OPEN UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS
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FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

«MASTER IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION »

MASTER THESIS

Diversity in the workplace

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MAY 2019

Open University of Cyprus

Faculty of Economics and Management

Graduate Program

<<Business Administration (MBA)>>

Master Thesis

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This master thesis is submitted for the partial fulfillment of the Master's Degree
<<Business Administration>>
Faculty of Economics and Management
Open University of Cyprus.

May 2019

Περίληψη

Στις μέρες μας η παγκοσμιοποίηση άλλαξε όχι μόνο τα σύνορα των χωρών δημιουργώντας ευκολότερο πέρασμα στο εργατικό μεταναστευτικό κίνημα, αλλά επίσης άλλαξε και τον τρόπο που δουλεύουν οι επιχειρήσεις, οι οποίες τώρα πρέπει να βρουν κατάλληλους μηχανισμούς ώστε να αντιμετωπίσουν άτομα από διαφορετικούς πολιτισμούς.

Η ποικιλομορφία θεωρείται ένας από τους πιο σημαντικούς οργανωτικούς παράγοντες για έναν οργανισμό που είτε έχει σαν στόχο την ικανοποίηση των εργαζομένων του, είτε την εξαιρετική εξυπηρέτηση των πελατών του ή ακόμα και την διατήρηση του ανταγωνιστικού του πλεονεκτήματος. Ωστόσο η αύξηση της ποικιλομορφίας μέσα σε ένα οργανισμό είναι επωφελής μόνο όταν διοικείται αποτελεσματικά.

Σκοπός αυτής της διατριβής είναι η διερεύνηση της επίδρασης της ποικιλομορφίας στον χώρο εργασίας σε σχέση με την απόδοση των εργαζομένων σε ένα οργανισμό, με αντικείμενα μελέτης δύο μεσαίου μεγέθους οργανισμούς στην Κύπρο. Η διατριβή αυτή εξετάζει επίσης, μεταξύ άλλων, παράγοντες οι οποίοι είναι καθοριστικοί για την ποικιλομορφία του εργατικού δυναμικού σε επίπεδο φύλου, ηλικίας, εθνικότητας και μορφωτικού επιπέδου των εργαζομένων.

Η διαδικασία που ακολουθήθηκε στην εκπόνηση αυτής της διατριβής περιλαμβάνει συνδυασμό έρευνας με πρωτογενής και δευτερογενής πηγές πληροφοριών. Όσον αφορά την πρωτογενή πηγή πληροφοριών λήφθηκαν υπόψιν δύο μορφές έρευνας, μία προσωπική συνέντευξη με τους διευθύνοντες συμβούλους των δύο οργανισμών και ένα ερωτηματολόγιο το οποίο απαντήθηκε από τους υπαλλήλους των δύο οργανισμών. Η δευτερογενής πηγή πληροφοριών περιλαμβάνει υλικό που συλλέχθηκε από την διαδικτυακή βιβλιοθήκη του Ανοικτού Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου, την ανοικτή βάση δεδομένων Αθηνών, τις πληροφορίες που δόθηκαν σε εμένα από τους δύο οργανισμούς και το διαδίκτυο γενικότερα σχετικά με την ποικιλομορφία στον χώρο εργασίας.

Κλείνοντας, στα συμπεράσματα επισημάνθηκαν τα αποτελέσματα της διατριβής σύμφωνα με τα οποία τόσο οι διευθύνοντες σύμβουλοι όσο και οι εργαζόμενοι των δύο οργανισμών εντοπίζουν την ύπαρξη ποικιλομορφίας αλλά συμφωνούν ότι δεν υπάρχουν επίσημες διαδικασίες για τη διαχείρισή της.

Summary

Nowadays globalization has changed not only the countries' borders creating a less difficult labor movement, but also has changed the organizations that now need to deal with individuals from different cultures and backgrounds.

Diversity is recognized as an important organizational resource in regards to whether the goal is to be an employer of choice, to provide excellent customer service, or to maintain a competitive edge. However the tendency to increase diversity within an organization is beneficial only when it is managed effectively.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the effect of diversity in the workplace towards employee performance in an organization, focusing on two medium sized organizations in Cyprus. This thesis also investigates the workforce diversity which includes the gender, age, ethnic and education background of the employees which are the most critical variables among all the others.

The process for this thesis involves a combination of research focused on primary and secondary source of information. Concerning the primary source there are two forms of research, a face to face interview with the Chief Executive Managers of the two companies and a questionnaire answered from the employees of the two companies. The secondary source of information is gathered from the Open University of Cyprus online library, the open Athens Database, the information given to me by the two organizations and the Internet regarding workplace diversity in general.

Finally in the conclusions, the findings of the thesis were indicated, which states that both managers and employees identify the existence of diversity but also the lack of formal procedures for its management.

Acknowledgments

I would like to warmly thank all my professors of Open University of Cyprus in this MBA course and especially my supervisor, Alexia Panayiotou for her valuable help during the whole process of the thesis writing.

I would also like to express my love and gratitude to my family and especially to my mother Constantia and to my husband Andreas, for their overall contribution and support.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the study of Diversity at a workplace. The chapter will begin by presenting the background, and move on to the problem formulation, the purpose of the study, the research methodology and the limitations that occurred.

1.1 Background

In the last few decades the world has seen many significant changes that have had an effect on the workforce. The world is changing in the same way people also change. Nowadays individuals do not look, think or act like in past years. Values, experiences and needs also changed. Even cultures are not static, but still have a strong influence on how a person communicates, reacts on the problem, searches solutions and resolves conflicts.

Diversity can generally be defined as recognizing, understanding and accepting individual differences between race, gender, age, class, ethnicity, physical ability, race and much more. In general diversity can be classified into two dimensions. The primary dimensions such as age, gender, sexual orientation and so on, and the secondary dimensions such as religion, education, geographical location, income etc.

The changes that take place in our world in our days indicate that diversity within the workforce can be a really important and quite a positive aspect considering the prospects an organization etc. (Gomez - Mejia, Balkin, Cardy, 2007).Other

researches indicate that diversity can have negative impact in the organizations if not handled properly. Thus someone could say that diversity can be a problem to an organization but it could also be a solution, depending on the way it may be used. This is the reason why it became interesting to study about diversity in the workplace as I have noticed the growth of diversity over the years. Also diversity has become a significant part for the management in the recent years which becomes another interesting factor to see how diversity in Cyprus is being managed. In addition, due to differences increasing in the population, diversity is expected to become even more significant in the future.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Globalization in recent time has triggered more interaction amongst people from different cultures and backgrounds than before. The changes that take place in our world nowadays indicate that diversity within the workforce can be a really important and quite positive aspect considering the prospects of a company or an organization (Gomez - Mejia, Balkin, Cardy, 2007).

This has been said, I have discovered through research that scholars in the management field as well as organizations, have increasingly developed interest, in the topic of cultural diversity in a work environment and thus countless studies have been conducted on work place diversity.

This occurrence can be partially explained from the fact that businesses in our days tend to be more global, through the way global economy has started being developed since many decades now. Companies try to gain a greater share of the markets and it is characteristic that organizations in countries like the USA, have understood that in order to remain competitive they have to accept the aspect of diversity within their workforce (Sohail et al. 2011).

The diversity of workforce can be considered more evident in societies like the American one, thus this thesis aims to show if there is any significant factors of Diversity at workplace in Cyprus and how diversity management contributed in the success of the corporate culture of Cyprus.

1.3 Purpose and Question of the Thesis

The purpose behind this thesis is to examine the different ways of dealing with work place diversity as well as to provide management with the necessary guidelines for effective diversity management in small to medium size organizations in Cyprus in order to show managers how to build effective workplace diversity by applying different diversity management tools. The main research question here is the following: “Has workplace diversity contributed to organizational success"?

1.4 Description of Material and Sources

It is necessary to state that this research work is based on the facts and information extracted from relevant academic books, proven online sources and feedbacks from interviews conducted on organizations. However Cyprus is a small country with very special and particular culture and thus broad spectrum tools in Diversity management might not be applicable at the fullest.

The current thesis examines of diversity in the workplace. The first chapter introduces the reader to the workforce diversity and explains the purpose, the sources used and the limitations of this thesis. In the second chapter more specifically, there is an overall analysis on the aspect of diversity and continues by analyzing on the concepts in diversity management as well as the role of mentors in this process and good mentoring. Furthermore the second chapter analyses the required tools with can be useful and important when talking about managing a diverse workforce where on the other hand and examines the reason for diversity management in organizations. The third part of the thesis is an empirical research that describes workplace diversity of two different organizations. The fourth and last part includes the final conclusions and the recommendations that have been made.

The information and facts were carefully evaluated and critically screened to provide the needed data for the research as well as to enhance the flow of relevant and reliable information. Interview questions can be found as an appendix at the

end of the thesis work. The later part of the thesis points out the finding and critiques of the research.

1.5 Research Methodology

The process for this thesis involves a combination of research, synthesis and analysis. The research work will be focused on primary and secondary source of information. Regarding the primary source there will be two forms of research. First, a face to face interview will be conducted with the Chief Executive Managers of the two companies with the relevant interview questions regarding their experience and view on working with a multi-cultural workforce. In addition to that, a questionnaire will be handed to the employees of the two companies asking them to answer on how they perceive Diversity in their workplace. The secondary source of information will be gathered from the open university of Cyprus library online, open Athens Database, the information given to me by the two organizations and the Internet regarding workplace diversity in general.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

There are numbers of limitation that are identified during the progress of completing the research for this thesis.

Firstly, a major problem that can almost never be eliminated during the process of generating information is respondents‟ bias. This is the case where respondents may not willing to participate in the survey because answering the questionnaires will be time consuming and does not bring any benefits to them. Therefore, the unresponsive and inactive behavior of the respondents may affect them to provide inaccurate answer in a questionnaire. This consequence has limited this research from obtaining the reliable information related to the thesis.

Also, language barrier is another limitation of the research, where respondents may not understand the questionnaire fully and properly. As the respondents are diversified in the organization might have problems understanding the questions constructed only in the English language, thus respondents may interpret the questions wrongly and provide inaccurate answer in the questionnaire. Therefore,

the lack of control in questionnaire settings will lead to misunderstanding questions, missing data, and unstructured responses which cause inaccurate result in research study.

Lastly not all the employees were been interviewed. Due to this fact the author will get limited information and individual perceptions of the focus group of the research, since only a few thoughts will be analyzed.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter aims to introduce the reader to the theoretical background of this thesis and help him understand the concept of diversity in the workplace, the different aspects, the benefits and challenges, and further to connect the gap of the reader between diversity in the workplace to diversity management.

2.1 Diversity in the Workplace

Diversity if handled properly has the real potential to be highly important for the competitiveness of organizations. For instance Pelled, Eisenhardt and Xin (1999) have noted that through the knowledge based view and the decision - making perspectives, diversity could have an important share on the development and promotions of creativity, while it could also improve the effectiveness of decision - making and hence to lead to superior performance (Richard, Murthi & Ismail, 2007: 1214).

Furthermore, this also means that some other important factors for organizations are that through diversity on the workplace, they have the ability for more sustainability and also better productivity (Barta, Kleiner and Neumann, 2012). Barta, Kleiner and Neumann also report through their findings that there is a direct correlation between high productivity and diversity in the workforce. This is due to the fact, that through diversity different people with different capabilities have the chance to cooperate. The process of combining all those different capabilities may lead to even better results within an organization.

There is a series of different terms and meanings considering diversity. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, diversity can be defined as the fact of many different things or people being included into something (Cambridge Dictionary, 2012). It has to do with a different range of things and persons in many aspects of culture and everyday life.

2.1.1 A general Analysis on the Aspect of Diversity

Diversity can be seen everywhere. For instance it is obvious in nature and in human societies. In nature it has to do with a plethora of ecosystems across the globe. It is characteristic that ecosystems across the planet are composed through a variety of abiotic and biotic components that interrelate between each other in certain ways (Pildwirny, 2006). The structure and composition is different in various parts of the earth and at the same time it can be determined by various factors (like climate, or human interference). Variations of these factors may also initiate dynamic modifications to the planet's ecosystems. Some of the more important factors can be the light of sun, the moon, the soil, the atmosphere, water and of course the variety of living organisms.

Actually ecosystems in nature can be considered to be like a company and a business. This is due to the fact that the central concept is that living organisms (like people in a society or an organization) interact to each other. It is evident that within an ecosystem, all living beings, as well as nonliving being (for instance soil, water) are dependent one to the other. The dependence is easily evident through the food chain and also through the exchange of matter or energy (Pildwirny, 2006).

On the other hand, diversity is something evident also within human societies. First of all humans themselves are all different one to another. Differences may have to do with race, age, attitudes, educational and religion background, and with the way of thinking. Differences are clearly seen even between people of the same sex, or people of the same race. For instance two people of the same race may have different face characteristics, or differences in various parts of the bodies. At the same time people may have differences on the way they think. This could be a due to cultural factors. For instance someone who has been brought up into an

atheistic family background may have total different views compared to a person who has been brought up into a deeply religious environment. Generally, diversity within the various social structures has to do with the prevailing ideas and views about the role of people in the world, or they may related to religions, philosophy, and certain economic and social or political factors. For instance, certain ideas about different races may promote or not promote racial diversity also in the workplace and on the other hand, different ideas about economic systems may also be crucial factors about the promotion of diversity of the work force. Usually also, all this has to do also with cultural diversity which is being noted at the next level.

2.1.2 Cultural Diversity

Our reference to cultural diversity at this point can be considered to be important for our references and analysis about diversity in the workplace, since this is also an important factor that could affect the latter decisively.

Since the dawn of the existence of humans on earth and the beginning of history many different societies evolved across the world. Various societies across the planet developed different systems considering their religious views, the way they are being dressed, their diet, their social structure, their political philosophy, their economical systems etc. Some of the more obvious differences which can be traced between people of different cultures, have to do with language, dressing and also the systems of their moral beliefs.

Cultural diversity nowadays seems to be more important. This is due to the fact that in modern societies technological advances in fields like communications and transportation bring different cultures closer. Geographical boundaries tend to be more transcended and this also has to do with the process of the surfacing of a more global economy, especially during the 21st century. Also another great factor here, is that of the new mass media. Through the latter the mass media industry (movies for instance) has affected many societies across the world which for centuries had their own unique cultures. This means that there seems a kind of a more visible pressure on the individuality of each culture.

Another important factor also is that of immigration across the world. Since the beginning of human history the process of immigrations of groups of different people from one place to another always existed. Nevertheless, in our days the process, due to communications and especially transportations has become more noticeable and tense, as it is something being developed at a more frequent pace. Countries like the USA or Western Europe have faced since a long time cultural diversity on their own societies. For instance the immigrant and refugee crisis which Europe faced during the last 10 to 15 years, because of the wars in Asia (war in Afghanistan and the Civil War in Syria), has played a significant role on the creation of a new reality considering cultural diversity, especially in societies which in the past had been cultural homogenous. Greece (as well as Cyprus) can be considered such an example (Papadopoulou, 2007: 167-184).

