The link between employee dissimilarity and work-related outcomes on the basis of work-motivation logic is explained and the model identifies diversity management practices as critical boundary conditions. Furthermore, it is important to note that the model conceptualizes diversity as employee dissimilarity. Employee dissimilarity refers to the differences between the focal employee of a work group and his or hers peers in terms of any attribute people can differ. (Guillaume et al, 2013)

The model clarifies how the interaction between societal factors (legislation, socioeconomic situation, culture), organizational factors (diversity management policies and procedures, and top management support for diversity) and work group factors (transactional and transformational leadership) facilitate or hinder the implementation of a climate for inclusion.

The conceptual model further suggests that the extent to which diversity leads to more or less favorable work-related outcomes will depend on employees' perceptions towards the importance of the of their employer's efforts to integrate differences, treat all employees in a fair and equitable way and empower them to contribute to the effectiveness of their work group – in other words, what authors define as the organization's climate for inclusion.

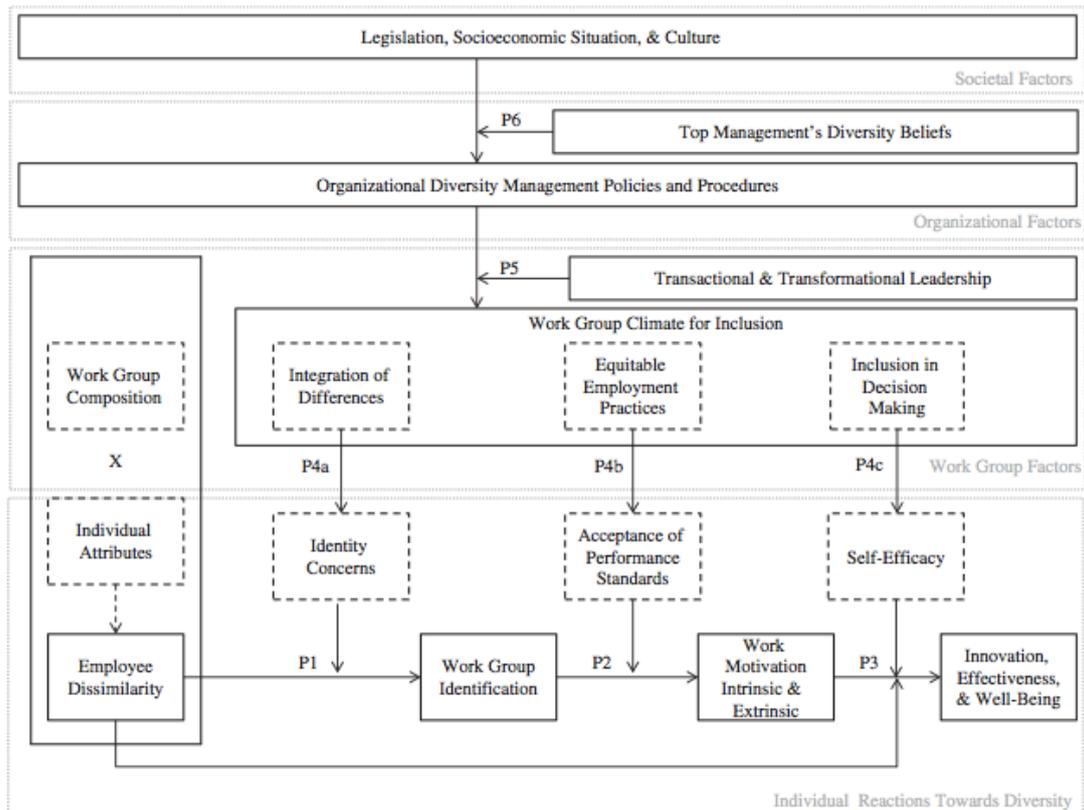


Fig. 3 – Inclusion and diversity related to innovation, effectiveness and well-being. Guillaume et al, 2013.

Building on Guillaume’s contributions to the notion of inclusiveness, Nishii, also states that a climate for inclusion will facilitate employee innovation, effectiveness, and well-being when it signals to employees that differences in the work group are integrated, all group members are treated in a fair and equitable way, empowered to contribute to the effectiveness of the work group (Nishii, 2012).

2.3.3 The outcomes of inclusion practices

One study provides contextual factors that may contribute to perceptions of inclusion. The antecedents such as climate, leadership and human resource practices contribute to the group processes that build the work environment for the individual employee’s perceptions of inclusion, an essential element in effective management of diversity, that leads to various outcomes that are advantageous for an organization (Figure 4), (Shore et al, 2011).

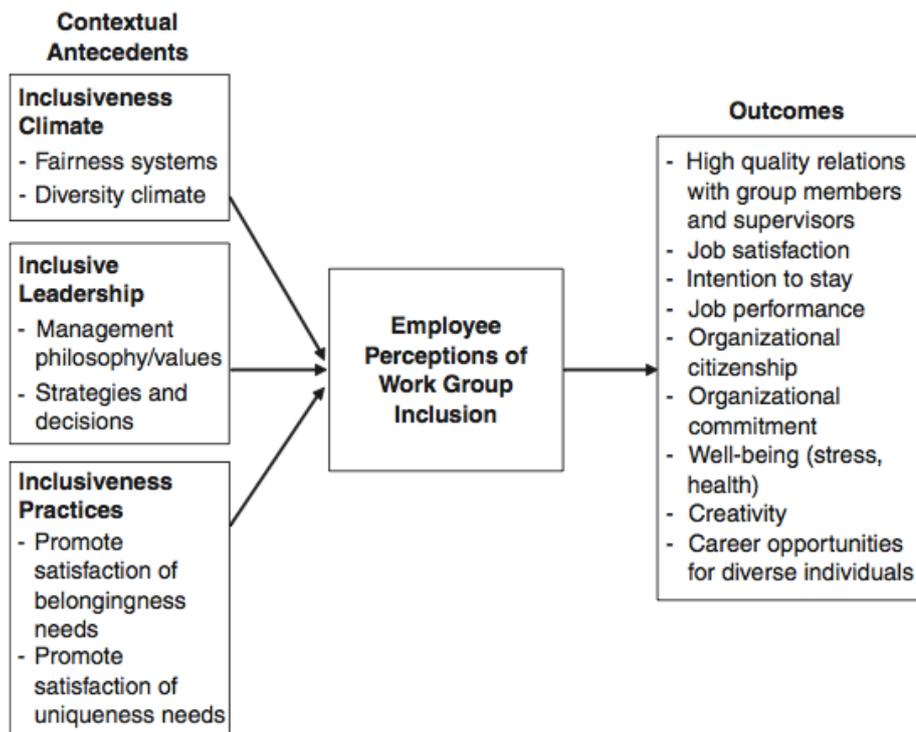


Fig. 4 – The outcomes of inclusion, Shore et al 2011.

2.4 Leadership for Diversity

The following section will focus on the managerial and leadership implications for diversity management.

2.4.1 Inclusion Management and Cultural Agility

Janakiraman argues that diversity management without inclusion management does not work, where she defines inclusion as the quality of the organizational environment that maximizes and leverages the diversity of the firm with its diverse talents and perspectives of all employees. Further, it is stated that diversity is the mix and the inclusiveness is the lever. Here, a matrix explaining the relationship between diversity and inclusion where organizations should aim to reach quadrant D, as demonstrated in Figure 5 (Janakiraman, 2011).

