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Managing inclusion at a diverse workplace

- From a managerial and employee perspective

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Abstract (Maximum 250 words)

Background: Globalization has changed the market in ways of creating new opportunities as well as new challenges for organizations and has given rise to a global phenomenon called workforce diversity. The phenomenon appeared as a result from the constantly changing marketplace where people as part of a worldwide economy, live and work in foreign countries. Thus, as global markets emerge, and workforce demographics shift, workforce diversity inches closer to becoming a necessity instead of a banner that businesses wave to show their commitment to embracing differences and change.

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to examine and to provide a better understanding of how diversity is managed through inclusive practices and policies, and how employees perceive these practices.

Method: The research is based on a qualitative case study. The primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The respondents of the interviews were both managers and employees in order to get the two different perspectives. Two managers and six employees were interviewed.

Findings: The empirical findings showed that managers' perspective of inclusion practices differs much from how the employees perceive inclusion practices of a diverse workforce. The main findings were that the stated inclusion practices at The University are not perceived among the employees. One example was that some of the employees feel like they were excluded at The University. Moreover, some of the employees stated that people that are not ethical Swedes are not treated the same nor get the same opportunities. Another observable issue was that The University rarely speak English and all documented information is in Swedish, which mean that not all employees receive the information needed.

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1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the topic of the thesis. The chapter will start with presenting the background where the concepts of globalization, diversity management, diverse workplace and inclusion of a diverse workforce are introduced. Furthermore, the chapter will present the problem formulation, purpose of the study, research questions and delimitations.

1.1 Background

Globalization has changed the market in ways of creating new opportunities as well as new challenges for organizations (Moore, 1999). Furthermore, globalization has given rise to a global phenomenon called workforce diversity. The phenomenon appeared as a result of the constantly changing marketplace where people as part of a worldwide economy, live and work in foreign countries. The process of globalization has also increased the requirement of more interaction among people from diverse backgrounds, beliefs, lifestyles and cultures (D'Netto, Shen, Chelliah, & Monga, 2014). As global markets emerge and workforce demographics shifts, workforce diversity inches closer to becoming a company's necessity instead of a banner that business wave to show their commitment to embracing differences and change (Mayhew, 2019). One organization that has been adapting to these changes and been hiring people from diverse backgrounds is The Coca Cola Company. The company stated that diversity and inclusion are the heart of its values and is an important part of Coca-Cola's success (The Coca Cola Company, 2020). According to them, *"Creating a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace is not only the right thing to do – it is a strategic business priority that fosters greater creativity, innovation and connection to the communities we serve"* (The Coca Cola Company, 2020, s. 1).

Increasing diversity has become a significant trend during the 21st century and it is a current organizational reality (Seymen, 2006; D'Netto, et al., 2014). Organizations may now benefit from the internationalization of business, world market development, growing workforce flexibility and increased awareness of diverse persons (Shen, Chanda, D'Netto, & Monga, 2009). In order to grasp these benefits, organizations usually use a proactive strategy called *inclusion*. Inclusion is about valuing diversity and treating every employee as an equal so that an organization can benefit from a diverse workforce (Rabl T. , del Carmen Triana, Byun, &

Bosch, 2018). Inclusion plays the role of strategy to prevent discrimination at the workplace. Therefore, by focusing on an inclusive approach, organizations work on ripping the benefits of a diverse workforce such as increasing work productivity and competitive edge. A workforce diversity is a concept that describes that organizations are becoming more heterogeneous in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation (Sharma, 2016). A diverse workforce can contribute with many different perspectives on expectations, approaches, insights and values which can enhance rational decision-making and efficiency. Moreover, diversity provides immediate access to a large pool of skills, knowledge, and abilities required in the accomplishment of organizational objectives and goals (Ewoh, 2013). Managing and valuing diversity can be a key element for effective management. Diversity management as well as having a diverse workforce benefits associates by creating a safe and fair environment where the employees have access to the same challenges and opportunities (Mazur, 2010; Shen et al., 2009). Unmanaged diversity at workplaces, on the other hand, can become an obstacle for companies to achieve organizational goals (Mazur, 2010). Thus, there is an increasing need to understand more about workforce diversity (Ongori & Agolla, 2007).