Cultural diversity can be considered an important factor affecting diversity in the workplace. This effect, for example may be related to the way people in a society are being brought up through the local educational system. The main characteristics of an educational system may affect the way by which persons in the future will react under certain circumstances in their work environment. For example, as it is noted at a paper title "Academic Freedom in People's Republic of China and America", in the great Asiatic country students since their early years, follow strict rules during the educational process and at many times they are not allowed to express freely their personal opinions. On the contrary, at Western Europe students have the ability to debate various topics freely. Discussion and dialogue is a main element, while teachers are considered to be equal to students. As the authors of this paper claim, we cannot say which system is better, but what matters, is that when a student travels abroad for studies, he/she may bring with him /her the best elements of the native culture and combine with elements and features of the culture he she will meet there. This is an important aspect for Company Managers to consider, in order to help their employees to develop themselves by the best way, in order to succeed later their career (Fengling et al. 1991: 29-33).

Especially in places like that of the workplace, cultural diversity seems to be both a great chance as well as an important challenge. Financial globalization especially

during the last decades had played a major role in companies extending their activities across the national borders of the countries where they come from. Companies are increasingly offering products and services to customers from various cultural backgrounds. They also hire employees who may come from different and various cultures and from totally different societies. For instance, especially during the last 5 years, due the Greek economic crisis, there has been an influx of Greek immigrants to countries like Cyprus. Such employees many times actually can provide valuable insights about the needs of customers who come from the same or similar backgrounds.

Cultural diversity is difficult to be exactly quantified. Nevertheless, a good indication about is measurement the number of different spoken languages in a country, the educational level of the country, the income difference between employees and the age employment rate of the Country.

Having stated the above it is important to mention that age is often overlooked when considering workplace diversity although it can be a point of major divergence in experience and knowledge. Many countries of Europe are currently experiencing great demographic changes within their workforce due to the recent economic crisis. As a result there is a growing number of older employees and quite a low number of young workers with potential. On the other hand some employees are now choosing to work in their late sixties and seventies which means there are currently four generations working together. As a result age diversity could cause conflicts in the workplace because of the different work related values between generations.

2.2 Effective Mentoring Program

The effects of cultural diversity in the workplace have been studied since a long time ago. A very interesting aspect at this point has to do with the effects of cultural diversity on organizational behavior. These effects in fact have been multi - variant and seem to depend on how different groups are combined in the workplace.

This is why cultural mentoring plays a very important role in managing a diverse workforce. It introduces employees from different cultural background into the new activities or environment they have found themselves in. Mentors could come in so many ways, such as an individual person, a group of people or an association, in order to join the working environment where different culture and believes meet. One could say that becoming an effective cultural mentor doesn't have to continually rely on any conception of elegance. It is how the workers experience the mentoring relationship that determines its success.

Most organizations believe in the effectiveness of workplace diversity as it brings the interaction between different people with different ideas and also enables a successful achievement at the workplace. Despite this view, some organizations disagree to this motive based on the disadvantages that comes with workplace diversity. They believe that it causes destruction and lack of concentration as well as low performance in the workplace due to discrimination, preferential treatment and as a result, reduces performance. It is fitting to state that the workplace diversity have the ability to improve workforce in a company but comes with its disadvantages as well. Some researches state that workplace diversity has greatly encouraged employees to share their carious ideas, as well as enabling companies to earn higher returns. Nevertheless the question that has remained unanswered is the implications on employees, especially foreign ones. However, it can also be argued that the sources found during the research makes it more compelling to believe that workplace diversity is an effective way of increasing productivity in a company.

As mentioned before, the role of mentors in a diverse workplace can be quite important. Employers routinely use a series of policies through which it is evident that they try to promote diversity in the workplace. Apart from all the above which has been mentioned and which has to do with age, gender, race or nationality, diversity in the workplace may also be manifested through the use of creativity and different individual opinions by each person respectively. This element too can be considered to be quite important and essential for an authentic workplace. The achievement of the presence of something like this, can be achieved through the right mentoring.

This kind of mentoring for instance, has to do with the process of valuing the members of a team in the workplace by their skills and differences rather than through their ability to conform to their organizational standards of a company. In addition the creation of this kind of employees may lead to a more robust leadership pipeline, to better customer service as well as to increased employee engagement. The right mentoring may contribute to the attracting of the best talents in a workplace. It is not a coincidence that the best mentoring programs actually seek to diversify the workplace in an organization through the following:

- Helping employees improve upon skills they have already shown an aptitude for
- Matching employees with mentors who can help them learn in a style that is best suited for their needs
- Spreading knowledge throughout the organization so that more employees learn a wider array of skills

Mentoring in the workplace involves a relationship between a less experienced individual and a more experienced person, where the purpose has to do with the personal and career development of the protégé (Kramer, 1985). The mentor may be a peer at work, a supervisor, or generally someone else within an organization. It may also be someone who doesn't work in the same organization but who at the same moment can be a specialized business mentor, who is hired from various companies in order to organize relative seminars. Through the latter, one important aspect which may be promoted many times, is the importance of diversification in the workplace, as a factor of success and progress for the company as well as for the employees of that company. This kind of mentoring that may be given in such a case, can be, for instance, the support and the showing of the significance of the personal traits which an employee may have (traits that can be associated for example with race, gender, sexual orientation, age, cultural beliefs etc) and they employee may use them properly in order to achieve both his / her personal development in the workplace and the best cooperation within a team in this workplace. In such a way also, a protégé employee may also learn how to navigate within an organization properly (Allen & Eby, 2011, p. 17).

The whole process of mentoring in this case can be associated to actions, like coaching, sponsorship, exposure and visibility. One important factor here also is that of the psychological support. Through the latter, a mentor may help an employee understand that his or her personal traits actually can be a tool of strength, both fort them and for the company. In other words, mentoring in this case, is a way of boosting the morale and the self - identity of someone. In this case the protégé employee can be more competitive and at the same time all this may occur through the provision of confirmation and acceptance, role modeling, friendship and counseling (Noe, 1988).

Mentoring which has to do with diversity in the workplace is usually described as a critical career experience which may have lasting effects on the career of an employee in the future (Noe, Greenberger & Wang, 2002). The outcomes of mentoring for the employees in an organization, may include both objective (like for instance, compensation or promotion on the other hand) as well as subjective factors for a career success (like the personal satisfaction which someone may have through their work, or on the other hand, his or her commitment to the course of the organization of which they are a member).

Of course on the other hand all this doesn't mean that there cannot be also some problems considering the process of mentoring. Such problems may be affiliated, for example, with the incompetency of some mentors and the errors which they can make sometimes, while trying to promote the significance of the diversity of the workforce in a workplace. Problems may also occur in the case the employers and the supervisors of a company, organization, generally in a workplace, cannot understand both the role and the significance of diversity in the workplace as well as the help which mentors may offer to employees and to organizations as an overall, through the promotion of diversity. Another problem can be associated to the tendency of many employees to understand the significance of diversity in the workplace, and also how important it may be to cooperate with people who maybe are different from them in many aspects (Eby, Butts, Lockwood and Simon, 2004).

It is characteristic that many mentoring relationships in the workplace may develop at once showing the importance of mentoring in the workplace (especially

for the promotion of factors like diversity). This development of mentoring relationships usually are based on mutual attraction and interpersonal comfort (Allen & Eby, 2011, p. 17). However it is characteristic that many organizations may also promote formal mentoring programs, using specialists on this field. This is a tool by which they try to capitalize on the positive elements and results of mentoring. In such programs the employees are marched with mentors by a third party. These formal programs may have various goals. One of them, for instance, can be the development of the personal talents which a person may have, and which at the same time, are an indication of his personal diversity. Here also diversity enhancement may also be an important factor through such programs (Eddy et al., 2001).

On the other hand formal mentoring programs tend to have specific goals which are set according to contracts and pre - arranged deals with the organizations. In this case also, it is pre- arranged how often mentors and employees may meet each other. In other words, the time programs in this case, are usually tightly fixed. Nevertheless, one problem through this process, can be that the relation of a mentor with someone working in an organization cannot be always so direct. It is evident that a real relationship between mentors and protégés can evolve through a kind of cooperation where it is not always necessary to follow specific rules. This is because in the process, both a mentor may understand that the needs of the employees in an organization may change, or that there can be a new situation, a new problem etc. in a workplace, which also means new approaches and being flexible. Under such conditions someone may understand that formal mentoring in fact is probably less effective than informal mentoring, since there are no spontaneously - developed mentoring relationships (Ragins and Cotton, 1999).

Apart from all the above it may also be mentioned that mentoring in an organization can be a tool by which talented and experienced employees can be paired with less experienced employees in such a way, by which they first can guide the second. Ideally in the process, the employee who is being mentored can gain more information, knowledge and also have a better knowledge of the organization. The mentor in turn can gain a new perspective and learns about an area of the organization which was unknown to him previously. It can be said at

this point that the true benefit and impact of mentoring in a diverse workplace, is often seen not in achieving goals and objectives but in the personal exchange between the mentor and the people who are being mentored. Through the real and personal relationships which are as important as it has been implied above, there is also a real opportunity for behavioral changes both at employees and mentors, while this means also long term success for a company.

The good mentor in fact can focus on the total development of a protégé employee in a company. Mentoring doesn't have to do only with guidance for teaching specific skills which in the process can be useful for the career development of the employee and the future of the organization, but it is also associated to sharing resources and network contacts as well as even challenging a series of ideas which the employees or even their supervisors may think that they are something like unbreakable rules. The role of the mentor in this case has to do also with the creation of an environment where the employee may feel safe, which is also an important presupposition for a successful mentoring and teaching program (Milgrom and Shannon, 1994: 157-180).

It has to be mentioned at this point, that type - based mentoring is consistent with evidence from a variety of sources. Psychologists and sociologists have documented that mentoring relationships within organizations are more likely to form between members of the same group (Athey, Avery & Zemsky, and 2000: 766). Herminia Ibara (1992) demonstrates that the structure of social networks depends many times on factors, like gender or race. More generally, communication and thus mentoring, may be more natural and more effective when people have the tendency to share common beliefs, ideas and feelings, or have common traits and features, like culture and language.

2.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Managing Diversity in the Workplace

As stated above there may be advantages but also disadvantages that come with managing a diverse workforce, of which management must be aware of to guide employees in the decision making processes in the organization.

2.3.1 Advantages

Perhaps the most important advantage of investing in managing diversity is the Increasing productivity at the workplace. Due to the fact that every organization has its own unique company structure, different strategies may be used to challenge or address the company in order to increase productivity. One of those strategies involves adopting workplace diversity and managing it effectively. When management takes the welfare of its employees at heart that means offering them proper compensation, health care and employee appraisal. In this way it enables employees to feel they belong to the organization irrespective of their cultural background and as a result they remain loyal and hardworking which, helps to increase the company's productivity and profit.

Effective diversity management also encourages employees to exchange their ideas and improve their team work. In recent times teamwork is increasingly advocated by organizations in order to get better outcomes on tasks and also for the delivery of goods and services. A single person taking on multiple tasks cannot perform at the same pace as a team could, therefore each team member brings to the table different ideas and offers a unique perspective during problem solving to effectively arrive at the best solution at the shortest possible time.

In addition to the above diversity at the workplace creates an opportunity for employee's personal growth. When workers are being exposed to new cultures, ideas and perspectives, it can help each person to intellectually reach out and have a clearer insight of their place in the global environment. The more time spent with culturally diverse co-workers can slowly break down the subconscious barriers of

ethnocentrism and thereby encouraging workers to be more experienced members of the society.

Another very important aspect on this topic is that workplace diversity can immensely strengthen a company's relationship with some specific group of customers by making communication more effective. Customer service department is one of the areas where effective communication is crucial. A customer service personnel or representatives can be paired up with customers from their specific area or location, making the customer feel at home with the representative and hence with the company.

Furthermore employee and their co-workers that come from a diverse background bring to the table some amount of unique perceptions and experience during teamwork or group tasks. Merge the diverse skills and knowledge of culturally distinct employees together can immensely benefit the company by strengthening the responsiveness and productivity of the team in order to adapt to the changing conditions.

2.3.2 Disadvantages

The disadvantages and challenges that may arise due to the existence of diversity in a workplace, either this diversity has to do different culture, language or with gender, age, social status, personal beliefs etc., have to do also with the very lack of knowledge of what diversity is (both the cultural one as well as the general notion of it between human beings) (Ongori & Agolla, 2007). It is true that in many cases, when there are people of different cultures gathered in a workplace, there can be difficulties on finding a common ground and to achieve agreements. In addition, other studies mention that when individuals with different mind-sets, perceptions, ways of thinking, lead themselves to clash with each other, then this is evident that can be quite damaging for the interpersonal relations within a company. This thing on the other hand, surely can be damaging for the organizations' positive results and productivity in the future. According also to previous researches, a diverse environment, especially when it comes to race and culture, may lead to several issues, like communication breakdown for example as well as low cohesion (De Netto et al. 2014).

There can be in some employees and individuals sometimes the tendency that they can be threatened by other people who are at the same workplace and who come from a different cultural background. As it has been mentioned above, the main cause and factor for such a feeling of being threatened has to do with the lack of knowledge about diversity and its main notion. As a result from this feeling clashes based on culture and ethnocentrism can be quite often, while such a situation at the same moment surely can undermine the team work between members of a company (Ongori & Agolla, 2007).

Having said that, organizations and managers often take refuge to high cost solutions in order to deal with Diversity Management. Especially when an organization strives to effectively manage the diverse workforce and undergoes a mandatory diversity training during which supervisors, employees, and managers receive lessons on the best way to interact with employees and clients. In recent times, there are lots of Diversity management program available where companies could choose from, taking into account the size of the company and its employees but some training programs require a high participation cost.

On the other hand workplace diversity can negatively impact communication in the company and it can place an obstacle in the way of effective communication, which can cause a decrease in productivity and dampen the cohesiveness among workers. Even though spending time with employees by getting to know them helps communication barriers, during a long-term, co-workers orientation periods and an individual´s first impressions can be difficult to control when culture clash.

Although the premise of workplace diversity is mutual respect, making way to accommodate each diverse worker´s request can be burdensome of employers and organizations, which makes it difficult to manage diversity. Some employee work constraints such as race, religion, country of origin and gender can sometimes be overwhelming if the diversity in the organization tends to be so much to the extent that the company has to employ a fulltime staff to keep track of accommodating the employee's needs. For instance, some Muslim employees may decide not to work on Fridays, as it is a special day for prayers and in such

instances employers has to make provision for someone to take their shift when the need arises.

Conclusively it has to be stated that every diverse culture has its own strengths and weaknesses, therefore in addition to their individuality, every diverse employee possesses a unique strengths and weaknesses that is derived from their culture. When each employees´ unique trait is managed properly and effectively in the organization, it can leverage the strengths and complement its weaknesses to highly impact the workforce.

2.4 Required Tools for Managing a Diverse Workplace

Generally, diversity perceptions call for an understanding that men, women and minorities generally have different experiences in organization and often they are unable to see or to understand the experiences of others (Soni, 2000, Fine et al. 199). Perceptions and attitudes towards ethnic or social minorities or towards women for instance, differ in organizational settings (Miller, 2014). For those populations it is characteristic that there still can be a situation where they continue to encounter "glass ceiling" that keeps them from reaching the upper levels of employment (Morrison and von Glinow, 1990). This means that subsequently the opportunities for advancement at the various levels of the hierarchy in their workplace are inferior and not too many.

At the same time, it is surely important to note here, that according to what has been said above, and there are many challenges in the effort to manage a diverse work population in the workplace, hence managing diversity is more than acknowledging the differences in people who comprise the workforce of an organization. This effort has also to do with recognizing the value of differences and also by trying to fight against discriminations and also promoting diversification. Other challenges here at the same time may include even legal sues and actions against an organization because of racism and discrimination (Devoe, 199). Negative attitudes and behaviors can be barriers to organizational diversity because they can harm working relationships and damage morale and work

productivity. Negative attitudes and behaviors in the workplace include prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination, which should never be used by management for hiring, retention and termination practices.