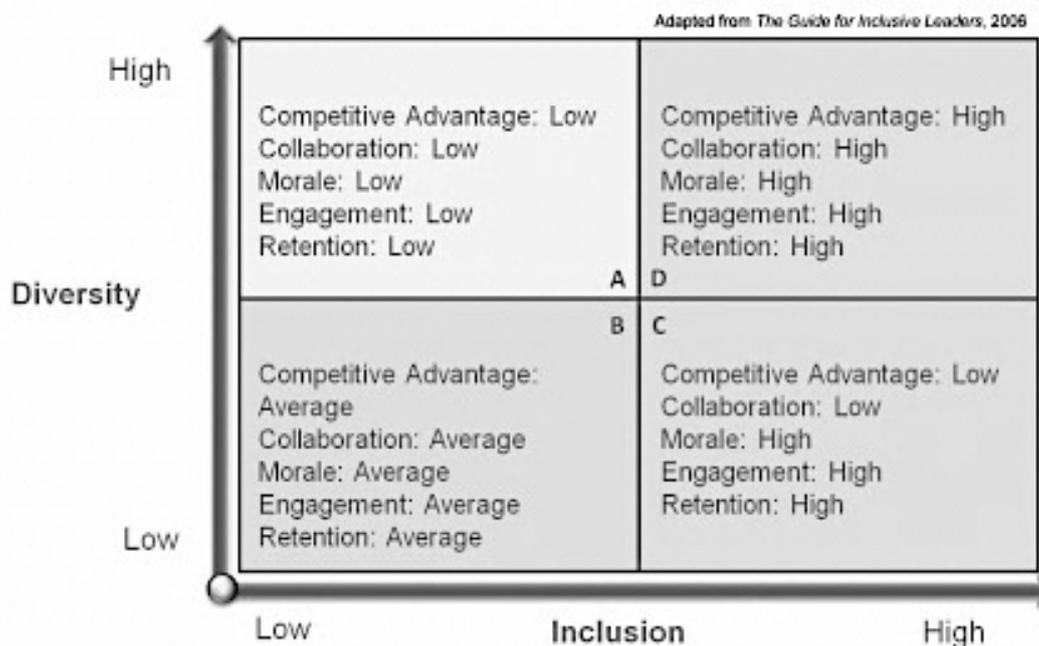


Fig. 5 – Diversity and inclusion matrix, Janakiraman 2011

In order to reach quadrant D, focus needs to be laid on developing cultural agility – the ability to effectively navigate, communicate, interrelate and function well in diverse cultural setting. Culturally agile leaders are defined by characteristics including adaptability and flexibility that are considered skills necessary to reduce risk and maximize opportunities to achieve performance and results.

Leaders agile enough to diagnose team dynamics exhibit change agent behavior. Leaders who are unable or unwilling to use this change agent behavior can negatively impact the organization in a number of ways: unconscious biases in grooming of individuals, unequal and inequitable standards, lag in using diversity and inclusiveness to further client relations and grow accounts and the inability to retain talent. Also important on the journey to cultural agility is a focus on micro-behaviors: small, subtle, often unspoken and unconscious

behaviors that communicate dispositions, attitudes, biases, and sentiments. Body language, voice tone, and facial expressions can impact positively or negatively, putting some team members at a disadvantage and others at an advantage.

Finally, Janakiraman presents four skills that are fundamental to attaining cultural agility:

1. *Cultural Due Diligence*: the process of adequately assessing the possible effects of culture in relationships and work groups
2. *Style-Switching*: the ability to use a broad and flexible behavioral repertoire to accomplish one's goals
3. *Cultural Dialogue*: the ability to illuminate cultural underpinnings of behavior and performance, close cultural gaps and create cultural synergy through conversation.
4. *Cultural Mentoring*: the ability to advise, teach and coach individuals in one's sphere of influence to (a) recognize the cultural underpinnings and consequences of their behavior, (b) understand the cultural and behavioral requirements for true inclusion, and (c) support change through inclusive behaviors, practices, and approaches (including policies and systems).

Furthermore, it is held that the key to effective diversity management lies in creating an atmosphere within the organization that emphasizes diversity as a valuable resource, (Avery and McKay, 2010). Here employees of all types are a) allowed and encouraged to participate in organizational processes and b) recognized and rewarded equitably for their contributions. Such an atmosphere can be captured within the concept of cultural diversity climate (Cox, 1994). Here it was claimed that, "a diversity climate includes an abstract component, which is a general perception towards the importance of employer efforts to promote diversity, and a specific component which refers to attitudes toward the probable beneficiaries of these efforts (i.e. white women and racioethnic minority men and women) in one's unit".

2.4.2 Work-group levels

This climate can be further conceptualized at the work group level and Guillaume et al suggest this reflects work group members' shared perceptions of the extent to which diversity management practices facilitate the integration of differences, lead to equitable employment practices and promote the inclusion of all employees in decision making (Nishii, 2012). It is believed that this type of climate is most likely to emerge at a work group level, because it is most likely at this level where leadership implements and executes an organization's diversity management policies and procedures, and where these policies and procedures are therefore most likely to materialize as practices (Zohar, 2000). Thus, it is argued that targeting the work groups directly through the management or leadership for instance, as opposed to going through other organizational bodies such as human resources, is the most effective way to manage diversity to reach an inclusive climate.

2.4.5 Training

It has also been argued that managing diversity should also value individual differences (Gordon, 1995). In one set of solutions presented, educational efforts are the common thread. The first solution is diversity training, which helps individuals understand their own and other's prejudices. One example of diversity training for instance is to focus the training on four strategies:

1. *Management development*, increase the visibility of, understanding of and commitment throughout the firm
2. *Organizational development*, promote an equitable work environment that values diversity
3. *Talent development*, obtain horizontal and vertical integration of diversity through all functions
4. *Individual development*, empower individuals to help reduce barriers to reaching their full potential

An organization believing in the diversity practices, must realize tactful incorporation of assimilation and adaptation as two of the greatest challenges to be faced (Mumby, 1988). Assimilation is the tension that is developed between the old dominant group and the new cultural diversity, which could reduce the organization's efficiency (Harvey and Allard, 2012). Here, active communication, training, and management practices would help to implement diversity practices at the workplace (Hyter, 2003). Furthermore, conflict issues are more likely to arise if employees lack proper training to possess knowledge of the work environment. Diversity training could thus decrease interpersonal conflicts (Lee, 2013; McElroy, 2013).

2.4.6 What do leaders need to understand about diversity?

Thomas discussed leadership implications of diversity management. He noted that firms managing their diversity practices effectively did not have a separate program for diversity; it was integrated into all the processes of the organizations. Diversity thus becomes a lens for looking at, identifying, developing and advancing talent. Often, the people at the very top are aware of the diversity management practices, but their middle management, who also run vital processes in organizations and create the experience of people who work there, do not understand and do not feel accountable for cultural diversity and inclusion (Thomas, 2011).

Management of a diverse population is evidently a significant challenge. Leaders in diverse organizations need special skills like effective communication, self-monitoring, empathy, and excellent strategies for decision making to be able to manage diverse groups (Kerby & Burns, 2012; Harvey & Allard, 2012). The company's leaders should be aware of their behavior and should be willing to change their behavior based on its influence.