Diversity has also become an important matter for managers, since it may bring organizational opportunities. Inclusive practice is an approach that refers to effort managers take to value differences and to promote opportunities for all employees (Sharma, 2016). The development of managerial skills is needed in diverse work environments as differences in population, meaning differences of ethnicity, race, culture and so on, are expected to rise in the future (Mazur, 2010). Hence, managers have an important responsibility to teach and change themselves as well as others within organizations, *"to value multicultural differences in both associates and customers so that everyone is treated with dignity"* (Mazur, 2010, s. 5). The question is not whether managers accept that individuals are different, but it is a matter of creating an inclusive atmosphere and making a commitment to valuing diversity. Inclusivity is the act of diversity management that creates a work environment nurturing teamwork, cohesiveness and participation. Hence, managers play an important role in creating a work environment with an inclusive atmosphere (Shen, Chanda, D'Netto, & Monga, 2009).

When it comes to Sweden, it has been proven that the Swedish industry has benefited a lot from globalization. Swedish industry's integration into global value chains created jobs and support to the Swedish households (Sjöö, 2018). In a report to the globalization council in Sweden,

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Johnson (2007) mentions different globalization waves which caused an increased rate of immigration. In the 1960s, many emigrants came to Sweden from Yugoslavia and Turkey which are together referred to as labor immigrants. When Sweden joined the EU in 1995 and became part of the common European labor market the number of foreign-born persons increased twice as much (Johnson, 2007). As of today, about 22 percent (22 %) of the working population in Sweden has a foreign background, that is, they are either born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas. These numbers indicate that there are organizations in Sweden which tend to have highly diverse workforces (Hedström, 2015). Furthermore, the city in which this study will be conducted has approximately 82 500 citizens and the division in the workforce between gender and ethnicity is 7 percent (7 %) women with a foreign background, 7 percent (7 %) men with a foreign background, 43 percent (43 %) women with a Swedish background and 42 percent (42 %) men with a Swedish background (Region Skåne, 2019). Thus, the numbers indicate that there are organizations in this city that may have highly diverse workforces.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Previous studies conducted by Ongori and Agolla (2007) discovered that researchers in the field of management and organizations have increasingly developed an interest in the topic of diversity in a work environment. The increased interest is due to the free movement of labor and the fight for human rights by certain minority groups who feel excluded from the employment sector (Ongori & Agolla, 2007). Research about diversity in workplaces has studied both field and laboratory settings. Laboratory studies showed that diversity within workgroups resulted in increased effectiveness. Field studies, on the other hand, showed that diversity is associated with negative performance outcomes (Mazur, 2010).

Many organizations are trying to adopt an equal opportunity philosophy which is aimed at creating a more heterogenic workplace, meaning having a diverse workforce (Ongori & Agolla, 2007). However, a dilemma related to diversity can occur in organizations where the managers are dependent on trusting their employees to carry out job tasks that are consistent with organizational goals. Managers tend to prefer homogenous workplaces where they can concentrate on goals such as high-commitment, retention of scarce skills and on maintaining a low staff turnover. Therefore, they might find difficulties in creating a diverse workforce, since

it might be challenging to maintain all these desired goals and be inclusive at the same time. Another reason why it is preferable to create a homogenous workforce is because managers fear that diversity might increase the chances of conflicts within the organization (Bassett-Jones, 2005). Studies also show that the level of satisfaction, cooperation and harmony tend to be high in homogeneous groups, and emotional conflicts tend to decrease. Since homogenous workforces tend to not have social and cultural barriers, positive social associations are nurtured as the self-characterized identity of belonging in homogeneous groups emerges (Mazur, 2010).