Effective managers are aware that certain skills are necessary for creating a successful diverse workforce. It is evident that managers first of all have to understand the consequences which may derive from it. On the other hand the managers have also to recognize that sometimes they too may have some prejudices and cultural biases (Koonce, 2001). Diversity doesn't have to do so much about differences between groups than about differences between individuals. Anyway each person is a different case with their own personal traits and characteristics, their own uniqueness. Apart from all this, managers have to be personally committed in changing the organization they lead, if they really wish to embrace diversity in the workplace.

Of course we have to note at this point that there is actually no single recipe for success. It all depends on the ability of the employers and the managers to understand what is best for the organization based on teamwork and the dynamics of the workplace. According to Roosevelt (2001) managing diversity is a comprehensive process for creating a work environment that includes everyone. When creating a successful diverse workforce, an effective manager should focus on personal awareness. Both the managers as well as the associates need to be aware of their personal biases. Therefore, organizations are in the need of developing, also implementing and on the other hand maintaining ongoing training, since for instance a one - day session of training will not change people's behaviors at once (Koonce 2001).

All the above also have to do with one quite important aspect: that a manager has to understand that fairness in business doesn't necessarily means equality. The latter has mostly to do actually with the equal opportunities for all people, no matter their race, their skin color, no matter if they are men or women, young or old, no matter their sexual orientation, their religion, their political beliefs, their general ideas in life etc. All this of course cannot be easy and take place at once.

The process of promoting diversity within the workplace, is something that may take some time to be achieved (Koonce, 2001).

Of course at the same time, it is very important trying to promote a safe environment where the advantages and benefits from cultural diversity can be much more evident. In such an environment it is characteristic that people from different cultural backgrounds will have the ability to meet each other, to have a free dialogue and exchange views and ideas. Each member of the organization in such a case may express their own argument freely and this variety of ideas can be a useful tool by which an organization can move more progressively in the future. This also is relevant to the idea that managers of business and organizations could implement some policies by which they could provide associate access to information and opportunities. Also associates should never be denied any necessary, critical and constructive feedback which could give more tools and means in order to become better and better in their work and duties (Flagg, 2002).

At this point some could also take under consideration the four practices for a healthier diverse workforce which been proposed by Farren and Nelson (1999). They argue that the first practice has to do with the existence of open communication channels where the employers also show that they are fully concerned about the problems, the questions and the needs of each one of their employees. This is also connected to the effort to cultivate a general way of thinking to all employees that they have to respect the other people working with them at the same place. One other practice here has to do with training the employees about other people's culture, history, and where they could also maybe teach them some basic words of the other people's language. Through this basic training a company could also educate its employees on learning to be more sensitive to other employees' feelings and against discrimination. It has to be noted at this point, that in our days around the world some multinational companies have special educational programs according to which they train their employees how to avoid cultural clashes and to accept on the other hand cultural diversity.

Another practice mentioned by Fareen and Nelson, is the providing of special mentors (the role of which has already been mentioned at the previous chapter) with the aim of decreasing the phenomena of discrimination and racism. Those mentors somehow can be something a voice for all those people in a workplace, who sometimes cannot be heard efficiently. Except all these cases, another practice has to do with making the managers in the workplace more accountable, by including for instance diverse accountability in the job descriptions to intensify their actions towards diverse workforce (Anjorin & Jansari, 2018, p. 9). It has to be mentioned at this point that on the one hand surely many top managers on many companies recognize clearly that cultural diversity in the workplace is essential in our days but on the other hand, it is also true that many times in practice many companies do not make this link of cultural diversity with performance and compensation.

It is characteristic that an organization first of all has to rethink or to remove on the other hand, any preconceived notion about previously thoughts and knowledge about diversity management. This has to do with the fact that anyway, especially in our days, there is a tendency for the evolve process at a much greater pace in fields like business and labor market, than in previous periods and decades. An important tool surely is for the companies' ad organizations trying to invest wisely and also to spend considerable amounts of money or generally various sources, in order to better equip themselves on diversity management. This will enable them to handle the issues that accompany a diverse workplace. As Greenberg (2012) quotes "a strategy must be created and implemented to create a culture of diversity that permeates each department and function of an organization".

Greenberg lists two basic recommended steps which an organization must address in order for a company to successfully manage diversity in the workplace. The one of them is the so called assessment of diversity in the workplace, while the second one has to do with the process of implementation of diversity in the workplace. Considering the first one, it is characteristic, that assessing and evaluating the diversity management process, should be a basic and integral part of the management system of an organization. This can also help the management

team of this organization to determine obstacles and challenges to diversity, which can be present in the workplace. In this case also the management team can determine which policies are needed or which ones have to be eliminated. At the same moment, through assessment of the diversity management in the workplace, the management team has the ability also to pass out flash cards to the employees to write down their most valued co-workers on a daily or week basis. The name of the one employee which is less mentioned through those cards can be a case at which the management team can focus. They may be in contact with this person in order to find out what is wrong and trying to find solutions for such a case (Greenberg, 2012).

On the other hand, in the case of the implementation of the diversity management plan, first of all it may be said that the personal commitment of executive and managerial teams is a must. This is anyway relevant to the idea, that managers and supervisors in companies, organizations etc., have to implement certain policies which promote the idea of diversity in the workplace. It is a unnecessary to note that actually the idea of diversity has to run actually all levels of an organization. By this way, diversity management can be more successful (Greenberg, 2012).

Some tools that me by used for diversity management are the following:

- organization of diversity training for employees at all levels
- allow affinity networking among employees with similar backgrounds
- Conduct learning sessions among groups, during which employees share with each other how their varying beliefs, ideas, ways of living, cultural backgrounds and traditions may shape the professional and personal lives
- Set long term goals and also develop diversity practices during recruitment, appraisal, lay- off
- Encourage employees to speak directly to their supervisors for any problem they may have, especially in the case they may face problems of discrimination from their colleagues
- Carefully analyze the diversity at each employment rank and level
- Reward the attainment and respect of other people's diversity
- Develop training for diversity leadership and

- Actively promote successful stories and cases of diversity

Generally, the key to create a successful diverse work place, exists within the organization itself. When an organization addresses the issues and problems which can be unique to their organization, diversity is sure to have a positive impact on their business. In addition, when an organization understands how important it is to invest in programs and plans that have to do with the promotion of diversity in the workplace and that diversity can have positive effects on it. Then it is almost sure that at some point in the future this organization will ripe the fruits of this investment.

2.4 The Reason for Diversity Management in Organizations

From what has already been mentioned at the above chapters of this thesis, someone can draw a picture of the reasons according to which diversity management is important in organizations. The existence of diversity in the workplace, indicates, as we already saw, that this workplace can be heterogeneous by many ways like for instance, on the matter of gender, or that of race, on the point also of culture, language, personal political or religious beliefs, customs, kinds of reaction towards a series of different situations etc. This means that people in an organization are not all one and the same but that they are distinct from one another and that they have elements and characteristics which make each one of them a totally exceptional person (Buckingham, 2012). This anyway could be considered as close to the idea that the latter has to do with a series of various differences which may influence the way by which people interact to each other. In this context it is easily visible that diversity management in the workplace is quite essential for the long term progress of an organization.

It is evident at the same time, that companies in our days have to organize better diversity management programs and action plans in order to face successfully the modern challenges in fields like those of business administration, economy, labor market etc. Apart from the new realities in business, world economy, labor market, their relation to new digital technologies etc., the role of diversity

management is also constituent to the new realities and tendencies that became more and more evident during the 20th century especially after the WWII and which in our days, at the beginning of the 21st century, seem to be a standard element of the rules of political conformity. Such ideas, for example, are those of the respect of the basic rights of all people, no matter their gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, age etc. The basic human rights are interconnected at the same time with the field of labor market and they are considered to be fully applied within the modern workplace.

Human rights generally are universal. And under such a presupposition every human being in the planet, no matter the race, culture, or gender he or she belongs to, has the same fundamental rights like any other being on earth. All humans have to be treated equally and with their dignity being respected and this is something which has to be thoroughly followed at the same time in the field of workplace and labor market. It is not a coincidence that many organizations around the world gradually seem to recognize their own moral, legal and commercial responsibility, when it comes to their workforce (Cox, 1999).

At this point is has to be noted, that efforts to protect and improve the rights of minorities over the past two decades have led to a rethinking of the propriety of the "melting pot" mentality and the exploration of new perspectives on the management of cultural diversity in the workplace. Cultural diversity has been defined as "the representation, in one social system, of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance" (Cox, 1999). The traditional approach in many multinational organizations across the world had been the expectation for the employees who belong to minorities and different cultures to adapt to the culture of the majority groups. Nevertheless, during the last decades there seems to be a change of thought on this matter. There seems that there are several dynamics which at the present time contribute to the growth of the diversity perspective. First of all it seems that all this has to do with the prevailing idea of social justice although on the other hand the goal of assimilation has been largely elusive under it (Amaram, 2007: 1).

After the Second World War there had been a gradual but stable tendency for the promotion of equal rights for the racial or gender minorities within the frame of many societies as also within many businesses. This has been a tool by which there has been a wide and deep search for ways and paradigms of how to improve the lot for these minorities. On the other hand, the legal obligations arising from the civil rights laws which prevailed in many societies across the globe, especially those of the Western Hemisphere, and the attendant affirmative action programs have made it necessary for many organizations to find the best ways in order to eliminate racial and gender discrimination in fields like education and employment (Ramakrishnan & Balgopal, 1995).

Another factor here also, is that of the limitations of affirmative action which have led to calls for new proposals to replace it (Gottfredson, 1992: 279; Thomas, 1990: 107). Apart from this we may also take under consideration here and the strategic imperatives imposed on American companies in order to gain a competitive advantage in the global markets. Such factors have clearly created tense pressures to acknowledge the significance of cultural diversity for companies and businesses. The point here is how companies can make useful cultural diversity in order to succeed in their goals (like for instance expanding their actions to more countries or having more profits by having more culturally diverted customers etc). Anyway it is more than obvious in our times, that multiculturalism actually has been maybe one of the most important factors in modern globalized economy and its competiveness. Pointing out here an example we take under consideration for instance, that companies, like EXXON, Coca Cola etc. have more than half of their clients abroad (Amaram, 2007: 2).

So, the success of an organization and its goals depends highly on how successfully this organization can use and capitalize the phenomenon of diversity (either this has to do with race or culture or with gender etc.). The proper combination of the different traits and talents which an organization's employees may have, can be combined and used in such a way so that they can be an important advantage for any organization in the process.

Chapter 3

Research Results

The research has been based on primary quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were obtained with the aid of a questionnaire, completed by employees in two companies. The qualitative data are obtained through two interviews contacted with managers of the two companies.

The quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V20).

3.1 Case Study

In this thesis the author wanted to attain rich data and understanding for diversity at a workplace hence two case studies were chosen. According to, Yin (2003) a case study refers to 'a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence'. This thesis focuses on cultural diversity management within a workplace therefore it was based on organizational perspective. The research for this thesis is based on two organizations that the author had easy access and enough of insight. The first organization works within the media industry, having under its umbrella a television channel as well as a website and is currently employing 90 persons (Unfortunately only 28 employees have answered the questionnaire). The second organization works in the sales industry specializing in cleaning chemicals for big Cypriot plants, food factories, hotels and hospitals. It currently employs 25

persons from which 22 have answered the questionnaire. Both companies have under their employment people from other countries, well-educated people and not, as well as people with various ages. Therefore the author believes that these two organizations will give enough evidence for the research and will provide for the reader a true insight of the diversity within the Cypriot organizations.

3.2 Description of the Sample

The sample of the survey consists of 50 participants, who are employees in two companies as mentioned above (28 and 22 respectively). 28, of whom (56%) are male and 22 (44%) are females. The age distribution of the participants demonstrates that 10 of them are below 25 years of age, 17 are between 26 and 35 years, another group of 17 are between 36 and 45 years, 5 participants are 46-55 years of age and one participant is more than 55 years of age.

With respect to the years of experience, the majority of the sample (33 participants, 66%) have one to three years of experience. As far as their position is concerned, 40 of the participants are employees and 10 are managers. Table 1 presents the demographic data.

		Frequency	Percent(%)
Gender	***Male***	**28**	**56,0**
	Female	**22**	**44,0**
Age	***<25***	10	20,0
	26-35	17	34,0
	36-45	17	34,0
	46-55	5	10,0
	>56	1	2,0
Experience	***< 1 years***	5	10,0
	1-3 years	33	66,0
	4-7years	6	12,0
	8-12 years	4	8,0
	13-20 years	2	4,0
Position	***Employee***	40	80,0
	Manager	10	20,0
	Total	50	100,0

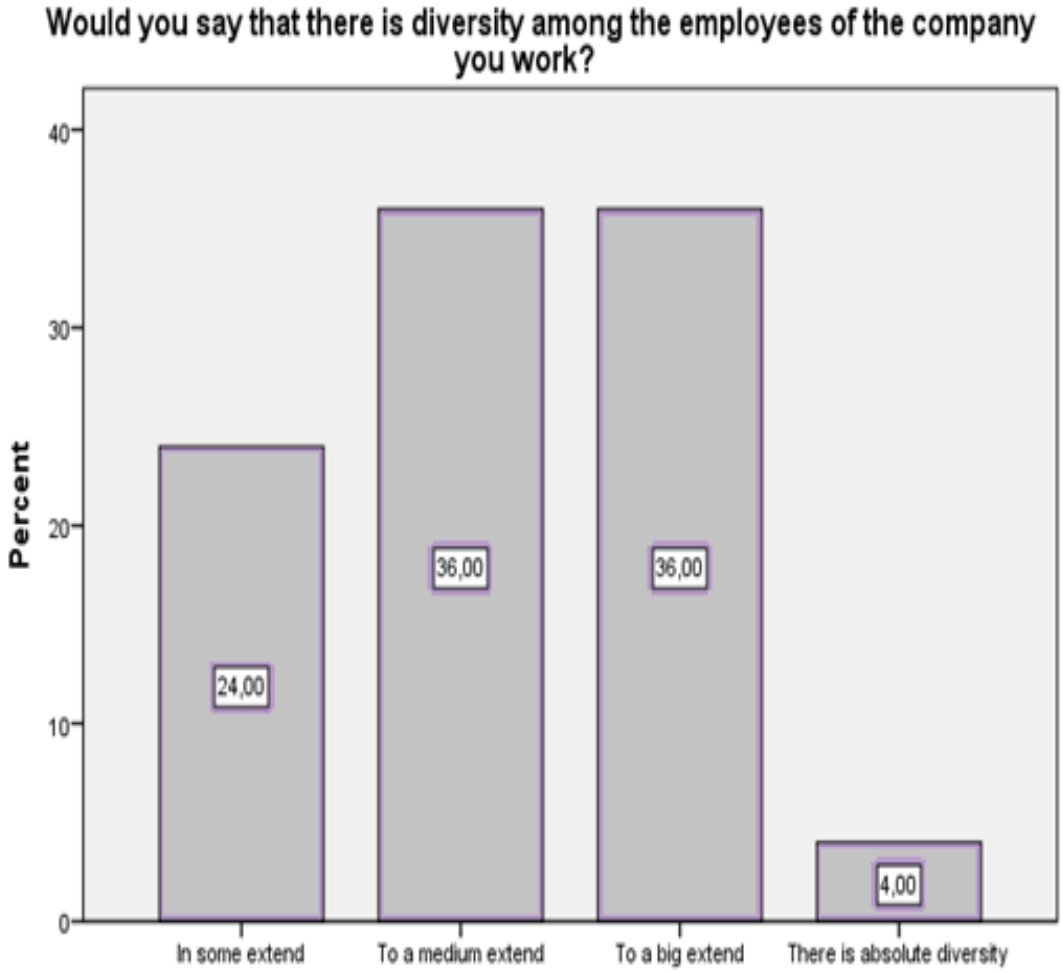
Table 1. Demographic characteristics

3.3 Descriptive Statistics

The responses to the question "Would you say that there is diversity among the employees of the company you work?" show that there is a degree of diversity in the companies, above the average. The dominant replies are "To a medium extend" and "To a big extend", with 36% of the sample giving each response (table 2 and graph1).