3. Methodology

The following chapter provides a detailed account for the research methodology with descriptions of conducted research, reasons behind the chosen method together with the possible limitations of the method used.

3.1 Method

For this thesis, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data has been used, a methodological triangulation; the use of multiple methods to study a phenomenon (Denzin, 1978). This method gives a more detailed and balanced observation by data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data (O'Donoghue and Punch, 2003).

The method of combining qualitative and quantitative data was chosen due to the difficulty to measure a complex parameter such as cultural diversity. Using both quantitative and qualitative data can improve an evaluation by ensuring that the limitations of one type of the data are balanced by the strengths of the other, providing an understanding that is improved by integrating different ways of research (Lobe, 2008). As qualitative research methods aim to answer questions such as why and how, whereas quantitative methods aim to answer questions such as what, where and when (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), the anticipation was that the method used would capture more dimensions and relevant information for this study.

As the purpose of this thesis was mainly exploratory in investigating inclusion and differences between senior and junior perceptions, combining the two methods and a case study seemed as the perfect option to fulfil the purpose and answer the research question by gaining insight in perceived differences from a large population in the survey, and complement these findings by deeper, more thorough and comprehensive insights gained from the interviews. Furthermore, the reasons for incorporating a case study method was primarily that this method brings an understanding to the complex issue of cultural diversity management by emphasizing detailed contextual analysis, which in turn can extend and add strength to knowledge gained from previous research within the area.

3.2 Chosen company

The company, a Swedish management-consulting firm belonging to a global group, was chosen as the company to further investigate cultural diversity management for several reasons. First, choosing a consulting firm was due to the nature and methodology used in consulting. The consulting industry is highly synonymous with diversity. By working with broad ranges of projects from various industries and consultants from different nations, it is evident that diversity permeates consulting operations. Consulting projects are also often conducted in teams, where differences in culture are manifested more prominently as opposed to on an individual level.

Furthermore, recruitment practices in firms like the company chosen to some extent create homogeneity in the workforce when employees are recruited from specific, well-renowned educational institutions. The belonging to a global group was also a determining factor in the decision to study the chosen company's Sweden branch. This was primarily as global companies tend to have an organizational culture wherein diversity management, more specifically cultural diversity management, is more chalked out due to the global range of

customers, employees and projects. Here, cultural differences are more likely to appear as opposed to in a firm solely operating in one national context.

3.3 Quantitative Data

The quantitative data for this study comes from a survey conducted at the company in June 2014. The survey has a total of 210 respondents, consisting of employees at the company's branch in Sweden. The employees answering the survey have been divided into five different career levels. Due to confidentiality reasons, the specified levels will not be disclosed.

Instead, the five career levels have been clustered into two different categories based on if they are in leadership positions or not, referred to as "seniors" and "juniors". Juniors are employees in career levels from entry level to below manager. Seniors are employees ranging from the career levels manager to leadership, and this group acquires the leadership role when working in teams.

The survey was anonymous and run by an external vendor, specialising in surveys for consulting, to guarantee data privacy. The results for each question asked have been provided to the company at the aggregate level of the average scores of each career level, and there is no evidence of individual answers. These averages have internally within the vendor been tested for significance, which will be further developed in chapter 4. The survey was divided in four categories, each section consisting of 4-5 statements. As the survey was conducted prior to this thesis, not all questions under the various categories in the survey were considered of relevance for the thesis. Thus, some of the questions from the original survey have been excluded. The four categories listed were 1) Sense of belonging, 2) Ability to leverage everybody's cultural diversity, 3) Career Development and 4) Experienced or observed act of cultural diversity. The questions are listed in Appendix 1.

The survey had interval variables, where the interval scale ranges from 1-5, where a score of 1 indicated that the respondent did not agree with the statement at all and a score of 5 indicated that the respondent completely agreed on the statement. As an external vendor conducted the survey, the data analysis methods were not known to the company. Statistical significance of averages had however been tested.

3.4 Qualitative Data

The qualitative data for this study consists of interviews held with employees working at the company. Four employees in senior positions and four employees in junior positions have been interviewed during April and May 2015. The purpose of the interviews was to capture the dimension of inclusion since this has been discussed as one of the key components of effective diversity management, as previously mentioned in the purpose of this thesis. In the interviews, it was of most interest to note differences of how seniors and juniors perceive the cultural diversity management practices, as these opinions and perceptions cannot be gained from the quantitative study. The interview questions can be found in Appendix 2 and 3.

Bearing in mind that experiences within cultural diversity are complex and often perceived due to the individual nature and experiences of individuals, the initial questions were open and general, in order to not influence the interviewee as well as gain as much unbiased information as possible. Towards the end, the questions were more specific. As a majority of the interviews were conducted via phone due to busy schedules and difficulties in coordinating meetings, the interviewees were told that notes would be taken throughout the

interview and after each question. This way, all information provided by the interviewees could be noted.

The interview questions were categorized and coded in areas relevant to the purpose and research question. The interview questions were different for the junior and senior employees; however a common coding of categories partially based on the theoretical framework (Cox and Blake, 1991) presented in chapter 2 was present;

- Background information
- Organizational culture
- Mind-sets about diversity and inclusion
- Previous experiences (This category had several subcategories that were different between the junior and senior employee interview questions).
- Training

When analysing the interviews to investigate possible differences between junior and seniors perceptions, each category from the junior and senior interviews were compared to each other.

3.5 Limitations and Reliability of Data Method

Using a qualitative method does not provide as generalizable results as those provided by a quantitative method. Furthermore, research quality depends on the individual skills of the researcher and is more easily influenced by the both researcher's and the subject's personal biases and idiosyncrasies. Here, it is also relevant to consider that the researcher's presence during data gathering, which often is unavoidable in qualitative research, can affect the responses.

Additionally, in a qualitative method, accuracy is arguably more often difficult to maintain, assess and demonstrate. With the volume of data, analysis and interpretation, as well as finding the appropriate modules of presentation, are often time consuming as compared to a quantitative method.

Restrictions from using analysis from data gathered by means of a quantitative method include that the results and conclusions drawn might not generalize to other settings. Findings may often be unique only to the respondents and specific setting included in the research study. A quantitative method does not either provide the margins for interpretation, explanation, nor the opportunity for discussion of questions posed.

4. Results

In this section, the results from the data collection are presented. To make the distinction more evident, the results from the case study are divided and presented under a junior career level and a senior career level heading. The results from the qualitative research are not divided, instead a summary of the responses is presented. The main four categories under junior and senior are the same, however under the categorization “Previous Experiences” the content differs as the questions for juniors and seniors were different.

Table 1 and 2 present results from the chosen survey questions that were considered of interest for the thesis. The results are averages for junior and senior career levels for each question asked, and only the results that showed statistical significance have been included.

Table 3 summarizes the results from Table 1 and 2 to facilitate identifying differences between the averages of the two groups.