Diversity has shown to stimulate creativity and innovation in organizations. However, diversity management plays a huge part in whether diversity will lead to creativity and innovation. If diversity is managed well, that is with an inclusive approach, it can create a better market orientation as well as increase commitment and job satisfaction by enhancing creativity. On the contrary, if diversity is not managed well, the outcomes can be harmful for an organization since it can lead to poor quality production, reduced communication, distrust and lost focus of market orientation (Bassett-Jones, 2005; Shore, Cleveland & Sanchez, 2018). Hence, benefits of diversity are unlikely to occur without inclusion, and even worse, such negative consequences, in turn, may even lead to discrimination within an organization. Existing literature on inclusion seeks to provide ways in which organizations can create inclusionary environments and bring on practices so that diversity does not become a disadvantage. Shore, et al. (2018) states that when it comes to organizational inclusion practices, top management tend to have a key role. They need to build and support an environment in which members of all social identity groups can be themselves and still being treated fairly and respectfully. However, empirical evidence shows that managers and employees within an organization often have differences in their perceptions regarding inclusion practices. In many cases, it has been discovered that managers believe that they are good at implementing various inclusion practices. However, employees do not find it to be the case. They perceive manager's inclusive practices not to be successful. I other words, it can be deduced that what managers think of practicing is not in line with what or how the employees perceive it to be (Shen et al., 2009).

The Sociological Science Journal (2019) presented a field experiment which studied nine countries in Europe and North America, containing more than 200 000 job applications. The findings in this study showed that there was significant discrimination of non-white applicants in all countries which were examined. People who are non-white living in high-discrimination

countries receive half of the callbacks as the white natives. Sweden has the second-highest rate of discrimination associated with skin-color (Quillian, Heath, Pager, Midtbøen, Fleischmann, Hexel, 2019). On the other hand, there is a county located in southern Sweden that states on their webpage that gender is the most important factor which determines which sector you work at. Hence, the differences in ethnicity tend to play a small role in comparison to gender (Region Skåne, 2019).

As mentioned above, scholars argued that researchers in the field of management and organizations have increasingly developed an interest in the topic of diversity in a work environment (Ongori & Agolla, 2007). The issue of managing diversity is a primary concern for many organizations. Furthermore, authors like Shore et. al. (2011) have in their findings pointed out the need to assess inclusiveness in work environment practices and how organizations could benefit from diversity. Inclusiveness in the work environment has also been studied in universities, for example, Aigare, Thomas and Koyumdzhieva (2011) researched in Jönköping international business school. They (2011) stated that diversity management is more relevant in education institutions because diversity is present in both the supplier and customer side. However, it is hard to find any research that takes both employee and managers' views of diversity and inclusivity into consideration. Since most universities have a diverse workforce, we want to investigate how managers work with an inclusive approach, as well as examine whether and how the employees at the university experience the inclusivity practices. Thus, this thesis will look at the current situation of managing diversity at a university and the employees' view of how it is being delivered. Furthermore, since there is an observable issue with discrimination in Sweden, we are interested in investigating how the university that was chosen works to prevent discrimination through inclusion practices.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine and to provide a better understanding of how diversity is managed through inclusive practices and policies, and how employees perceive these practices. This explorative research may contribute to the literature base for future readers. It may also add more insight and knowledge on the topic of diversity at the chosen University, in terms of what a diverse workforce contributes to a workplace. Since the university has a diverse workforce, it is a relevant case for this thesis.

1.4 Research Questions

Two research questions have been prepared to help reach the stated purpose:

RQ1: *How do managers at the University work with diversity through an inclusive approach?*

RQ2: *How are inclusive practices perceived by employees at the University?*

1.5 Delimitation

In this study, there are a few delimitations. First, not all the employees were interviewed at the university. Since only a few thoughts have been analyzed we received limited information and individual perceptions. There have also been delimitations of the concept of diversity since it has several different dimensions. In this thesis, there was a focus on ethnicity.

2. Literature Review

This chapter will provide a description of concepts relevant to this study. The concepts include a definition of diversity, benefits and challenges of diverse workforces, diversity management, and the theory of inclusivity. The key definitions are provided in order to avoid misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