	Frequency	**Percent(%)**
In some extend	12	24,0
To a medium extend	18	36,0
To a big extend	18	36,0
There is absolute diversity	2	4,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 2. Replies to the question "Would you say that there is diversity among the employees of the company you work?"



Graph 1. Replies to the question "Would you say that there is diversity among the employees of the company you work?"

The next question investigates the type of diversity within the organizations of the survey. It is a multi-response question (the respondents can give one or more responses), which makes the number of responses greater than the sample size. Table 3 presents the distribution of the responses. Almost every participant replied that there is age, gender and education diversity, 88% of the sample replied that there is income diversity, 62% ethnicity / race / nationality diversity, 42% replied Sexual orientation, 40% language, 34%interests and only one participant replied disability.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Type of Diversity[a]	Age D	48	17,3%	96,0%
	Gender D	49	17,7%	98,0%
	Sexual orientation D	21	7,6%	42,0%
	Education D	46	16,6%	92,0%
	Income D	44	15,9%	88,0%
	Ethnicity / race / nationality D	31	11,2%	62,0%
	Language D	20	7,2%	40,0%
	Disability D	1	0,4%	2,0%
	Interests D	17	6,1%	34,0%
Total		277	100,0%	

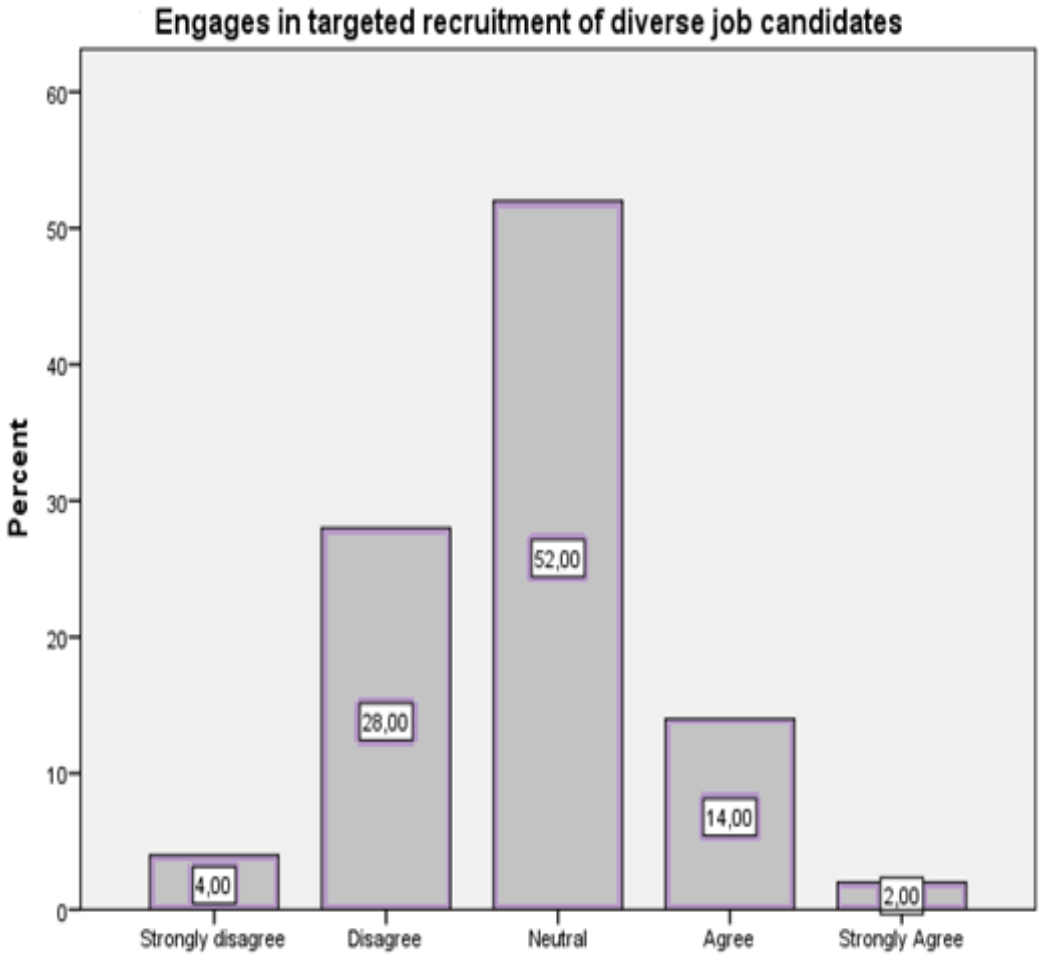
Table 3. Type of diversity

The rest of the questions are investigating the opinions of the respondents regarding the way diversity is managed within the organization they work for. The statements start with the prefix "*The company I work for*"… and the responses Likert scale (1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree). In the paragraphs to follow, the replies of the questions are presented in the form of frequency tables and bar graphs.

Regarding the question / statement ("*The company I work for*"…) "Engages in targeted recruitment of diverse job candidates", there is a tendency for disagreement, since more than half of the sample gave a neutral response (52%), and 14 participants (28%) disagree. 7 individuals replied that they agree (14%) (Table 4 and graph 2).

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	2	4,0
Disagree	14	28,0
Neutral	26	52,0
Agree	7	14,0
Strongly Agree	1	2,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 4. The company engages in targeted recruitment of diverse job candidates

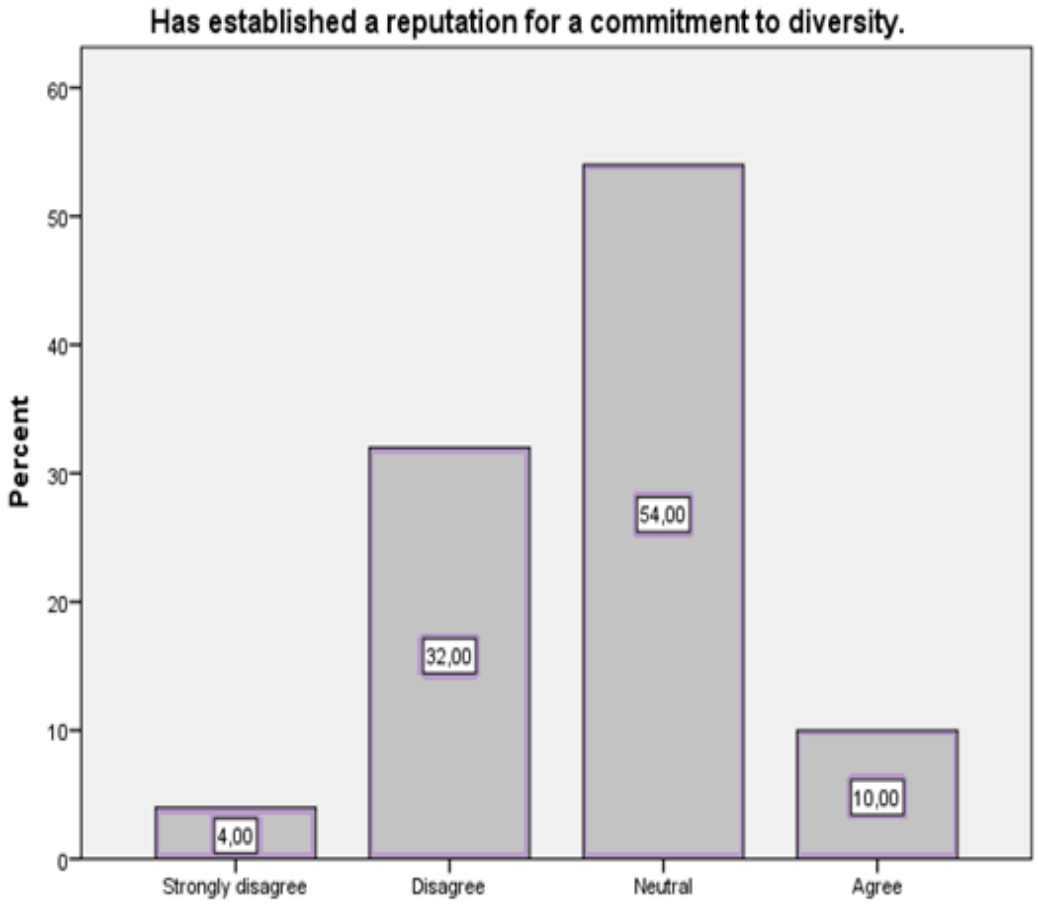


Graph 2. The company engages in targeted recruitment of diverse job candidates

The tendency is similar for the statement "Has established a reputation for a commitment to diversity", with is 54% of the participants giving a neutral response, 32% relying "disagree", 5 giving the re response "Agree" and 2 "Strongly disagree ". (Table 5 and graph 3).

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	2	4,0
Disagree	16	32,0
Neutral	27	54,0
Agree	5	10,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 5. The company has established a reputation for a commitment to diversity

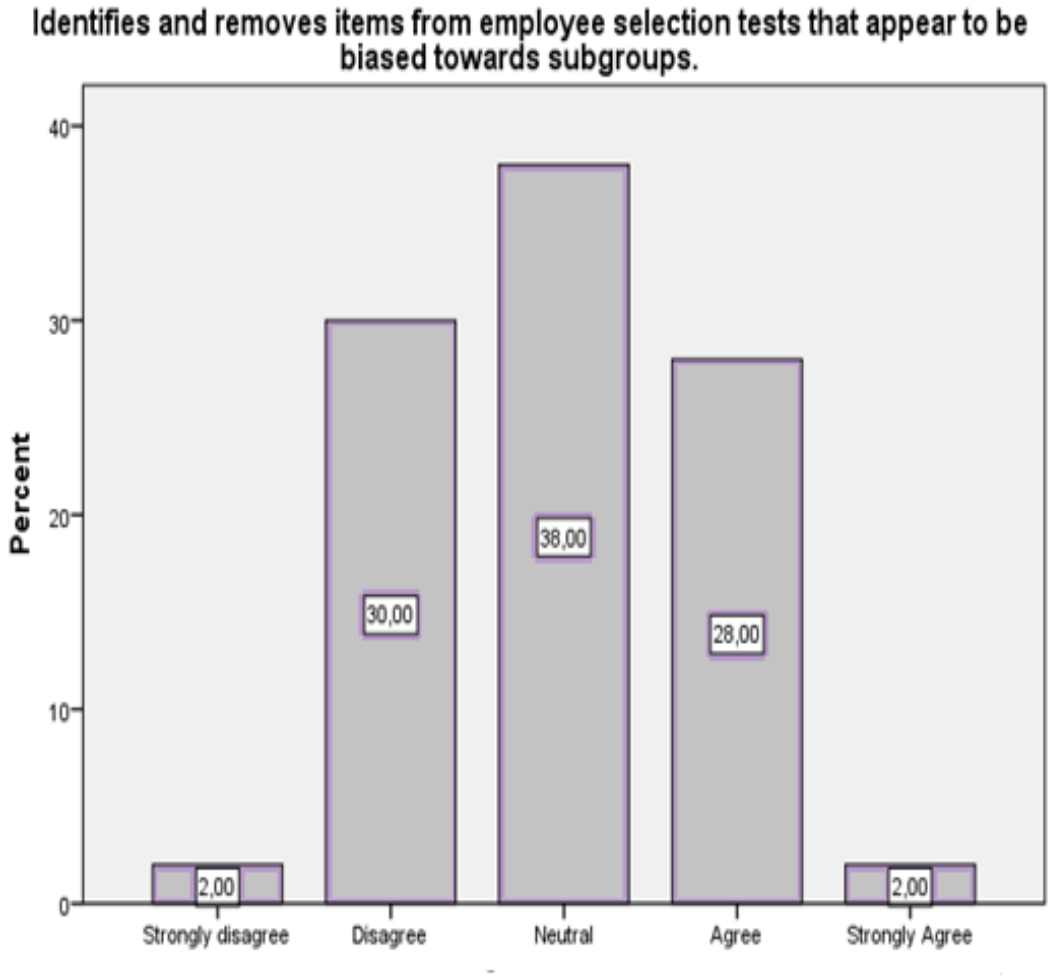


Graph 3. The company has established a reputation for a commitment to diversity

Addressing the statement "Identifies and removes items from employee selection tests that appear to be biased towards subgroups", there is a balanced distribution of the responses: 38% gave a neutral reply, 30% disagree, 28% agree and one participant replied that strongly disagree, as well as one replied that strongly Agree (Table 6 and graph 4)

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	1	2,0
Disagree	15	30,0
Neutral	19	38,0
Agree	14	28,0
Strongly Agree	1	2,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 6. The company Identifies and removes items from employee selection tests that appear to be biased towards subgroups

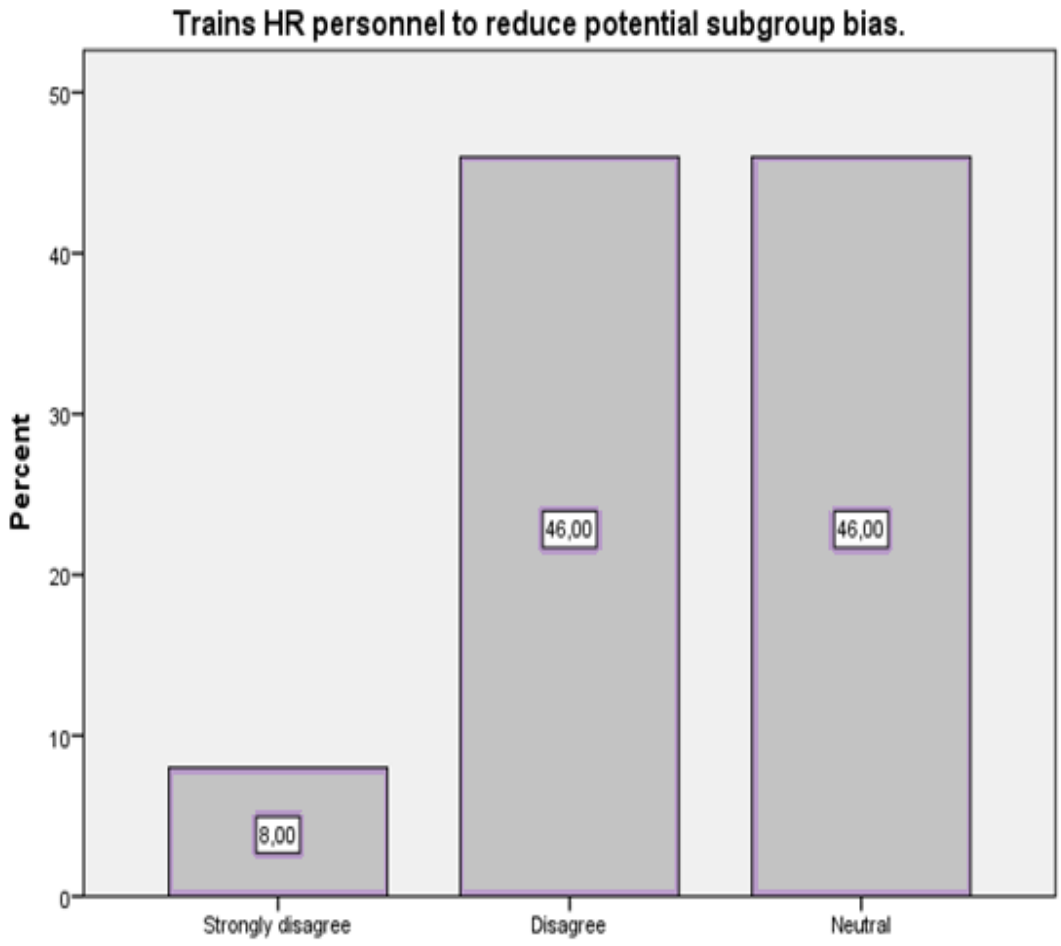


Graph 4. The company Identifies and removes items from employee selection tests that appear to be biased towards subgroups

With reference to the statement "Trains HR personnel to reduce potential subgroup bias", there is a clear direction to disagreement, since almost half of the sample (46%) disagree and half (another 46%) gave a neutral response, while there is no one that agrees (table 7 and graph 5).