4.1 Junior Career Level

4.1.1 Survey

<u>Category and Questions</u>	<u>Score</u>
Sense of Belonging	
Q1 <i>I feel a part of the Company community</i>	3.93
Q2 <i>I feel like I am a valued member of the Company</i>	3.52
Ability to leverage everybody's cultural diversity	
Q3 <i>I sense that the Company is a multi-cultural workplace</i>	3.51
Q4 <i>I sense that the Company capitalizes well on the cultural skills and experiences that I have</i>	3.16
Q5 <i>I sense that the Company leverages employees cultural diversity</i>	3.23
Q6 <i>I sense that the Company could better leverage employees with different cultural background</i>	3.63
Career development	
Q7 <i>I sense that foreign background plays a positive role in scheduling and promotion decisions</i>	2.61
Q8 <i>I sense that colleague(s) with foreign background have an equal opportunity of assignment to key project or internal roles as those with Swedish backgrounds</i>	3.62
Q9 <i>I sense that speaking Swedish is mandatory for a successful career with the Company</i>	3.37
Experienced or observed act of cultural diversity	
Q10 <i>I have experienced or observed discrimination at the Company based on someone's cultural background</i>	1.57
Q11 <i>I have witnessed colleague(s) being excluded from important communication due to cultural background</i>	1.64
Q12 <i>I have witnessed colleague(s) being excluded from important communication due to language skills</i>	2.34

Table 1 – Survey Results, Junior Career Level

4.1.2 Interviews

The interviewees for the junior section had worked at The Company for 8 months, 19 months, 2 years and 7 months respectively and were all in a role between entry-level and below manager.

4.1.2.1 Organizational culture

When discussing the organizational culture and cultural diversity, the junior employees stated that they were aware that the company is very active within the area of cultural diversity management, however three out of the four interviewees stated that they could not think of specific cultural diversity practices as they had seen more activities within gender diversity. For instance, during the introductory days there was time reserved specifically for diversity, there is a constant discussion within the company's Sweden office about cultural diversity, which is manifested in joint conferences when many employees are gathered together. Furthermore, there are continuous business updates with surveys investigating current perceptions of cultural diversity amongst the employees. One interviewee also mentioned that they were under the impression that the workforce at junior levels it not as culturally diverse as it is on senior levels.

"I chose to begin my career at the company primarily due to it being a global company with a diverse workforce. Meeting people that are different from you is something I find both entertaining and enlightening."

-Junior level employee

4.1.2.2 Mindsets about cultural diversity

All interviewees stated that they see culturally heterogeneous groups as something positive. The cultural diversity of a group is however not something that focus is laid on; it is instead the different qualities and competences the team members acquire.

"It is an asset to have people from different parts of the world and cultures working in one team as this enables a broader spectrum of experiences, perspectives, knowledge, an advantageous group dynamic as well as analytical tools and skills – all factors that are necessary in projects."

-Junior level employee

However, three out of the four interviewees also mentioned that whether or not culturally heterogeneous groups are an advantage or disadvantage depends the people in each group and what situation it is, hence that there are several other factors contributing to whether or not the outcomes of a culturally heterogeneous group are positive. It was mentioned that misunderstandings could occur, for instance by different ways of working. Furthermore, the interviewees also mentioned that the time management might be affected negatively, as working with many different inputs requires more time

4.1.2.3 Previous experiences

The experience of having worked in a culturally heterogeneous group at the company differs between the interviewees as they have worked at the company for different amounts of time, resulting in having been part of different numbers of project. All of the four interviewees at the company had previous worked/were currently working in culturally heterogeneous groups.

Communication barriers in heterogeneous teams

When discussing the communication barriers with the interviewees it was apparent that the language barriers were the most prominent barriers as a result of different nations and cultures represented in a team. As the company is a multinational company, English is meant to be the main language. Despite this, three out of the interviewees had experienced that a language other than Swedish and English had been used in a work group setting, thus making them feel less included amongst the other team members. One interviewee had experienced several situations where they or someone in their team wanted to say something but others understood what they said differently than what the intention was due to language barriers.

Furthermore, it was also mentioned that communication barriers vary depending on the situation. However, regardless of language spoken amongst the team members, the scope, the key-question, goal and hierarchy had been clear in these situations, which was considered of great importance for the team performance and outcome.

Inclusion

Whether or not the interviewees felt included in culturally heterogeneous work groups depended on the situation. All interviewees said they generally felt included in teams, however they all could recall a situation where they felt less included in a culturally heterogeneous work group setting. Three out of four of the interviewees stated that situations when they felt less included were due to language barriers, where several people in a group spoke a language that the interviewee did not.

Further, it was mentioned that it is difficult and more complex to deal with employees who are new in a company (such as the interviewees who had not been at the company for a long time) as it is harder to follow meetings as well as adjust to new ways of working in a new company.

Leadership in heterogeneous groups

The first question asked here was what the interviewee's leaders made to feel everyone included when working in a culturally heterogeneous team. Here, all the interviewees stated that they had not experienced special efforts from their current/previous team leaders to include everyone in the group. One of the interviewees has in a previous project felt less included due to others in the group speaking another language. In this situation, the manager did not take action until the interviewee specifically mentioned that they did not feel included.

“Even though I think the cultural diversity approach is highly embedded in our organization, managers still need to acknowledge that there is a need to regard cultural differences as they essentially can make or break the effectiveness of a team.”

-Junior level employee

When asked if interviewees could see differences between the leadership when they had been in heterogeneous vs. homogeneous groups, all interviewees stated that they could not see any differences. Here, it was mentioned that it to a large extent depended on who the leader was as a person. Additionally, it was noted that when in culturally heterogeneous groups, the

junior level employees interviewed could not see any specific efforts in managing cultural differences from leaders.

Experienced advantages and disadvantages of working in a culturally heterogeneous group

The junior employees listed the benefits of working in culturally heterogeneous groups as enabling a broader perspective, seeing problems and challenges from different viewpoints, increased creativity and getting to know employees at other company branches as well as seeing how they work.

The disadvantages of culturally heterogeneous workgroups that were mentioned was not being able to speak Swedish in all contexts, thus having to speak English, which can cause people to become more reserved. Another disadvantage mentioned that when people from same department in another country were teamed together. This could cause other team members to feel less included and not knowing who and what they are talking about, leading to not being able to follow discussions and feeling less included and valuable.

Training

The interviewees stated that they had not undergone any formal training, although they did see many documents and emails regarding diversity and inclusion.

4. 2 Senior Career Level

4.2.1 Survey

<u>Category and Questions</u>	<u>Score</u>
Sense of Belonging	
Q1 <i>I feel a part of the Company community</i>	3.86
Q2 <i>I feel like I am a valued member of the Company</i>	3.90
Ability to leverage everybody's cultural diversity	
Q3 <i>I sense that the Company is a multi-cultural workplace</i>	3.65
Q4 <i>I sense that the Company capitalizes well on the cultural skills and experiences that I have</i>	3.34
Q5 <i>I sense that the Company leverages employees cultural diversity</i>	3.15
Q6 <i>I sense that the Company could better leverage employees with different cultural background</i>	3.82
Career development	
Q7 <i>I sense that foreign background plays a positive role in scheduling and promotion decisions</i>	2.57
Q8 <i>I sense that colleague(s) with foreign background have an equal opportunity of assignment to key project or internal roles as those with Swedish backgrounds</i>	3.47
Q9 <i>I sense that speaking Swedish is mandatory for a successful career with the Company</i>	3.51
Experienced or observed act of cultural diversity	
Q10 <i>I have experienced or observed discrimination at the Company based on someone's cultural background</i>	1.75
Q11 <i>I have witnessed colleague(s) being excluded from important communication due to cultural background</i>	1.73
Q12 <i>I have witnessed colleague(s) being excluded from important communication due to language skills</i>	2.59

Table 2 - Survey Results, Senior Career Level

4.2.2 Interviews

The interviewees for the senior section had worked at the company for 9 years, 16 years, 6,5 years and 16 years respectively, and were all in a role between manager and leadership.