2.1 Diversity and its Dimensions

According to Sharma (2016, s. 63) *"Diversity refers to any perceived difference among people: age, race, religion, functional specially, profession, sexual orientation, geographic origin, and lifestyle, tenure with the organization or position and any other perceived difference"*. The characteristics mentioned above are divided into the so-called primary dimensions and some are within the secondary dimensions of diversity. *The primary dimensions* of diversity include factors such as gender, age, race, color, ethnicity, physical ability, etc. These abilities shape one's self-image along with one's worldview. The primary dimensions are inborn, more visible and are therefore what mainly influence other perceptions of the self in a workplace or society (Mazur, 2010). For example, Moore (1999) states that gender is normally the first type of information that we absorb about an individual. Likewise, observable dimensions of diversity might give an inaccurate picture of an individual since people are more complex and unique than what their immediately observable characteristics suggest (Moore, 1999). *The secondary dimensions of diversity* include factors such as religion, culture, thinking style, geographic origin, family status, political orientation, work experience, values, sexual orientation, education, lifestyle, language, beliefs, physical appearance and economic status. These dimensions are more malleable meaning that many of them will change over time. For example, values and beliefs might change due to experience and other circumstances (Mazur, 2010).

Table 1 - The dimensions of Diversity

Dimensions	Category	Factors
Diversity	The primary dimensions	gender, age, race, color, ethnicity, physical ability
	The secondary dimensions	religion, culture, thinking style, geographic origin, family status, political orientation, work experience, values, sexual orientation, education, lifestyle, language, beliefs, physical appearance and economic status

2.1.1 Diversity at workplace

Within the company, diversity refers to the co-existence of employees from various socio-cultural backgrounds (Ongori & Agolla, 2007). Diversity could also be described as a mixture of people with different group identities within the same social system. Workforce diversity on the other hand means similarities and differences among employees in terms of cultural background, age, physical abilities and disabilities, religion, race, gender and sexual orientation (Seymen, 2006).

2.2 Benefits of Diverse Workforce

What makes diversity so important? Researchers, practitioners, and theorists such as Fredman and Deane (2014) have emphasized the benefits that individuals, groups, societies and organizations can derive from diversity. A diverse workforce can bring several benefits and advantages to an organization. Sharma (2016) stated six advantages of having a diverse workforce.

First, a diverse workforce tends to improve the understanding of a customer base. Having an organization with employees from a wide range of backgrounds can develop an understanding of customers' point of views because different experiences come together. The more diverse the workforce is the more likely it is for the organization to meet diverse clients' needs (Sharma, 2016). A diverse organization may be better suited to serve an external client in an increasingly global market (Saxena, 2014). Ongori and Agolla (2007) agree and state that organizations with

a diverse workforce can provide superior services due to that they better understand customers' needs.

Second, a diverse workforce may increase productivity. Greater diversity will offer diverse ways of thinking. A mix of diverse experience and expertise can in certain processes encourage the employees to discuss and learn from each other. There is a great possibility that collaboration and teamwork will thrive if the employees are comfortable speaking and expressing their opinions with their colleagues. Sharma (2016) presents studies showing that diverse organizations have higher levels of morale, which in turn leads to employee satisfaction and greater productivity.

Third, organizations with people from diverse backgrounds tend to be more innovative and creative. The same as with productivity, innovation and creativity become greater when people in a workforce have diverse backgrounds, experiences and skills. An increased level of creative talents and ideas comes with a broad range of backgrounds (Sharma, 2016). The innovation and creativity stimulated by diversity create a world-class culture within the organization that can outperform the competition (Saxena, 2014). This culture within the organization involves an environment "where no one is advantaged or disadvantaged" and where 'we' is everywhere (Fredman & Deane, 2014). The ability to succeed no matter what the future may hold will increase if the company has a greater diversity within the workplace. Saxena (2014) states that creativity thrives on diversity.

Fourth, diversity increases the set of skills. The organization will have a greater set of skills and competences with a more diverse workforce. It is never a bad thing to increase a company's ability to cope with a changing market (Sharma, 2016). Having a diverse workforce can supply a greater variety of solutions to problems in sourcing, service, and allocation of resources (Saxena, 2014). Furthermore, diversity in the workforce can become a competitive advantage for organizations because different sets of skills and different viewpoints may facilitate unique and creative approaches to problem-solving, thereby increasing innovation and creativity, which in the end leads to better organizational performance (Ongori & Agolla, 2007).

Fifth, it improves employee onboarding and retention. When new employees start, they can easier be on-boarded and integrated because there are employees they can relate to. Employees who feel valued, comfortable and able to integrate within an organization are less likely to search for employment elsewhere. Thus, it can lead to reduced costly recruitment processes and it helps to build experience and expertise within the employee base (Sharma, 2016).