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	4	8,0
Disagree	23	46,0
Neutral	23	46,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 7. The company trains HR personnel to reduce potential subgroup bias

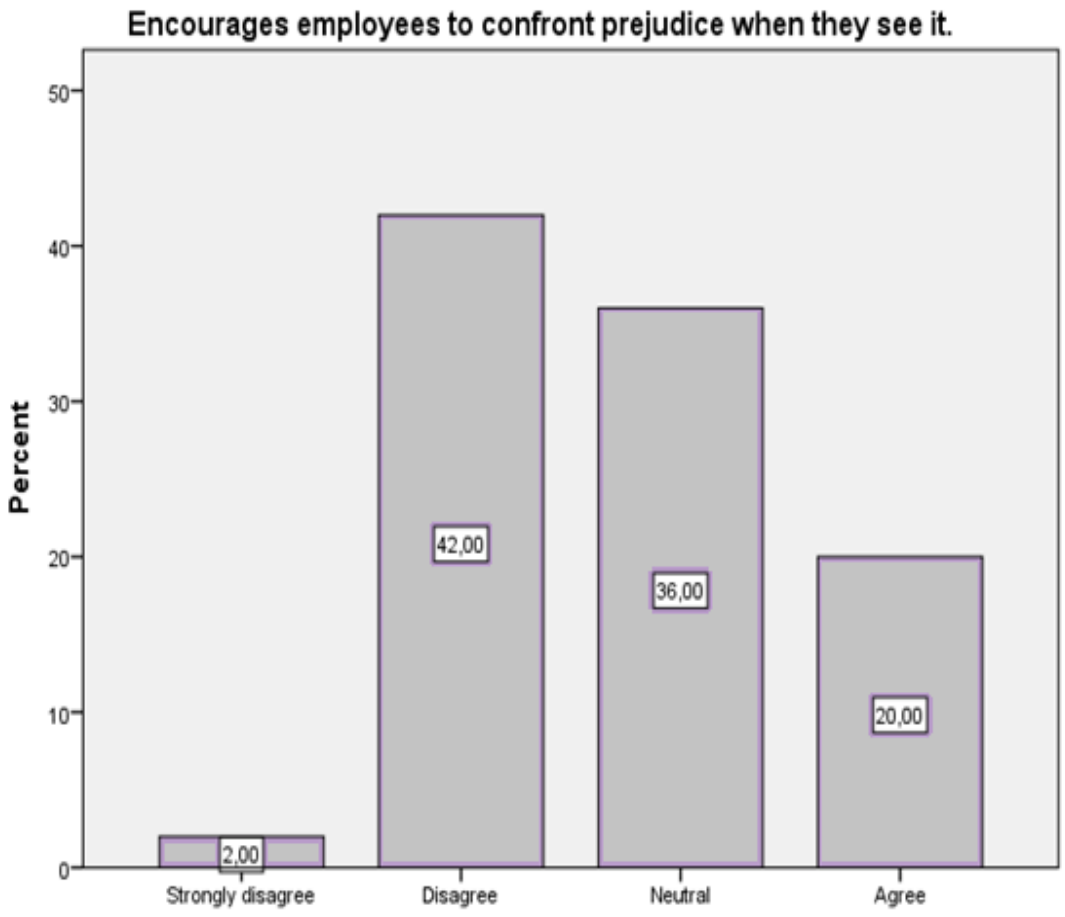


Graph 5. The company trains HR personnel to reduce potential subgroup bias

Regarding statement "Encourages employees to confront prejudice when they see it" there is also a tendency to disagreement, since more respondents disagree (42%) than agree (20%), while 36% gave a neutral response (table 8 and graph 6).

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	1	2,0
Disagree	21	42,0
Neutral	18	36,0
Agree	10	20,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 8. The company encourages employees to confront prejudice when they see it

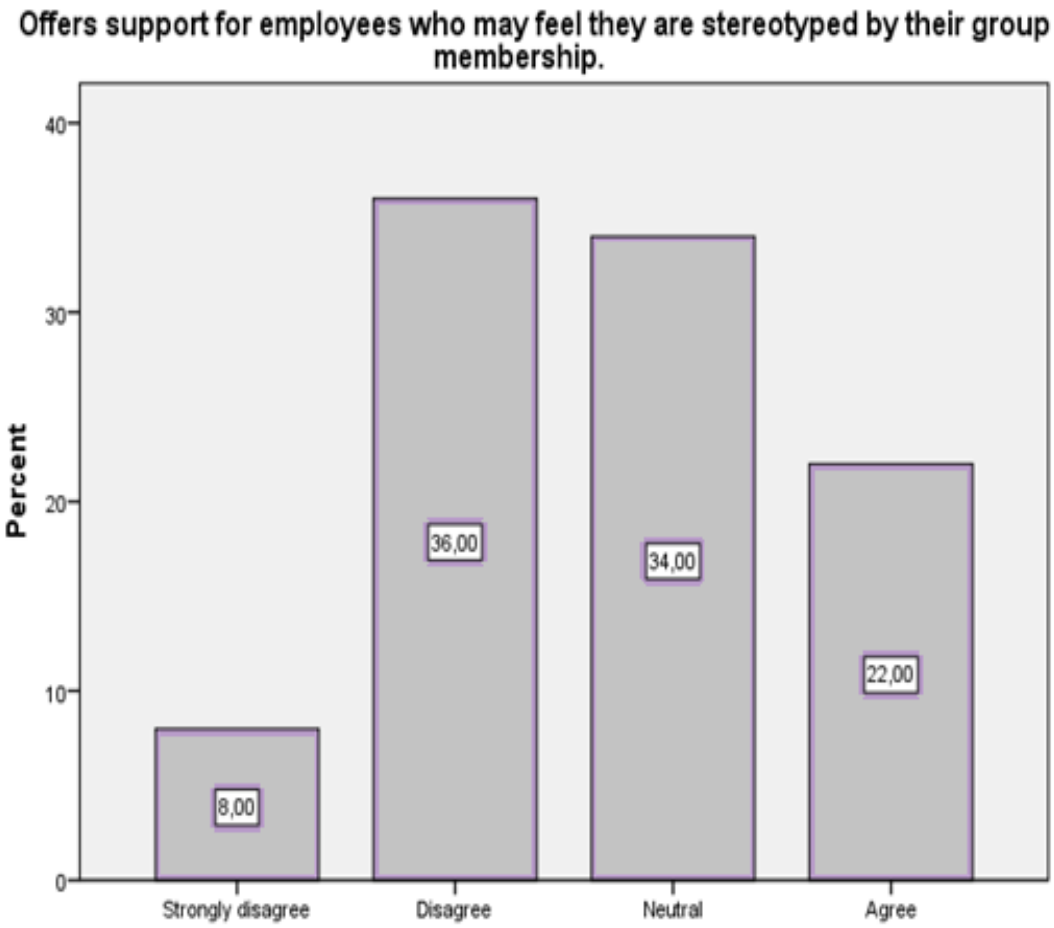


Graph 6. The company encourages employees to confront prejudice when they see it

As to the statement "Offers support for employees who may feel they are stereotyped by their group membership" it can also be observed that the participants tend to disagree: 36% replied that they disagree, 8% that they strongly disagree, 22% that they agree and 34% gave a neutral response (table 9 and graph 7).

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	4	8,0
Disagree	18	36,0
Neutral	17	34,0
Agree	11	22,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 9. The company Offers support for employees who may feel they are stereotyped by their group membership

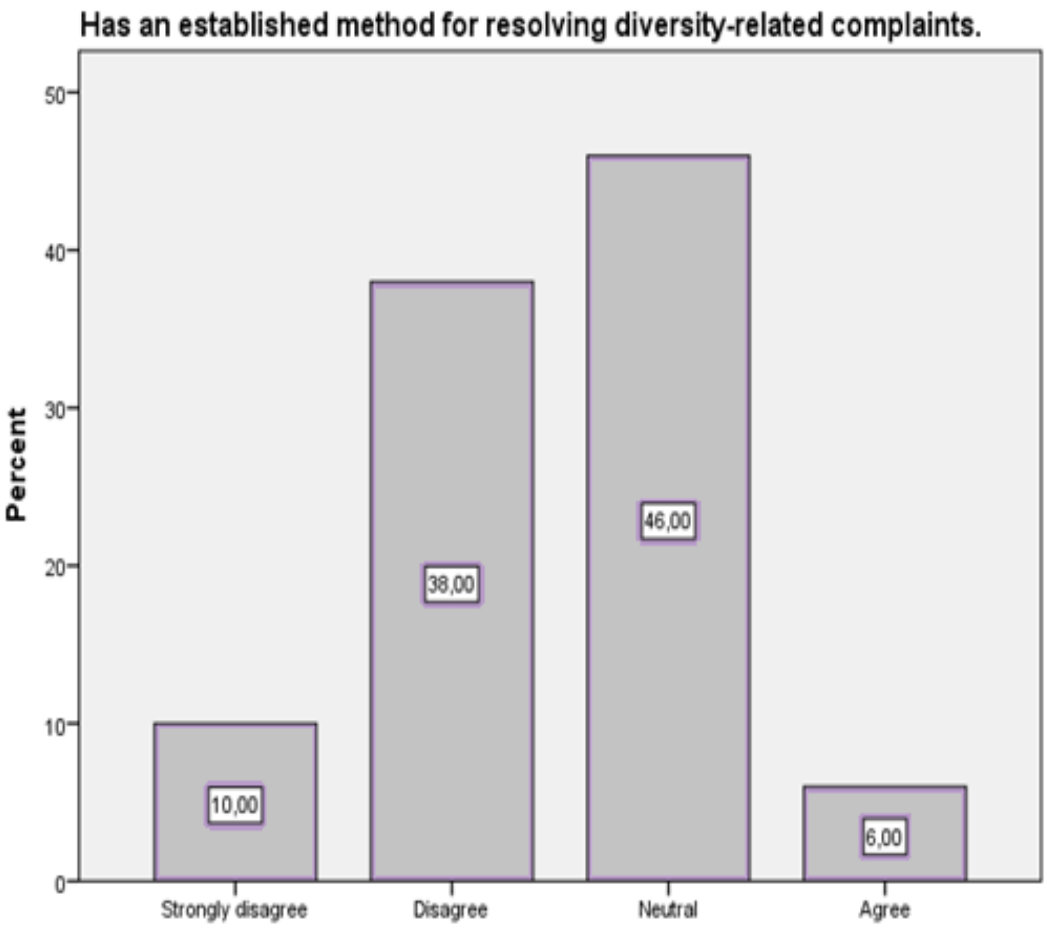


Graph 7. The Company Offers support for employees who may feel they are stereotyped by their group membership

Regarding the statement "Has an established method for resolving diversity-related complaints" the tendency is similar to the previous questions: 38% of the sample replied that they disagree, 36% replied that they disagree, 10% that they strongly disagree, 6% that they agree and 46% gave a neutral response (table 10 and graph 8).

		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	**Strongly disagree**	5	10,0
	Disagree	19	38,0
	Neutral	23	46,0
	Agree	3	6,0
	Total	50	100,0

Table 10. The company has an established method for resolving diversity-related complaints

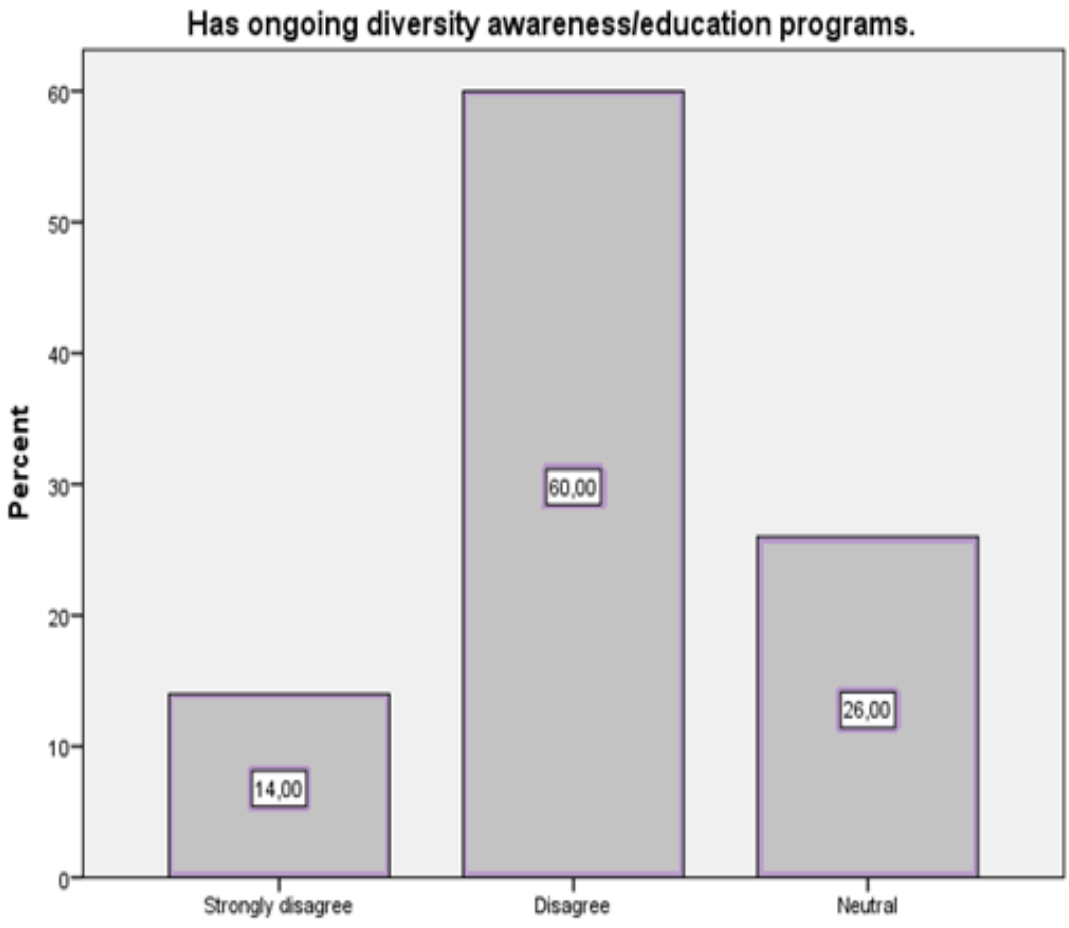


Graph 8. The company has an established method for resolving diversity-related complaints

With reference to the statement "Has ongoing diversity awareness/education programs", there is no agreement at all. The respondents either gave a neutral reply (26%), or they disagreed (60%) or they disagreed strongly (14%). (Table 11 and graph 9).