4.2.2.1 Organizational culture

Cultural diversity was mentioned as a somewhat new focus area in the diversity practices at the company, yet it is still prioritized and considered as something very important. The company is working on increasing cultural diversity in their Sweden branch, and one of the interviewees mentioned that addressing the issue of different languages is incredibly important. The interviewees mentioned that the company primarily has been working with gender diversity, as gender related issues have been considered of great interest for the Sweden branch of the firm, partially due to its prominence in the Swedish society. Cultural diversity was explained as more difficult and complex to measure as it includes a dimension of unconscious bias. However, cultural diversity has gained more attention within the company over recent years. One interviewee who had been active in the diversity and inclusion practices mentioned that there are currently different trainings, scorecards and other measures taken to promote cultural diversity. Globally in the company, the area of cultural diversity is given a lot of attention, and on a national level in different countries several surveys and studies have been conducted. There are no specific guidelines to what needs to be done in different situations, having a global network, and thus also a culturally diverse workforce is embedded and lies in the heart of the organization.

“Cultural diversity is a given in the organization and everyone has at some point worked with someone from a different background - it is rather rule than exception.”

-Senior level employee

4.2.2.2 Mindsets about cultural diversity

All interviewees held that cultural diversity is unquestionably an opportunity and asset to the company. Although diversity and inclusions exist as a function at the company, all seniors interviewed mentioned that inclusion and diversity to a high extent permeate all business operations at the company.

The notion of unconscious bias was also brought up in three out of the four interviews. It was considered to cause unintended, subtle and every-day discrimination, which is considered unacceptable in the company. Thus, the interviewees held that this is an important aspect to target in order to make to workplace more inclusive and culturally diverse.

4.2.2.3 Previous experiences

All interviewees had several times been in a managing role of a culturally heterogeneous workgroup at the company. Furthermore, two of the interviewed seniors were working on the development of inclusion and diversity at the company's Sweden branch.

Intended work group environment

When asked what work group environment the seniors strived for managing a team, all interviewees had similar opinions. Strive for an environment where everyone is included and contribute equally as well as articulate expectations with intelligibility.

One senior mentioned that as it is costly to have a workgroup that you do not know before starting a project (cost in terms of time and effort), it is important to ask of earlier experience and understand what drives the different people –if they prefer analytical work, stakeholder relations etc. in order to try to build on team member’s strengths and figure out what environment gives the team members the best conditions to work effectively.

All interviewees held that communication is key - it is important to talk to and include everyone, especially if someone is not as driven as the others.

One interviewee also mentioned that they had experienced that the social aspect of culturally heterogeneous teams was essential in obtaining a favorable work group environment.

Communication Barriers

All interviewees agreed that communication barriers to different extents had existed in all culturally heterogeneous groups they had managed. These barriers were primarily those connected to differences in language.

Differences between heterogeneous and homogeneous groups and barriers

The main differences and barriers in culturally heterogeneous groups mentioned was first and foremost the language. Furthermore, other differences such as views on society, views on authority, how to deal with problems were barriers the seniors had experienced.

Global differences between the company’s offices in different nations were also important to consider according to three of the four interviewees – that even within the same organization there are immense differences that derive from different cultures and backgrounds.

“Unfortunately, the degree of diversity and heterogeneity is lower at a senior level, both cultural and gender diversity, which indicates that the organization is not as inclusive as we would wish for it to be.”

-Senior level employee

Differences between heterogeneous groups on a junior and senior level were also discussed with the interviewees. The seniors mentioned that the degree of cultural diversity and heterogeneity is lower at a senior level, which indicates that the organization is not as inclusive as intended. Here, the notion of unconscious bias was brought up again by mentioning that there is a negative bias towards minorities in leading roles in the organization, such as biases towards people of different culture and background,

One of the seniors also mentioned that it is evident that junior level employees are more used to heterogeneous groups and that this can depend on demographic changes where young people travel more often, have more international experience and come from universities where heterogeneous groups are far more common than in organizations.

It was highlighted that the further up in the organization you come, the more homogeneous the groups are – not only from a cultural perspective, rather that there is a straightforward base that everyone shares and stands upon. This was considered easier to handle as you stand on a common ground and share basic principles and the spread of different opinions becomes narrower.

Dealing with the barriers

When discussing the best way to deal with the barriers, all seniors interviewed mentioned that communication and dialogue is key. They held that it is important to encourage the heterogeneous dialogue and even if this may cause some confusion and difficulties initially, it will show great results to potential conflicts and misunderstandings.

Furthermore, acknowledging the differences and understanding that different cultures have different ways of how they meet people, how they delegate etc. was also mentioned as a way of dealing with barriers. It takes a while to learn but being aware of this aspect facilitates cooperation between employees. It was also said that it is important to acknowledge that in different cultures, same things might have different meanings.

Knowledge Sharing

Here, the interviewees all responded that there was no active attempt to communicate their knowledge of diversity and inclusion to their senior and junior colleagues. However, taking a stand in situations where someone is not being treated right was also mentioned as an indirect way of communicating diversity and inclusion belief. Additionally, feedback and advice is often given to juniors in work groups during one-on-one meetings.

Inclusion

“There is this saying that I really like. “Diversity is counting your talent; inclusion is making your talent count”. It is all about leveraging all our employees with different cultural backgrounds.”

-Senior Level Employee

Here, the questions asked was how the seniors make everyone in their teams feel included. Acknowledging and giving attention to each individual as well as realize their competences and what they can contribute with to the team was mentioned by all seniors. Furthermore, making sure everyone’s voices and inputs are heard in meetings was also mentioned. The seniors mentioned that to create an inclusive work group environment they should not talk too much themselves and eliminate any possible barriers, encourage knowledge sharing and different opinions, be calm and realize signals between team members.

The last point was emphasized by two of the seniors. Making sure to notice when two people do not function well together was mentioned as acquiring a social and emotional dimension of intelligence – for instance notice by how a person talks that something is wrong and notice signals between two people. As leader in general, not only in heterogeneous groups, this ability is essential. Here, common leadership practices were also highlighted where leaders are there to bring out the best of the team and their mandate is to delegate and distribute responsibility equally.

Finally, all seniors mentioned that making sure that one language is spoken at all times is of great importance.

Leadership of homogeneous and heterogeneous groups

Here, the questions asked was whether the seniors manage heterogeneous and homogeneous groups differently. The responses provided were quite similar. This was something the seniors did not pay much attention to as they instead attempted to enter the role of a leader to a new team without any preconceptions and prejudices. However, usually it is easy to notice if the heterogeneity is problematic for the teamwork or not, and this observation can usually be made very quickly.

However, two of the seniors mentioned that when they knew that they were going to lead a heterogeneous group they tried to get to know each individual more than usual, asked open questions and tried having a broader and more generalized approach.

Furthermore, it was also discussed whether the leadership practices depended on whether a group is homogeneous or heterogeneous groups. The interviewees agreed that this is not really accurate; the aim is to always bring out the best in the team and use the resources available as effectively as possible. Teams are formed based on competence, not on background – employees are there because they have skills required for the project. Here, the seniors mentioned that they try to reach different work group environments based on existing common grounds. In heterogeneous groups, employees would share knowledge and experiences from their background with the others; in homogeneous groups, employees would talk about things they have in common, in their native language.