Sixth, organizations that embrace diversity can benefit from a larger talent pool than those who only look at selecting groups of potential applicants. Thus, it leads to a faster and more cost-effective recruitment process (Sharma, 2016). Also, organizations that develop a reputation and experience for managing diversity will likely attract the best personnel (Ongori & Agolla, 2007).

2.3 Challenges of Diverse Workforce

Managing workforce diversity is one of the most difficult and pressing challenges of present organizations (Ongori & Agolla, 2007). In opposition to the benefits of a diverse workforce, Mateescu (2017) states that diversity can negatively influence the performance of the group. The negative influences on performance from a diverse workforce are explained by the theories of self-categorization and social identity. These theories state that a higher level of heterogeneity in a group decreases the level of communication within the group. As the level of communication and satisfaction decreases, emotional conflicts increase. Another perceived disadvantage is that multiethnicity and multiracialism increase the consumption of time, energy and resources for problem-solving. Also, frustration and confusion arise due to the complexity, uncertainty and difficulties appearing during a decision-making process. These circumstances lead to a decreased level of identification of the group which results in low performance.

Homogenous groups tend to communicate more often and also in variety of ways to each other, much due to that they share the same perceptions and worldviews (Mazur, 2010). Because homogeneous people do not have social barriers within the group, thus the level of cooperation and satisfaction will increase and also the level of emotional conflict will decrease. Since these are the circumstances prevailing in homogeneous groups, the positive social associations will be heightened (Mazur, 2010). However, if the employees of an organization are perceived as too similar, then the employees become interchangeable and the need for uniqueness is unfulfilled (Shore, o.a., 2011).

Furthermore, Fredman and Deane (2014) have found evidence that favors a more pessimistic view of diversity. The pessimistic view state that diversity creates social divisions and that it can lead to negative performance outcomes. In addition, differences based on gender, age, race and ethnicity, for example, tend to affect group functioning in a more negatively. On the

contrary, 'underlying differences' such as functional or educational background were more likely to affect performance in a beneficial way (Fredman & Deane, 2014).

2.3.1 Discrimination

When it comes to the field of diversity much of the focus has been on eliminating or reducing undesirable, unfair, and discrimination on increasing equity and social justice (Fredman & Deane, 2014). Discrimination is another challenge that comes with a diverse workforce. Not all humans are alike. Societies have discriminated against people from different cultures, races, etc. for centuries (Saxena, 2014). Much of the work and focus on diversity in organizations began in the context of efforts to expand social justice and civil rights across lines of gender, age, race, disability, and other dimensions of identity that had often formed the basis for systematic exclusion and discrimination. Discrimination can later lead to further challenges. Members who have previously felt excluded or discriminated against will not be willing to assimilate to dominant norms and styles as a price of promotion or admission. Organizations also tend to ignore diversity for the purpose of avoiding discrimination or they highlight it solely for the purpose of accessing niche markets (Fredman & Deane, 2014).

2.4 Diversity management

The presented benefits with a diverse workforce will not solely occur only by having a diverse workforce. The requirement of additional practices is needed for these benefits to occur. Furthermore, the result of globalization and demographic changes have had a huge impact on organizations. The ongoing organizational development shows diversity management is not a matter of decision but a matter of fact. Diversity management can be described as how organizations to coordinate, plan and realize policies, initiatives, strategies, and activities for progress aiming to accommodate different ways of working with diverse employees. Managers encourage the continued development of the perceived differences among their employees in order to achieve maximum productivity. It is important for managers to create and support an organizational culture where all workers can be effective. Furthermore, when creating this culture, it is important for the managers to support workplace diversity as a company goal and to include diversity initiatives in the company's business strategies (Sharma, 2016).