	Frequeny	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	7	14,0
Disagree	30	60,0
Neutral	13	26,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 11. The company has ongoing diversity awareness/education programs

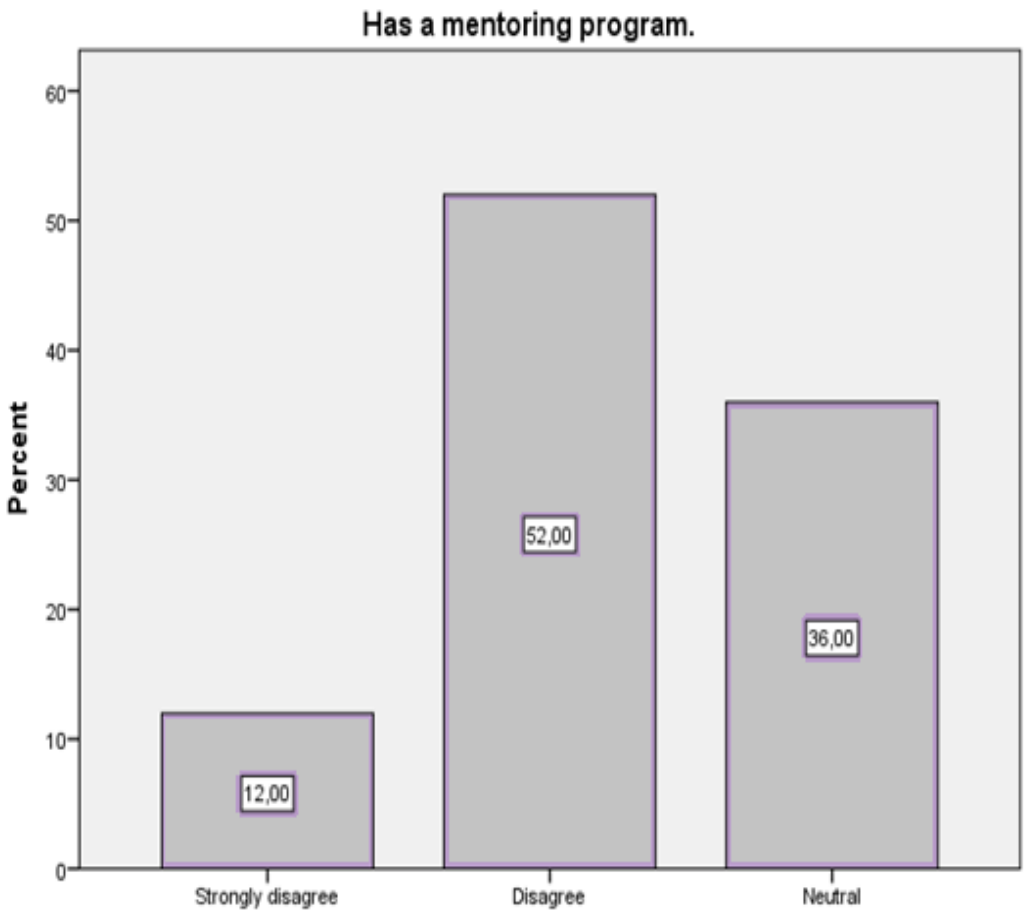


Graph 9. The company has ongoing diversity awareness/education programs

Similarly, no one agreed that the company "Has a mentoring program". Specifically, 12% of the sample replied that they strongly disagree, 52% that they disagree and 36% gave a neutral reply (table 12 and graph 10).

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	6	12,0
Disagree	26	52,0
Neutral	18	36,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 12. The company has a mentoring program

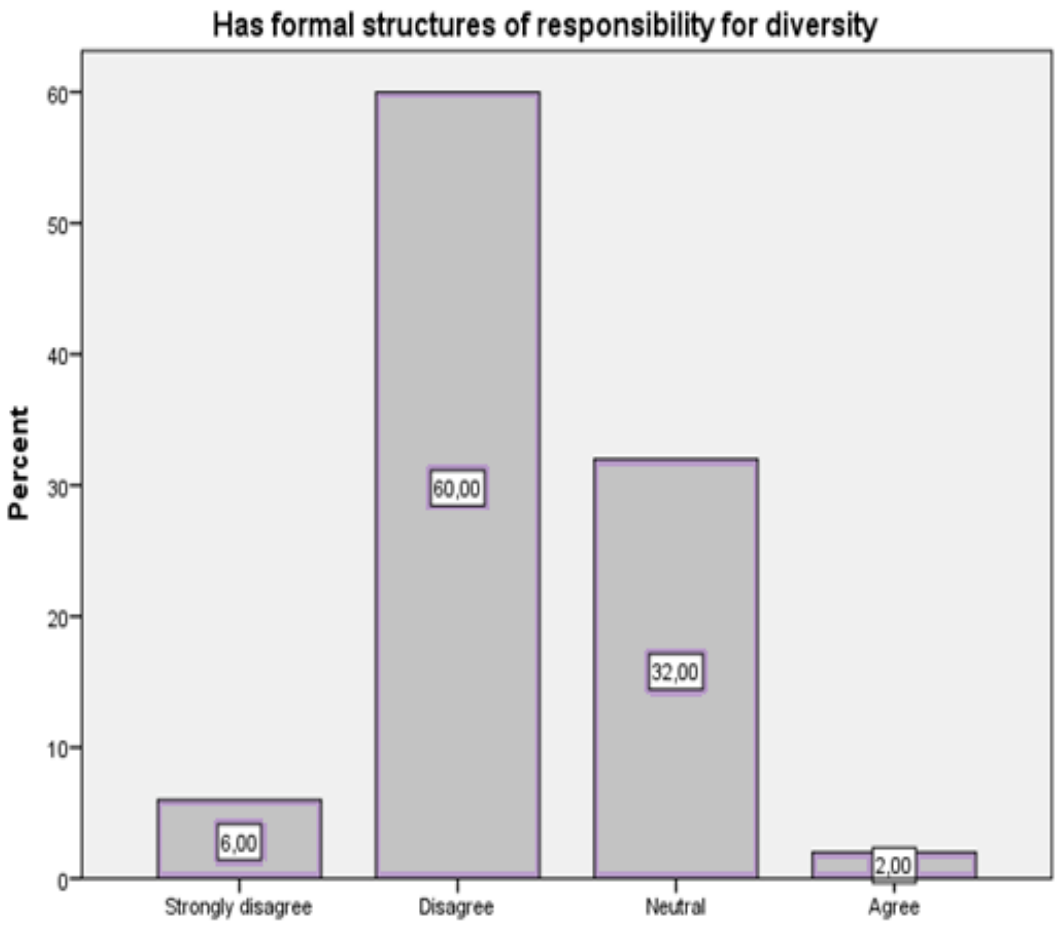


Graph 10. The company has a mentoring program

A similar picture is obtained by the responses to the question "Has formal structures of responsibility for diversity", since there is only one individual that agrees, 6% of the sample replied that they strongly disagree, 60% that they disagree and 32% gave a neutral reply (table 13 and graph 11).

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	3	6,0
Disagree	30	60,0
Neutral	16	32,0
Agree	1	2,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 13. The company has formal structures of responsibility for diversity

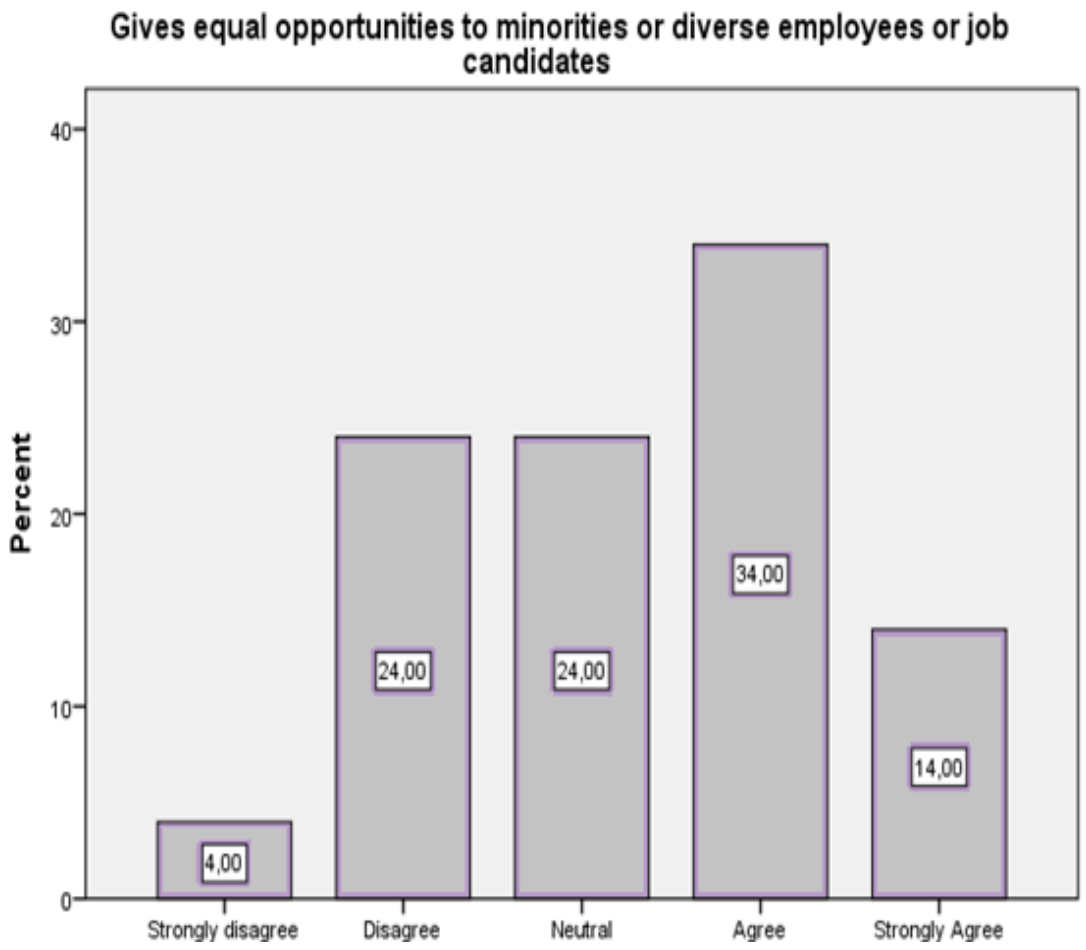


Graph 11. The company has formal structures of responsibility for diversity

With respect to the statement "Gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees or job candidates", the replies show a positive tendency, since 24% disagree, 24% are neutral, 34% agree and 14% strongly agree (table 14 and graph 12).

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	2	4,0
Disagree	12	24,0
Neutral	12	24,0
Agree	17	34,0
Strongly Agree	7	14,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 14. The company gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees or job candidates

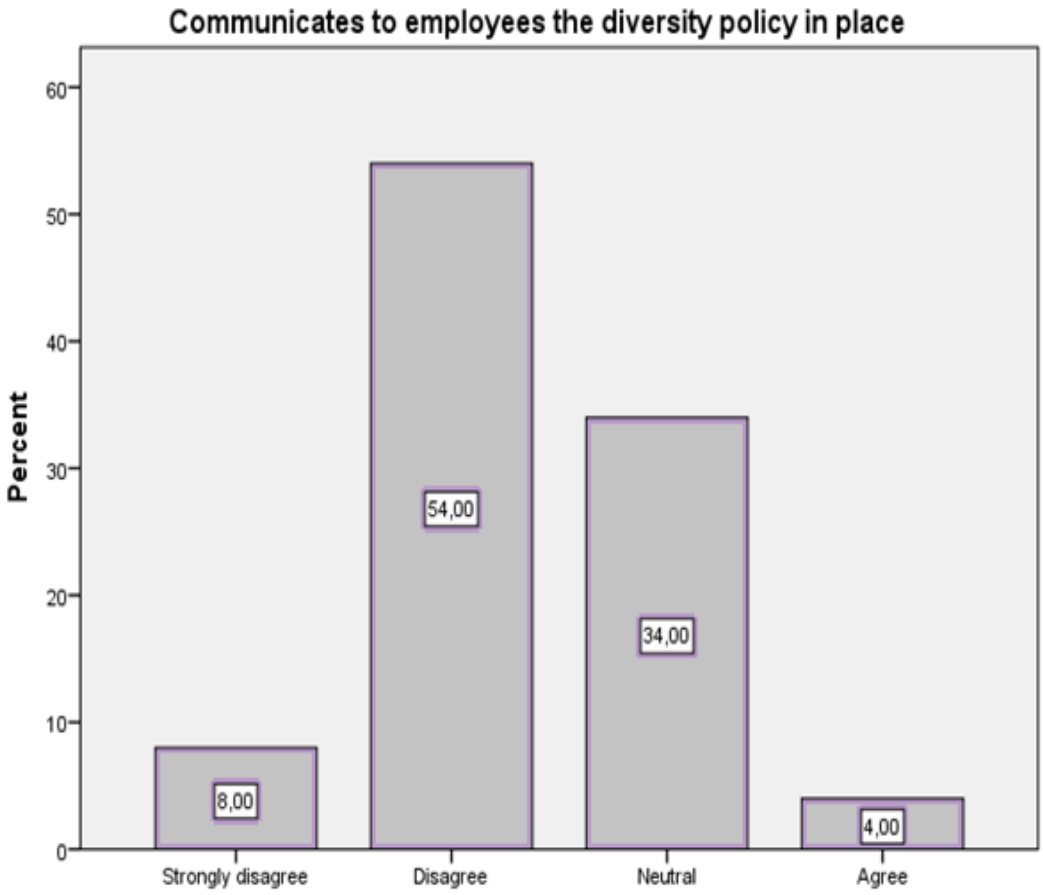


Graph 12 The Company gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees for job candidates

The replies to question "Communicates to employees the diversity policy in place", demonstrate a disagreement, since only 4% of the sample agree, 8% strongly disagree, 54% disagree and 34% are neutral (table 15 and graph 13).