Training

All employees in the senior career level goes through training in gender, culture and sexual awareness. This aims to make the employees better leaders and be able to see problems in issues involving unconscious bias and stereotyping. The training entails presentation of the tools and frameworks within cultural diversity at the company as well as norm building mechanism and case studies. Here, the goal is to empower the leaders as they create the work environment in teams which contributes to the overall work environment in the firm.

Furthermore, there is a compliance training addressing unconscious bias where leaders are taught to see and filter differences between employees such as gender, culture and sexuality.

Assistance and Tools

The seniors said that there are many tools and assets in terms of knowledge with training and frameworks within the company. Amongst these tools are virtual software program, guidelines on how to hold effective meetings, unconscious bias courses and courses on how to work with cultural diversity. Furthermore, there is a large resource library in the area of diversity, where cultural diversity is included, that has been developed globally in the company. Challenge is to communicate these tools and make employees discover, explore and use it.

Peer-support in this area is also strong and relevant. Seniors mentioned that it is important that you can learn something from each other as leaders. Furthermore everyone has a “mentor”, who is meant to support the employee in his or her career development. Even though diversity is not the mentor’s main area of expertise, the employees can definitely turn to their mentors when they need help in a situation dealing with a culturally heterogeneous

group. Managers and above are the career counselors and these employees go through the diversity training.

4.3 Junior and Senior results

<u>Category and Questions</u>	<u>Junior Score</u>	<u>Senior Score</u>
Sense of Belonging		
Q1 <i>I feel a part of the Company community</i>	3.93	3.86
Q2 <i>I feel like I am a valued member of the Company</i>	3.52	3.90
Ability to leverage everybody's cultural diversity		
Q3 <i>I sense that the Company is a multi-cultural workplace</i>	3.51	3.65
Q4 <i>I sense that the Company capitalizes well on the cultural skills and experiences that I have</i>	3.16	3.34
Q5 <i>I sense that the Company leverages employees cultural diversity</i>	3.23	3.15
Q6 <i>I sense that the Company could better leverage employees with different cultural background</i>	3.63	3.82
Career development		
Q7 <i>I sense that foreign background plays a positive role in scheduling and promotion decisions</i>	2.61	2.57
Q8 <i>I sense that colleague(s) with foreign background have an equal opportunity of assignment to key project or internal roles as those with Swedish backgrounds</i>	3.62	3.47
Q9 <i>I sense that speaking Swedish is mandatory for a successful career with the Company</i>	3.37	3.51
Experienced or observed act of cultural diversity		
Q10 <i>I have experienced or observed discrimination at the Company based on someone's cultural background</i>	1.57	1.75
Q11 <i>I have witnessed colleague(s) being excluded from important communication due to cultural background</i>	1.64	1.73
Q12 <i>I have witnessed colleague(s) being excluded from important communication due to language skills</i>	2.34	2.59

Table 3 - Survey Results, Junior & Senior Career Level

5. Analysis

This chapter aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding for the findings presented in the previous section with support from the theoretical framework. To facilitate, this chapter is divided according to the survey categories; 1) Sense of belonging, 2) Ability to leverage everybody's cultural diversity 3) Career development and 4) Experienced of observed act of cultural diversity.

5.1 Sense of Belonging

In the questions asked under the category Sense of Belonging, it was evident that although both groups had relatively high averages for both questions. For Q1 - *I feel a part of the company community* the differences between the averages were not as big as in Q2 - *I feel like I am a valued member of the company* where the junior average was lower than the senior average.

The junior level employees feeling of lesser value is supported by the information gained from the interviews. Here, all junior employees mentioned that they had experienced a situation where they did not feel as included in a heterogeneous work group setting. Furthermore, all interviewees stated that they had not experienced special leadership efforts from their team leaders to include everyone in the group. They also mentioned that they could not see any differences in leadership when being in culturally heterogeneous and culturally homogeneous groups. This is not consistent with the previously presented theories, where favourable or less favourable work-related outcomes were said to depend on the perception towards the importance of employer efforts to create a climate for inclusion. (Guillaume et al, 2013)

In contrast, from the senior employee interviews it can be noted that making employees feel included in culturally heterogeneous groups is considered of great importance as the seniors mentioned several ways they try to make culturally heterogeneous work group environments more inclusive. Furthermore, the seniors mentioned that they did not make distinctions in terms of how to manage the group based on the heterogeneity or homogeneity of the team - the aim is instead to always bring out the best in teams. This cannot, however, be supported by previous research. Apart from Guillaume et al, Janakiraman also held that reaching high diversity and high inclusion requires the development of cultural agility, hence the development of leader's specific skillsets targeted to managing diverse groups (Janakiraman, 2011).

A gap between what seniors communicate and exercise and what juniors perceive is evident. In this occurrence, the model presented by Shore et al (Figure 4) is relevant. Inclusive climate and leadership are essential practices as these lead to employee perceptions of work group inclusion, which in turn leads to positive outcomes such as job satisfaction and improved job performance (Shore et al, 2011). Although the results from the study, specifically the results from the senior employee interviews, prove that the contextual and antecedent factors are highly present at the company, the employee perception of work group inclusion is still not strong, which can have a resulting negative effect on the outcomes presented in the model. Again, this can in turn indicate that further efforts to create an inclusive environment needs to be taken by leaders (Guillaume et al, 2013; Janakiraman, 2011).

Furthermore, by returning to the Inclusion framework (Fig. 2), this gap can be demonstrated by the quadrants. Senior employees strive for high belongingness and high value in uniqueness amongst their team members, creating a feeling of Inclusion. However, the junior

employees indicating lower scores when asked if they feel valued in the survey, as well as in the interviews stating that they have experienced situations in culturally heterogeneous work groups where they did not feel included indicates that junior employees would not fall in the Inclusion box of the framework, towards the Exclusion quadrant.

5.2 Ability to leverage everybody's cultural diversity

Under the category, all averages were relatively high, indicating that the company leverages cultural diversity well. However, there were noteworthy differences between the junior and senior averages for two of the questions, more specifically between the averages of Q4 – *I sense that the Company capitalizes well on the cultural skills and experiences I have* and Q6 – *I sense that the Company could better leverage employees with different cultural background* where the senior scores were higher.

Here, Q6 is particular is interesting. Both juniors and seniors agree with the statement that the company better could leverage employees with different cultural backgrounds. In the interviews, a senior employee also mentioned that no specific measures are taken or considered when entering the leading role of a multi-cultural team. These two points go hand in hand, and here it can be argued that leaders in fact need to acknowledge cultural heterogeneity in a team they are managing.

Again, this can be supported by the literature and previous research, including cultural agility (Janakiraman, 2011) and contextual antecedents including inclusiveness climate, inclusive leadership and inclusiveness practices (Shore et al, 2013). The model described by Guillaume et al also supports that creating an inclusive work environment where differences are not only valued but also integrated and leveraged are essential in reaching effective diversity management (Guillaume et al, 2013).