Farren and Nelson (1999) developed a three-step framework where they suggest how managers in organizations should retain a diverse workforce. Since a diverse workforce can create miscommunication (Bassett-Jones, 2005), Farren and Nelson (1999) suggested that the first step is that mangers in organization need to have an *open communication*. Communication is viewed as one of the ground pillars which holds organizations up. Another ground pillar is the knowledge that the employees attain. Also, employees are seen as the ones who first recognize possible issues within the organization. Thus, managers should be straight forward with their employees by communicating if there is a possible issue. Organizations that have an open communication and treat their employees with respect have higher rates of employee loyalty, retention and they become far more competitive (Farren & Nelson, 1999). The results are that employees are more likely to enjoy their work and their productivity will increase. Unequal treatment of the employees is defined as an organizational issue. Since the employees control the production, fair treatment becomes an essential managerial tool. While open communication is the first critical step, it has to be followed by actions that reflect the concerns and needs of employees (Farren & Nelson, 1999).

The second step is *training and education*. This step managers should focus on educating employees about diversity and give them an insight to the biases and discrimination that diverse employees feel. Due to the rise of people with diverse backgrounds in companies, many organizations provide practical and real-life training to educate employees how to handle problems that might occur because of a diverse workforce. By educating employees, the discrimination will be minimized. By doing sensitive training such as exercises including teambuilding, employees learn to work productively and effectively with people from diverse backgrounds which have different lifestyles. By having diversity training, an organization have a greater chance at maximize performance and to enhance the organization's ability to attract, develop and retain talent (Farren & Nelson, 1999).

The third one is called *make managers accountable*. Most managers in organizations see the issue of diversity initiatives as important, but only a few link diversity initiatives to performance. As mentioned in the second step, education about diversity is the key to understanding the circumstances that diversity creates. Therefore, it is crucial to see the different aspects with a diverse workforce to understand which measures are needed to be implemented. Managers should understand the benefits that diversity might bring as well as

they should not overlook the matter that diversity differences might lead to issues (Farren & Nelson, 1999).

2.5 Theory of inclusion

The core concept of inclusion was created in relation to diversity. Practices and research have suggested that diversity, meaning a group of multiple identities and their cultures in an organization or a workforce, does not necessarily lead to benefits; the need for additional practices is likely needed (Fredman & Deane, 2014). Besides, only embodying a greater variety of differences in an organization or group does not magically lead to a path towards greater performance. That is, inclusion is considered a key approach in order to benefit from diversity. Inclusion is what managers do with diversity when they value and appreciate people of and not in spite of their differences, as well as their similarities (Fredman & Deane, 2014). Inclusion could be defined as the degree to which an employee is accepted and treated as an insider by the organization and where they are allowed to participate and contribute fully (Shore, et.al., 2011).

Essentially, inclusion is a way of working with diversity: it is the process and practice through which groups and organizations can reap the benefits of their diversity (Fredman & Deane, 2014, s. 50)

The terms inclusion and diversity are often used together and treated as two sides of the same coin. Yet, the distinctions and relationships between inclusion and diversity are not always sufficient and specified (Fredman & Deane, 2014). Diversity comes with a mixture of attributes within a workforce that significantly affects the way people feel, think and behave at work, the employees' work performance, acceptance and satisfaction. In contrast, inclusion emphasizes putting new attention in practices, policies and climate of the workplace. Thus, inclusive practices are about creating an *inclusive workplace* culture that shapes the organization. In that way, it is the workplace culture that connects individuals to the organization. The connection means to encourage collaboration, fairness and flexibility so that all employees can participate and contribute to their full potential. The core of inclusion theory is explained by inclusion practices. Inclusion is about seeking to create inclusionary environments and not to view diversity as a disadvantage, but to view it as a factor that can provide an organizational

advantage. As earlier mentioned, a diverse workforce can provide opportunities for greater innovation, but without inclusion practices, such benefits are unlikely to befall (Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez, 2018). Inclusion emphasize on fostering and creating conditions that allow and encourage everyone to fully be themselves. That includes embracing similarities as well as differences (Fredman & Deane, 2014).