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	4	8,0
Disagree	27	54,0
Neutral	17	34,0
Agree	2	4,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 15. The company communicates to employees the diversity policy in place

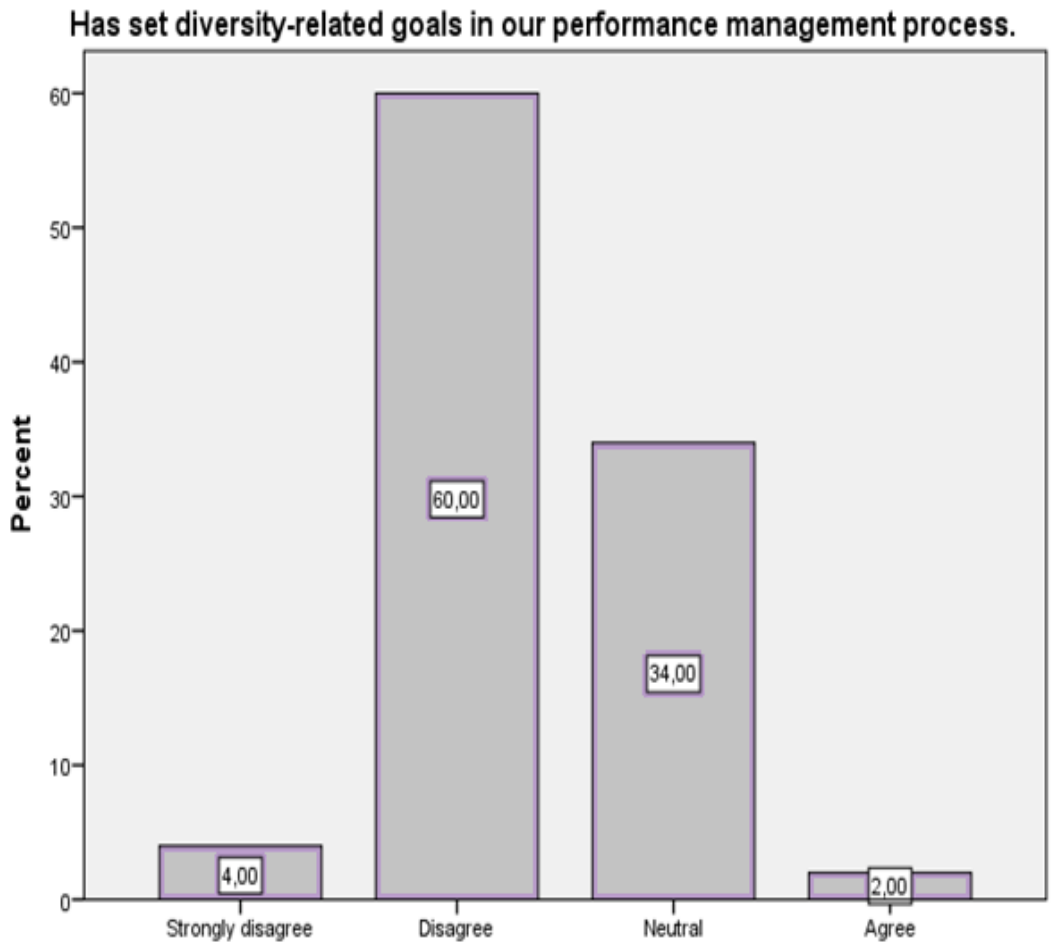


Graph 13. The company communicates to employees the diversity policy in place

A negative picture is also formed by the replies to the question "Has set diversity-related goals in our performance management process." There is hardly one positive response, 4% strongly disagree, 60% disagree and 34% are neutral (table 16 and graph 14).

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Strongly disagree	2	4,0
Disagree	30	60,0
Neutral	17	34,0
Agree	1	2,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 16. The company has set diversity-related goals in our performance management process

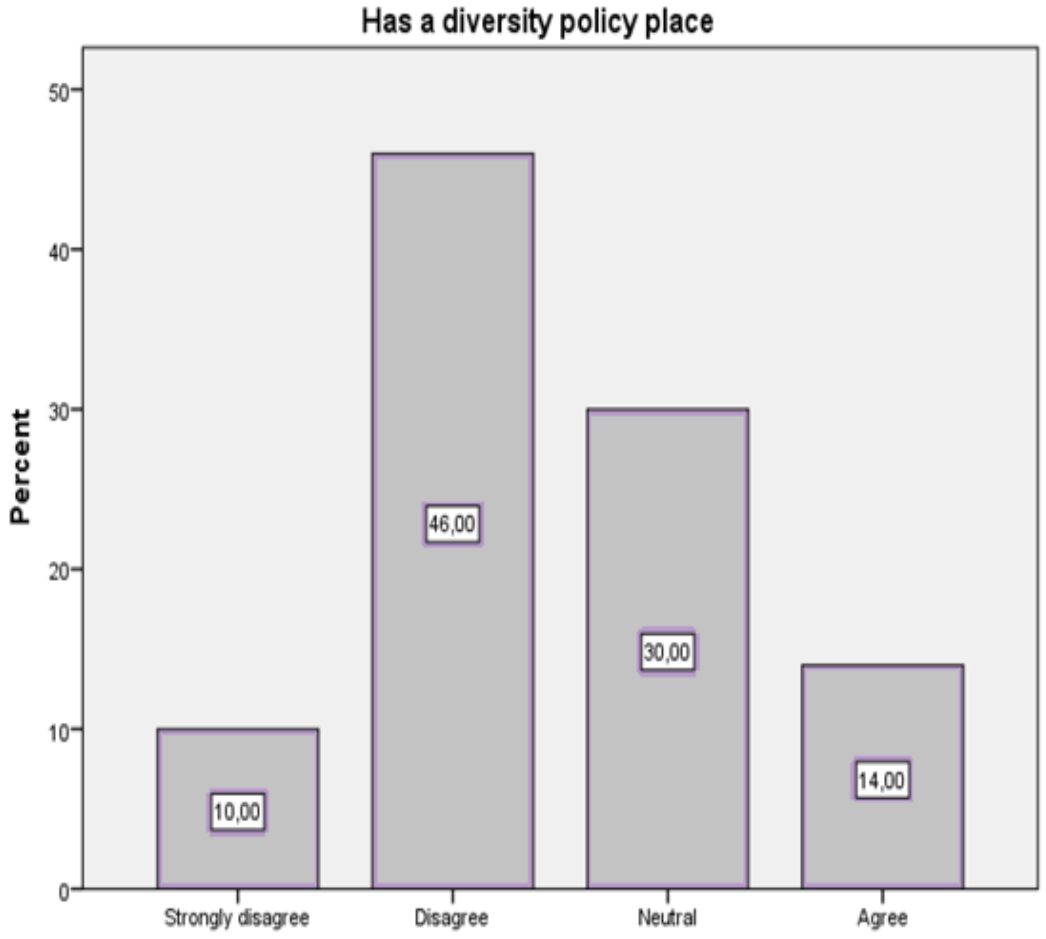


Graph 14. The company has set diversity-related goals in our performance management process

Regarding the statement “Has a diversity policy in place”, we can also observe a tendency to disagreement, since 10% of the participants strongly disagree, 46% disagree, 30% are neutral and 14% agree (table 17 and graph 15).

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	5	10,0
Disagree	23	46,0
Neutral	15	30,0
Agree	7	14,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 17. The Company has a diversity policy in place

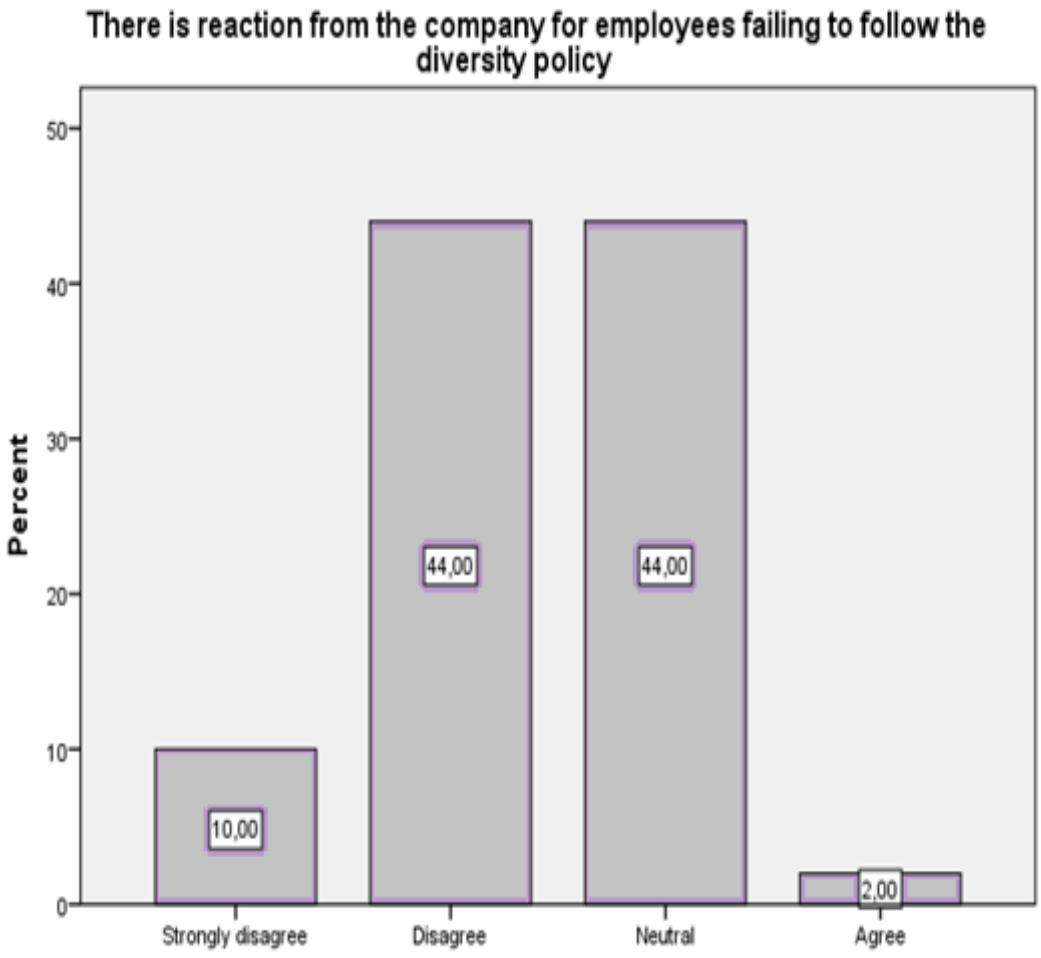


Graph 15. The company has a diversity policy in place

The last statement is “There is reaction from the company for employees failing to follow the diversity policy”. The replies to this statement demonstrate a disagreement, since there is a single positive reply, while 10% of the participants strongly disagree, 44% disagree and 44% are neutral (table 18 and graph 16).

	Frequency	**Percent (%)**
Strongly disagree	5	10,0
Disagree	22	44,0
Neutral	22	44,0
Agree	1	2,0
Total	50	100,0

Table 18. There is reaction from the company for employees failing to follow the diversity policy



Graph 16. There is reaction from the company for employees failing to follow the diversity policy

3.3.1 Correlations with Demographics

In order to investigate whether the characteristics of the participants are related to the answers they gave, a number of non-parametric statistical tests are conducted. These test were performed at a significance level <0, 05.

- **Gender:**

A Mann-Whitney Test was performed in order to examine if the gender has an impact of the replies. The results of the rest revealed that there are no significant differences between males and females for any of the questions (p>0, 05 for all questions).

- **Age:**

In a similar manner a Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted in order to examine if age differentiates the responses. The results of the rest revealed that there are no significant differences between age groups for any of the questions (p>0, 05 for all questions).

- **Experience:**

A Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted in order to examine if experience time differentiates the responses. The results of the rest revealed that for most of the questions, there are no significant differences between groups of years of experience. There are two statements, for which significant differences were detected:

For question 5:

"The company identifies and removes items from employee selection tests that appear to be biased towards subgroups", there are significant differences ($x^2(3)$ = 12,270, p=0,007). The more experienced employees (groups with 4-7 years of experience and 8-12 years of experience) tend to agree more that this is the case.

For question 13:

"Gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees or job candidates", in a similar way ($x^2(3)= 11,653$, $p=0,009$), the more experienced employees (groups with 4-7 years of experience and 8-12 years of experience) tend to agree more that this is the case. (Table 19).

Ranks					
Years of experience		**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Chi-Square**	**p**
5. Identifies and removes items from employee selection tests that appear to be biased towards subgroups.	**< 1 years**	5	25,70	12,270	,007
	1-3 years	33	20,62		
	4-7years	6	33,50		
	8-12 years	4	41,50		
	Total	48			
13. Gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees or job candidates	**< 1 years**	5	26,80	11,653	,009
	1-3 years	33	20,41		
	4-7years	6	36,25		
	8-12 years	4	37,75		
	Total	48			

Table19. Kruskal-Wallis Test for years of experience and questions 5 and 13

- **Position (employee – manager):**

The position of the respondents (employee vs manager) also differentiates the same questions:

For question 5. "The company identifies and removes items from employee selection tests that appear to be biased towards subgroups", there are significant differences ($x^2(1) = 6,197$, $p=0,013$). Employees tend to agree more than the managers.

For question 13 "Gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees or job candidates", in a similar way ($x^2(3) = 11,653$, $p=0,009$), there are also significant differences ($x^2(1) = 7,648$, $p=0,006$). Employees also tend to agree more than the managers (table 20).

Position		**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Chi-Square**	**p**
5. Identifies and removes items from employee selection tests that appear to be biased towards subgroups.	**Employee**	40	27,09	6,197	,013
	Manager	10	19,15		
	Total	50			
13. Gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees or job candidates	**Employee**	40	28,25	7,648	,006
	Manager	10	14,50		
	Total	50			

Table 20. Kruskal-Wallis Test for position and questions 5 and 13

Finally, it is examined whether there is correlation between the responses to the question "Would you say that there is diversity among the employees of the company you work?" and the rest of the questions. In other words it is aimed to examine if the degree that the participants believe that there is diversity among the staff with the organization correlates with their responses for the organizations' policy and practices.

The results of the Spearman's rho correlation test are presented in Table 21. It can be observed that there is a significant positive correlation between the degree that the participants find that there is diversity with their replies for the question that the company "Offers support for employees who may feel they are stereotyped by their group membership" (r_s=0,358, p=0,011). The positive sign of the correlation denotes that the respondents who believe more that there is diversity in their workplace, tend also to believe more that the organization supports the employees who may feel they are stereotyped by their group membership.

Similarly positive significant correlation is detected between the degree that the participants find that there is diversity with their replies for the question that the organization "Gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees or job candidates" (r_s=0,520, p=0,000). The correlation denotes that the respondents who believe more that there is diversity in their workplace, tend also to believe more that the organization gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees or job candidates.

On the other hand, a significant negative correlation is found between the degree that the participants find that there is diversity with their replies for the question that the organization "Has an established method for resolving diversity-related complaints" (r_s= - 0,343, p=0,015). The negative sign of the correlation denotes that the respondents who believe more that there is diversity in their workplace, tend to disagree with the statement that the company "Has an established method for resolving diversity-related complaints". (Table 21).