It can also be discussed whether the diversity and inclusion practices to leverage diversity should come from team leaders or from higher management in the firm. Looking back at the HR approaches to diversity management touched upon in the HR paradigm, these approaches may be an effective way of dealing with leveraging employees with different cultural backgrounds as it then becomes fully organizational as opposed to on a work-group level. Litvin stated that diversity efforts should be systematic and structural organizational approaches. However, Zohar argued that work-groups should be targeted instead of going through organizational bodies, as this is the most effective way to reach an inclusive climate. (Litvin, 2002; Zohar, 2000)

5.3 Career Development

Under the Career development category, both the junior and senior averages for Q7 – *I sense that foreign background plays a positive role in scheduling and promotion decisions* were relatively low, as opposed to the averages indicated for the rest of the questions in the survey. Although scheduling and promotion decisions were not targeted in the interview, none of the interviewees mentioned that they do not favor culturally diverse backgrounds in this context. When asked about the views on cultural diversity within the organization, not only in a work group setting, all interviewees mentioned this as something highly positive for an organization. The low average score may therefore in this case indicate a case of unconscious bias, more specifically a bias similar to perception bias, towards foreigners in terms of

credibility in scheduling and when making decisions regarding promotion (Zeelenberg and Wagenmakers, 2006).

Moreover, there was a substantial difference between the averages indicated in Q8 –*I sense that colleague(s) with foreign background have an equal opportunity of assignment to key projects or internal roles as those with Swedish background*, where the senior score was lower than the junior score. The averages from Q9 –*I sense that speaking Swedish is mandatory for a successful career with the company* was also noteworthy, where the junior average was lower than senior average. These results, together with seniors interview responses, can also be connected to the presence of unconscious bias amongst seniors within the company.

5.4 Experienced or observed act of cultural diversity

Under the category Experienced or observed acts of cultural diversity, the averages for Q10 – *I have experienced or observed discrimination at the company based on someone's cultural background* were relatively low, however the senior average was higher than the junior average. Notably, this does not necessarily signify higher levels of discrimination on a senior level. As senior employees have been present at the company for a longer time, this increases the probability of having experienced or observed discrimination.

The averages from Q11- *I have witnessed colleague(s) being excluded from important communication due to cultural background* and Q12- *I have witnessed colleague(s) being excluded from important communication due to language skills* were interesting. For Q11, the averages were relatively low as compared to the rest of the questions. The senior average was however higher than the junior average and the reasons for this can be similar to those mentioned in Q10, that seniors have been at the company for a longer time and therefore might have witnessed more than junior employees, just as mentioned for Q10. The averages for Q12, on the other hand, were much higher than Q11, which indicates that exclusion of important communication is more likely to occur based on language skills as opposed to cultural differences. This can be further supported by all interviewees, both senior and junior, mentioning that the most prominent barriers in culturally heterogeneous groups are those related to communication and difference in languages spoken. Effective communication amongst other skills was mentioned by Kerby & Burns and Harvey & Allard as an essential attribute for leaders in culturally diverse organizations. Here, the gap between intended and perceived cultural diversity leadership becomes apparent again by looking at the interview responses. Seniors held that a part of creating an inclusive work environment lies in making sure that the same language is spoken at all times, meanwhile the juniors held that they had been in situations where they felt less included due to another language being spoken (Kerby & Burns, 2012; Harvey & Allard, 2012)

6. Conclusion

In regards to investigating potential differences between junior and senior perceptions of the cultural diversity practices in the firm, interesting findings have been made. As posed by the research question and purpose prior to the data analysis, this has also provided insight into possible methods of implementation and improvement on company activities within cultural diversity management.

Targeting the research question for this thesis, the results from the study indicate that there in fact are differences between how seniors and junior employee perceive cultural diversity practices at the company. These differences are primarily those related to how leadership is perceived by junior level employees; what senior level employees state that they communicate towards their team members is not what junior level employees perceive. Primarily, the differences were in what seniors stated their efforts to create an inclusive work environment were and how juniors mentioned that they perceived these efforts. From the theoretical framework, inclusion was mentioned as one of the keys for effective diversity management together with studies holding that employer and leadership efforts are important in the effectiveness of culturally heterogeneous work-groups. Failing in creating an inclusive workplace will therefore have an impact on how effective the organization is in its cultural diversity management practices.

In relation to the purpose of providing indications of how an organization can implement and improve cultural diversity management practices based on the employee perspectives, the study found that language barriers are a key target in order to reach an inclusive work group environment. Furthermore, the results from the study also indicated that it might be relevant for leaders to acknowledge the difference between the dynamics and characteristics of homogeneous and heterogeneous teams when entering their managing role. This is also related to the gap between what senior's communicate and exercise and what juniors perceive.

Here, the senior employees mentioned that the heterogeneity or homogeneity of a group was not something they considered and they aimed to enter new teams without any preconceptions or prejudice. Instead, focus was put on attempting to bring out the best of the team, regardless of cultural differences present, and make use of the resources and skills as effectively as possible.

Although this objective mind-set can be considered positive, the studies presented in Chapter 2 demonstrate that barriers from homogeneous groups are important to acknowledge in leadership efforts toward an inclusive work group environment. As some studies hold that the cultural diversity management initiatives should be from an organizational approach (Litvin, 2002; Cox, 2011) and other studies hold that the initiatives should emerge at a work-group level (Zohar, 2000), the implications for organizations can be to attempt using both approaches in order to reach a favourable outcome. Furthermore, from the results of the study, both the survey and the interviews, it can also be stated that there is a presence of unconscious bias within the organization, primarily amongst seniors. Ross, 2008, mentions that although bias cannot be fully eliminated, organizations should focus on managing and acknowledging biases.

Moreover, the aspect of colleagues being excluded from important information was from the survey shown to be a result of language skills as opposed to cultural background. Although no specific literature dealing with cultural diversity and languages has been presented, a conclusion that may be drawn is that the organization need to work on the language dimension and strive to achieve a united language platform for all team members. This can contribute to favorable outcomes in terms of team members feeling more included by not being excluded from important communication.

Finally, looking at the cultural diversity training is also of relevance for the purpose. Although this was not directly targeted by the survey, it was found in the interviews that only the senior employee groups undergo formal trainings within diversity management. Here, the four strategies developed by Gordon are also connected to the discussion of whether diversity practices should derive from a higher level in the organization or at a work-group level. Implementing more than one, or establishing a combination of the four strategies, could both help the organization reach cultural diversity awareness at a higher organizational as well as on a work group and individual level (Gordon, 1995).

7. Discussion

In the following chapter, the reliability and generalizability of the study is discussed. Following, the research contribution, implications for the future and future research suggestions will be discussed. Finally, a section discussing the limitations is presented.

7.1 Reliability and Generalizability

The generalizability of using a case study method can be discussed. The study has been conducted based on a survey of 210 respondents as well as 8 interviews in one single company, which obstructs the generalizability to other employees within the company as well as other organizations.

A potential source of error is the uncertainty of the interviewee's responses and opinions mirroring the actual situation. Interview as a method has for instance been questioned in studies dealing with leadership (Alvesson, 2010). Here, it is discussed whether the leadership practices presented by the interviewees are the actual ones or the desired leadership practices. In the study, the focus of the senior interviewees has been within diversity management leadership practices and the interviewee's responses may have been influenced by the notion of cultural diversity and its perceived general relevance and importance in organizations. This might also have influenced the junior employee responses.