In an organization, inclusive practices refer to voluntary actions taken to create greater inclusion of a diverse workforce through programs and policies where you emphasize collaboration, you treat everyone fairly and provide equal opportunities (Sharma, 2016; Fredman & Deane, 2014). Furthermore, the theory of inclusion explains that people tend to copy those who are in power. Likewise, if leaders who are in power and have authority enhance an inclusive behavior, they will be mimicked by others within the organization. As a result, an inclusive organizational culture will be created. However, if the leader were to act in a non-inclusive way, others will follow and consequently the organization as a whole. To understand the inclusion theory, one must understand the underlying issues which have created the need to adapt inclusivity in workplaces. Organizations have to deal with concepts of "in" and "out" groups the concept of in-groups refers to the small inner circles of colleagues whom we share interests, identities and perspectives. On the other hand, out-groups refer to those who are different from us. Those whom we may not share core values with, and those that have a different perspective and have had different life experiences (Fredman & Deane, 2014).

The practice of inclusion is an ongoing and dynamic process and it is created and re-created continuously. Individuals, groups and organizations cannot work on becoming inclusive just once and then assume that they are finished because it is a recursive and never-ending approach both in life and work. The concept of inclusion can be seen from different perceptions (Fredman & Deane, 2014). Thus, people can describe how they feel being included versus excluded differently. Essentially, inclusion is often seen as synonymous with a sense of belonging and participation. In an organization, the key aspect of what defines inclusion can become complex. For example, managers can perceive the employees to be "insiders" depending on how long they have been in the organization while the employees do not associate the time with themselves being "insiders" (Fredman & Deane, 2014; (Frost & Alidina, 2019). Employees often feel like "insiders" meaning that they feel a part of the team when they have their voice heard. This will increase their engagement, thereby furthering performance. If an employee

feels excluded and treated unfairly, they will lose job interest, resulting in poor job performance (Sabharwal, 2014). On the other hand, actions that are associated with managers and the "insider status" are sharing information with the employees, make the employees participate in decision-making processes and making sure their voice gets heard. These actions are assumed to enhance employee perception of inclusion (Shore, et.al., 2011). Shore, et.al. (2011) define inclusion as the degree to which the employees perceive that they are involved in the mission and operation of the organization with respect to their uniqueness.

2.6 A Conceptual Framework of Inclusion

Based on the presented literature, we created our theoretical framework that would fit our research questions. The framework is called *"Workforce Inclusion Framework"* and consists of five components. The green components which are: communication, education & learning and implementing inclusion practices. These three represent the process of spreading awareness of inclusion practices within an organization. The purpose of the framework is to see if the results of the process reflect the policies the organization has regarding creating an inclusive work environment. An inclusive work environment refers to the inclusion of the entire workforce where everyone is treated and viewed equally.

Figure 1 - Workforce Inclusion Framework
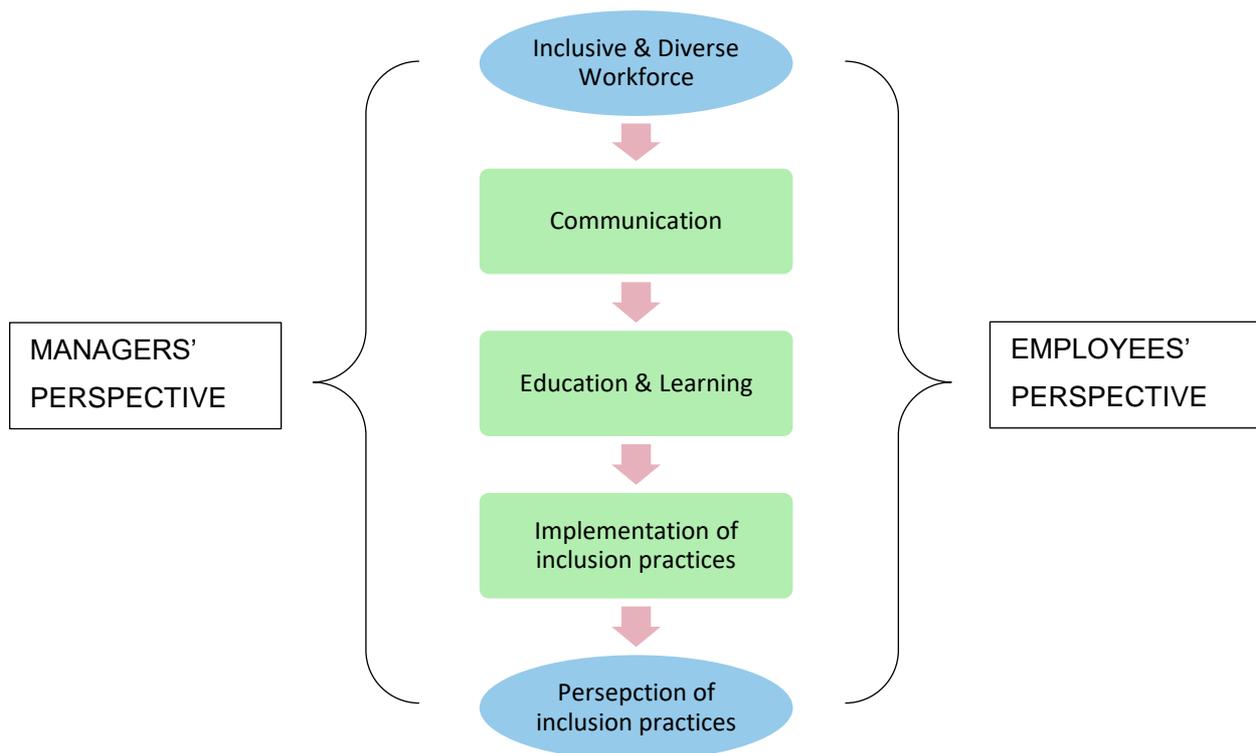
Inclusive and Diverse Workforce