Spearman's rho		1. Would you say that there is diversity among the employees of the company you work?
3. Engages in targeted recruitment of diverse job candidates	**Correlation Coefficient**	,047
	p	,744
	N	50
4. Has established a reputation for a commitment to diversity.	**Correlation Coefficient**	,269
	p	,059
	N	50
5. Identifies and removes items from employee selection tests that appear to be biased towards subgroups.	**Correlation Coefficient**	,133
	p	,357
	N	50
6. Trains HR personnel to reduce potential subgroup bias.	**Correlation Coefficient**	,041
	p	,779
	N	50
7. Encourages employees to confront prejudice when they see it.	**Correlation Coefficient**	,159
	p	,270
	N	50
8. Offers support for employees who may feel they are stereotyped by their group membership.	**Correlation Coefficient**	***,358****
	p	***,011***
	N	50

9. Has an established method for resolving diversity-related complaints.	**Correlation Coefficient**	***-,343****
	p	***,015***
	N	50
10. Has ongoing diversity awareness/education programs.	**Correlation Coefficient**	-,151
	p	,296
	N	50
11. Has a mentoring program.	**Correlation Coefficient**	,164
	p	,255
	N	50
12. Has formal structures of responsibility for diversity	**Correlation Coefficient**	-,106
	p	,464
	N	50
13. Gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees or job candidates	**Correlation Coefficient**	***,520*****
	p	***,000***
	N	50
14. Communicates to employees the diversity policy in place	**Correlation Coefficient**	-,051
	p	,724
	N	50
15. Has set diversity-related goals in our performance management process.	**Correlation Coefficient**	-,084
	p	,564
	N	50

16. Has a diversity policy place	**Correlation Coefficient**	,181
	p	,208
	N	50
17. There is reaction from the company for employees failing to follow the diversity policy	**Correlation Coefficient**	,061
	p	,674
	N	50

Table 21. Spearman's rho correlation test

3.4 Analysis of the Interview

Aiming to examine some qualitative aspects of the study, two interviews were conducted, with a manager of a media industry (Subject A) enterprise and another with a manager of a chemical sales industry enterprise (Subject B).

The scope of the interviews were to obtain information regarding the diversity management policies and methods deployed by the organizations.

The results of the interviews demonstrated that for both organizations it was clearly stated that there is diversity in the workplace. The diversity refers to the different characteristics of the employees, (age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity / race, nationality, language, income, disability, interests), their personality type and experience. One of the two manages mentioned that there is no diversity regarding religion and education. The other mentioned that "*We are hiring people with different personalities, nationalities, age, interests and education at varied stages of their career*"

The participants to the interviews agreed that there are benefits from the diversity in the workforce for the company. Subject A replied that "*Individuals from different backgrounds can offer a selection of various talents, skills and experiences, which benefit the organization*" and subject B mentioned that "*The main advantage, in my opinion, if diversity exists is that you have different views, ideas and approaches of handling issues within the company and you can choose the best from all this*".

The negative effects of diversity to the workplace, seen by the interviewees is that this van bring a degree of conflict, due to differences of the individuals, mainly referring to different beliefs of people of different ages. The participants mentioned that it is normal to have a certain degree of dispute and disagreements, with are the negative results, when peers have differences and different views. Both interviewees gave their image that the negative impact is mirror. Subject B mentioned that it can be resolved through discussion.

The main challenges of diversity management in an organization, as described by the participants is the difficult task for the organization to bring the best out of

these different people in such a way that the company is benefited, and to make people embrace new ideas without conflict.

With respect to established written policies (a formal position on equal opportunities, anti-discrimination etc.), or specific organization procedures for managing diversity , Subject A replied that there are not any, put in place, and Subject B replied that there is a diversity policy, but not in written form, but there are not any organization procedures in place for managing diversity.

The responses to the question "Have you witnessed any tension among employees in your company as the direct result of diversity, e.g. racial tension? If so, how did you address it?" Gave a picture that there have been such occasions a few times. Manager of study case A replied that "*Yes a few times. The way I handle it is by addressing them into my office one by one and try to discuss in a friendly basis the situation. If it is possible, after the friendly talk I give them a project that requires them to cooperate. Usually this works just fine*". Manager of study case B, also expressed that similar incidents happen and are handled in a similar cooperative manner "*Yes I did. The way to address it is to meet with the people involved in my presence, listen to both people views, and by discussion solve the difference and move on*".

Both interviewees agreed that it is important to have a corporate commitment to diversity within the organization. It was mentioned by Manager of study case A that the meaning of commitment to diversity is the cultivation of a working environment "*where all employees feel welcomed, challenged and rewarded for their contributions to the organization's success*".

None of the participants participated in discussions with the management team on how to unify diversity management policies with the ethics and values of the organization, and it is not clear if such discussions take place within the organizations. The ways used by the organizations in order to communicate diversity management policies and diversity positioning to employees is through memos, emails and staff meetings.

In none of the organizations involved in the survey exist written procedures for disciplinary action in case of not following the diversity policy. Manager of study

case B, mentioned though that they proceed first to "verbal *explanation, then written and if the problems persists dismissal – but this never happened we never reached that point*".

The above findings resulting from the two interviews formulate a picture of the surveyed companies with respect to diversity management policies. This picture is indicative to the fact that the management identifies the existence of diversity within the staff, as well as the benefits that can come from this diversity. There is a naive direction towards cultivating a climate that accepts diversity and acts in a way to resolve conflicts in a positive way, through communication.

However, there are no formal or written procedures put in place within the organizations. It is clear from the interviews that that the respondents have not participated in discussions regarding diversity policies, as part of their managerial tasks. Moreover, it has been not clarified if such meetings and discussions take place.

Chapter 4

Conclusions and Discussion

This thesis aimed to examine the diversity in the workplace among two medium sized Cypriot organizations .Also the author wanted to investigate how the diverse workforce is being managed at those two organizations from an employee's perspective as well as to see whether the views of the managers and the employees are met.

4.1. Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

From the responses of the managers, as well as the employees, it is clear that within the organizations investigated there is a degree of diversity, related mainly to income, ethnicity / race / nationality, sexual orientation, language and interests. Additionally, although employees included the education among characteristics of diversity, one of the managers mentioned that there is no diversity regarding religion and education.

The general picture formed by the results of the quantitative survey to the employees, is that there is no standard policy towards diversity management. The degree of agreement of the sample with the statements of the questionnaire, was for most of the cases negative. The employees agreed to a medium extent that the organization for identifies and removes items from employee selection tests that appear to be biased towards subgroups and to a rather high extent that the

organization gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees or job candidates, but this is all about it.

They expressed their disagreement for the rest of the dimensions of the diversity management present in the questionnaire. The percentages of the sample that disagreed was by far higher than those who agreed (if any for some questions), for all aspects of the survey. Specifically, the employees did not agree that the organization engages in targeted recruitment of diverse job candidates, nor that has established a reputation for a commitment to diversity. They also demonstrated negative responses when asked if the organization trains HR personnel to reduce potential subgroup bias, or if the organization encourages employees to confront prejudice when they see it. Further, negative responses were given when employees were asked if the organization offers support for employees who may feel they are stereotyped by their group membership, if the organization has an established method for resolving diversity-related complaints, or if the organization has ongoing diversity awareness/education programs. They also did not agree that the organization has a mentoring program, nor that there are formal structures of responsibility for diversity.

There is evidence in research findings that mention that diversity in the workforce has a positive impact on the work outcomes (Barta, Kleiner and Neumann, 2012; Ilmakunas & Ilmakunas, 2011; Okoro and Wasington, 2012). This has not revealed as a point of view in the present research, with regard to the interviews provided by the managers.

Formal structures, are, however necessary in order to manage effectively and in certain cases promote diversity. Managers need to realize that fair treatment in business doesn't necessarily means equality. Since this realization takes time, process of promoting diversity within the workplace, need to be scheduled and planned (Koonce, 2001).

These responses are in line with the information obtained through the interviews to the managers, who also identify the existence of diversity, but the lack of formal procedures for its management. We could therefore, interpret the absence of practices of targeted recruitment of diverse job candidates and the substantial

support to minorities, as well as lack of mentoring programs towards diversity as a consequence of formal structures of responsibility for diversity and rules that drive the whole organizational culture related to diversity.

Although managers, as well as employees in the present research have realized that there are positive outcomes from the diversity in the workplace and from then proper management, there seems that at the practical level, little is done.

Farren and Nelson (1999) have mentioned that open communication channels and evidence of concern from the employers about the problems, the questions and the needs of each one of their employees is one good practice for managing different needs. Developing a common way of thinking within the organization is important for elevating respect among employees. Training employees on other people's culture, history, can help diversity acceptance and management, so does the provision of special mentors aiming to decrease the phenomena of discrimination and racism. Inclusion of diverse accountability in the job descriptions can assist managers intensify their actions towards diverse workforce (Anjorin & Jansari, 2018, p. 9).

These practices do not seem to be in use in the surveyed organizations. Employees expressed that they have not perceived communication initiated by the management regarding the diversity policy in place, something which is also in line with the information provided by the managers, who mentioned that such communication is done through informal memos, some emails and staff meetings.

The managers explained that in cases of problems coming due to diversity among employees, usually conflicts, they resolve the issues through discussions with the opposing sides. It is therefore, open and sincere communication that can resolve conflicts coming from diversity among staff. This is an area that needs to be improved in the organizations, in order to have better results with regard to emergence of conflicts and other problems related to diversity among employees.

In the literature it is mentioned that effective managers need to know that specific skills are required for creating a successful diverse workforce. They need to

realize that there needs to develop knowledge and procedures managing it. In addition they also have to recognize that sometimes they may have some prejudices and cultural biases themselves (Koonce, 2001). According to Greenberg (2012) companies need to create a strategy and form a culture of diversity, something that needs to be implemented in all departments of the company.

Greenberg, (2012), also suggests implementation of a diversity plan through certain policies, after having assessed the extent of diversity in the workplace.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the information gathered, the responses given in the questionnaire by the employees and with regards to the interview questions from the managers, the author noticed certain areas where both organizations need some improvement.

In order to have a more effective management of diversity the companies need to initiate procedures that enhance:

- Communication of the organization's values and positioning towards diversity.
- Clear connection between organization's mission and vision and diversity matters, and make the employees' part of this.
- Establish formal procedures for managing diversity in the workplace and communicate these to the employees.

In addition, mentoring programs that are related to diversity can be introduced, as literature shows that they can may have lasting effects on the career of an employee in the future (Noe, Greenberger & Wang, 2002).

4.3 Conclusions

As mentioned above, diversity can generally be defined as recognizing, understanding and accepting individual differences irrespective of their race, gender, age, class, ethnicity, physical ability, race and so on. Globalization in this recent time has triggered more interaction amongst people from different cultures and backgrounds than before. Many studies and researches have been conducted concerning diversity and it can be said say that diversity can be a problem to an organization but could also be a solution depending on the way it may be used.

Nevertheless, it is obvious, from all the above that at the same time an organization has the chance and the duty to develop the idea of diversity in the workplace in such a way so that people who are considered to be different one to another can cooperate in harmony for the benefit of this organization. Diversity and its different forms and manifestations actually can be a useful tool by which, for example, an organization can boost its productivity or find new and exceptional solutions which may be important for its future and for its presence in the market. The main idea at this point has to do with the prospect that the talents and the special traits of different people can and must be coordinated and combined in such a way so that they will finally offer the best results.

Of course at the same time, such a process is not so easy. It is evident, as we said before, that organizations and their managers have to develop plans and programs by which diversity will be a strong tool of development. The latter has to do both with each individual in the workplace as well as with the whole organization. Such programs and plans on are connected to the effort of giving training to the employees through which the latter will develop a new way of thinking according to which they will respect diversity and they will also be ready to cooperate with their colleagues in order to achieve the company's aims and goals. On the other hand, such plans will have to coordinate the special traits of all employees by the best ways. Many times, good intentions, no matter their importance, are not the only thing that has to be taken under consideration. The point here is also how you organize and set such programs and plans.

This is why the role of mentors is quite important. Mentors are the ones who can guide the personnel of an organization through in order to promote the importance of diversity in the workplace. Their work usually is not that easy, since they have to face ideas and ways of thinking which are indicative of discrimination. Such ideas most notably can be either of the employees or even their bosses and supervisors in a company. Mentor's work can be said to be mostly a gradual process, where he or she will promote the benefits and advantages of diversity in the workplace, maybe not at once but in time. One important aspect here, which has been noted above, is that the role of mentor can be more decisive in the case he has a more direct approach towards the employees of an organization. Such an aspect it is not so usual in the case of formal plans and programs organized by mentors as it is in the case of more informal programs. In any case, diversity management in the workplace is more than important as it is close to the needs and the realities of labor market in our days. It is something which sets the needed basis for modern companies in a global environment which evolves and changes constantly.

Appendix

A.1 Employee Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Company Employee Regarding Diversity Management

Gender		Man ☐		Woman ☐		
Age	<25 ☐	26-35 ☐	36-45 ☐	46-55 ☐	56-65 ☐	>65 ☐
Years in the company	<1 ☐	1-3 ☐	4-7☐	8-12☐	13-20☐	>20☐
Position	Employee ☐		manager ☐		executive ☐	

1. Would you say that there is diversity among the employees of the company you work?
   Not at all ☐

   In some extend ☐

   To a medium extend ☐

   To a big extend ☐

   There is absolute diversity ☐
2. Type of diversity in the workplace (you may select more than one response)

Age ☐	Ethnicity / race / nationality ☐
Gender ☐	Language ☐
Sexual orientation ☐	Religion
Education ☐	Disability ☐
Income ☐	Interests ☐

For the sentences that follow, please indicate the degree that you agree
(1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neutral 4=agree
5=strongly agree)

The company I work for engages in targeted recruitment of diverse job candidates	1	2	3	4	5
The company I work for has established a reputation for a commitment to diversity.	1	2	3	4	5
The company I work for identifies and removes items from employee selection tests that appear to be biased towards subgroups.	1	2	3	4	5
The company trains HR personnel to reduce potential subgroup bias.	1	2	3	4	5
The company encourages employees to confront prejudice when they see it.	1	2	3	4	5
The company offers support for employees who may feel they are stereotyped by their group membership.	1	2	3	4	5
The company has an established method for resolving diversity-related complaints.	1	2	3	4	5
The company has ongoing diversity awareness/education programs.	1	2	3	4	5
The company has a mentoring program.	1	2	3	4	5
The company has formal structures of responsibility for diversity	1	2	3	4	5
The company gives equal opportunities to minorities or diverse employees or job candidates	1	2	3	4	5
The company communicates to employees the diversity policy in place	1	2	3	4	5
The company has set diversity-related goals in our performance management process.	1	2	3	4	5
The company has a diversity policy place (for example a formal positioning for overall acceptance and equal opportunity for all)	1	2	3	4	5
There is reaction from the company for employees failing to follow the diversity policy	1	2	3	4	5

A.2 Questions for the Manager's Interview

Interview Protocol for company managers

1. What is your position within the company?
2. How many years you have been working for this company?
3. Would you say that there is diversity within the employees of the company?
4. If yes, in what terms? In other words, what is the type of diversity (age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity / race, nationality, language, religion, education, income, disability, interests).
5. Research shows that workforce diversity is beneficial for a company. Do you agree? What do you think are the main positive impacts of diversity in your company, if any?
6. In spite of the above, do you also see any possible negative effects of diversity on the work or the business? Have you come across such negative impacts? Can you describe some examples?
7. Which do you think that are the main challenges of diversity management in an organization?
8. Is there a diversity policy in your company? (a formal position on equal opportunities, anti-discrimination etc.)
9. Are there specific company procedures in place for managing diversity? Can you give some examples?
10. Have you witnessed any tension among employees in your company that is the direct result of diversity, e.g. racial tension? If so, how did you address it?
11. What does it mean for you to have a corporate commitment to diversity?
12. Have you participated in any discussions with the management team on how to unify diversity management policies with the ethics and values of the company as defined by the company mission? Can you describe?
13. In what way does the company communicate diversity management policies and diversity positioning to employees? (For example, is there a newsletter, written statements, training sessions?).
14. Are there any procedures in place for disciplinary action, for failure to follow the diversity policy? Can you give examples?
15. If there are disciplinary measures in place (as in Q14), have these ever been used?

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