Another source of error that is important to acknowledge is that the author possesses limited degree of knowledge and experience of the field and interview-based research methods, something that is considered essential for skilled interviewers (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). If the study was conducted by researchers having more experience and deeper knowledge of cultural diversity management as well as the consulting industry, an improved collection of data may have been gathered by targeted questions.

Furthermore, discussing the reliability and applicability to cultural diversity management of the results from the survey is also relevant. Certain questions, such as the questions asked under the category Sense of Belonging may not be directly connected to cultural diversity. For instance, an employee marking a high score on the Q1 – *I feel a part of the company community* may simply be involved in non-work related activities within the company resulting in a higher sense of affiliation and belonging. Albeit positive, this is not necessarily strictly related to cultural diversity management within the firm.

As previously mentioned in the analysis, it is again worth acknowledging that the differences in averages in the survey questions may be a result from seniors having been present at the company for a longer time. This is especially manifested in questions targeting previous experiences. Additionally, it is also worth considering the fact that different types of leadership highly depend on personal characteristics. This was also mentioned in the interviews, where junior employees held that differences in leadership depends on who the manager is.

Finally, it is important to also acknowledge that the survey was conducted in 2014, which could have affected the reliability of the study as the diversity management practices may have changed over the past year. This dimension is only applicable to the quantitative data as the interviews were held in April and May 2015. Not disclosing the company name or interviewees is seen to increase credibility as the statements and opinions remain anonymous.

7.2 Research Contribution

Although the area of cultural diversity management can be considered somewhat unexplored, there are several studies touching upon cultural diversity management practices, inclusion and leadership. These three areas of research have also been combined in studies examining leadership for inclusion and diversity in organizations and so forth. The perspective of senior and junior employees in cultural diversity management provides a more comprehensive and pragmatic description of cultural diversity management practices in an organization.

7.3 Practical Implications

The practical implications for the study are positive, as it hopefully has contributed with valuable insights and a better understanding for how cultural diversity management practices is perceived by the workforce. The study presents conclusions based on the research conducted, which can be helpful for organizations when planning and reviewing their cultural diversity management activates. These recommendations are supported by the data provided in this thesis and previous research.

Furthermore, the study provides specific recommendations to the company studied based on their employee perceptions.

7.4 Future research suggestions

As only one firm has been studied in this thesis there are opportunities to make similar studies not only in other consulting firms, but also in large organizations in other industries that have diverse workforces. Comparisons between employee perceptions of cultural diversity management between different organizations and identifying similarities and dissimilarities may also strengthen the results presented in this study and possibly provide bases for generalizability to other organizations in the industry.

Yet another elaboration of the study could have been to include dimensions of work group effectiveness and performance based on cultural diversity management leadership, which was not feasible due to the time limitations and range of the study. Research questions that would be of interest to further examine within this area include; How can leaders in culturally heterogeneous work groups increase and measure effectiveness through cultural diversity management practices?; What are the effects of cultural diversity management practices on work group performance?; How can an organization improve leadership to create inclusive work group environments in culturally heterogeneous teams? The last research question can be considered of great interest based on the conclusions drawn in this thesis.

8. References

8.1 Primary Sources

In-depth interviews at the company with 4 junior level employees and 4 senior level employees

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9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – Survey Questions

Sense of Belonging
<i>Q1 I feel a part of the Company community</i>
<i>Q2 I feel like I am a valued member of the Company</i>
Ability to leverage everybody’s cultural diversity
<i>Q3 I sense that the Company is a multi-cultural workplace</i>
<i>Q4 I sense that the Company capitalizes well on the cultural skills and experiences that I have</i>
<i>Q5 I sense that the Company leverages employees cultural diversity</i>
<i>Q6 I sense that the Company could better leverage employees with different cultural background</i>
Career development
<i>Q7 I sense that foreign background plays a positive role in scheduling and promotion decisions</i>
<i>Q8 I sense that colleague(s) with foreign background have an equal opportunity of assignment to key project or internal roles as those with Swedish backgrounds</i>
<i>Q9 I sense that speaking Swedish is mandatory for a successful career with the Company</i>
Experienced or observed act of cultural diversity
<i>Q10 I have experienced or observed discrimination at the Company based on someone’s cultural background</i>
<i>Q11 I have witnessed colleague(s) being excluded from important communication due to cultural background</i>
<i>Q12 I have witnessed colleague(s) being excluded from important communication due to language skills</i>

9.2 Appendix 2 – Junior Employee Interview Guide

General information

- Job title
- How long have you worked at the company?
- Why did you choose to begin working at the company?

Organizational Culture – the company and cultural diversity

- How does the company work with diversity/cultural diversity?
- What diversity practices exist at the company?

Mind-sets about diversity and inclusion

- Do you see diverse work groups as a problem or an opportunity? Why? Why not? Motivate.

Previous Experiences

- What are your own personal experiences when it comes to diversity management? Have you worked in culturally heterogeneous groups?
- Can you think of a project or situation where you worked in a culturally heterogeneous group?
- What situation was it?
- What work group environment was there? How was this communicated?
- Have you experienced any communication barriers when working in a culturally heterogeneous workgroup? How did you/your manager deal with these?
- Were you in the majority or minority of the workgroup?
- How were cultural differences (language, culture, religion etc.) manifested in this situation?
- Was everyone equally involved? Did everyone feel included? Did you feel included?
- What did your leader do to make everyone feel included?
- What did/did not group members do to include everyone?
- Which were the benefits/disadvantages when working in this situation?
- What did you appreciate/what could have been done better?
- Has leadership been different when you have been in a culturally heterogeneous work group as opposed to homogeneous groups? In what way?

Training

- What is your view on the diversity management training at company?
- Have you undergone training within diversity management? When/how often?
- What have you learnt?

9.3 Appendix 3 – Senior Employee Interview Guide

General information

- Job title
- How long have you worked at the company?
- Why did you choose the company/why have you stayed at the company?

Organizational Culture – the company and cultural diversity

- How does the company work with diversity/cultural diversity?
- What diversity practices exist at the company?

Mind-sets about diversity and inclusion

- Do you see culturally diverse work groups as a problem or an opportunity? Why? Why not? Motivate.

Previous Experiences/Communication

- What are your own personal experiences when it comes to diversity management? Have you managed culturally heterogeneous work groups?
- As a leader of a heterogeneous workgroup, what work group environment do you strive to reach? How do you communicate this?
- When working with a heterogeneous workgroup, have you seen communication barriers? How did you deal with these?
- Do you manage team members differently when it is a culturally heterogeneous work group, as opposed a culturally homogeneous work group? In what way?
- How do you transmit what you have learnt of diversity management as a leader to your colleagues, both colleagues in junior and senior positions?
- Can you tell me about a situation, process and outcome when you have been in a situation where diversity management practices were essential? How did you manage this particular situation?
- What were the differences in the heterogeneous group? (ex language, culture, religion etc.)
- What would you say were the key dimensions to address and tackle the differences within the group?
- What did you do to make everyone feel included?
- Can you see a difference between heterogeneous workgroups with juniors vs. seniors when it comes to cultural diversity? What are these differences?

Training

- What is your view on the diversity management training at the company?
- Have you undergone training within diversity management? When/how often?
- What have you learnt?
- Have juniors you have worked with undergone this training?
- If you feel that you need assistance when managing a diverse workgroup, is there anyone (such as seniors, colleagues, management) or anything (such as resource library) you can turn to? Is this something you discuss with colleagues?