The first component is called *Inclusive and a Diverse Workforce.* This component refers to the documented policies which organization have about inclusion of a diverse workforce. In this part of the framework, the perception of a diverse workforce is also included. The reason why *inclusion practices* are emphasized in the framework is that it is considered a key approach for an organization to benefit from diversity. Inclusivity and diversity management need to be congruent so that an organization could benefit from a diverse workforce. Inclusion could be defined as the degree to which an employee is accepted and treated as an insider by the organization and where they are allowed to participate and contribute fully (Shore, o.a., 2011).

Communication

Communication is the second component which is valued as important due to that the context of communication affects a workforce in several ways. If communication is done well it can increase the level of satisfaction and corporation. On the contrary, decreased communication has the opposite effect as it increases the level of emotional conflicts within a group (Mateescu, 2017). Farren and Nelsons (1999) stated that open communication is essential in organizations to avoid misunderstanding, and it should also be two-way. The managers are the ones accountable for communicating the inclusion practices to their workforce so that they are aware of the practices. The employees are responsible for receiving and taking these policies into consideration and applying them.

Education & Learning

The third component is Education and Learning. Education refers to mangers educating employees on how to handle problems that might occur because of a diverse workforce. Learning refers to having an open mind towards differences that employees might have. The recognition of the benefits of diversity is a crucial part. If people within an organization do not view diversity in a positive light, then negative associations will be related to a diverse workforce. Thus, it is important to recognize the benefits a diverse workforce can bring (Frost & Alidina, 2019). A heterogeneous group has a better possibility to bring competitive advantages (if managed well) in a global context (Fredman & Deane, 2014). If organizations and managers have incentives to be inclusive, it should be communicated within the organization, and specifically to the employees (Rabl T. , del Carmen Triana, Byun, & Bosch,

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2018). Educating a workforce pushes an organization towards acknowledging the benefits of diversity in an organization.

Implementation of Inclusion Practices

Fourthly, we have *Implementation of Inclusion Practices*. All the steps above are meaningless unless they are implemented within the organization. All the steps must be followed in order to create an inclusive work environment. The implementation should be a strategic act that reflects the incentives organizations and managers have regarding inclusion.

Managers' and Employees' Perception of Inclusion Practices

The last component of the framework aims to examine how the stated inclusion practices from The University are perceived among the employees. More specifically it aims to investigate the similarities and differences between managers' perception and employees' perception of inclusion practices. Employees feel like they are true members of the workforce and feel that they are equivalent to any other employee when they can make their voices heard. This will increase their engagement, thereby furthering performance. If an employee feels excluded and treated unfairly, they will lose job interest, resulting in poor job performance (Sabharwal, 2014). On the other hand, actions that are associated with managers and the "insider status" are sharing information with the employees, make the employees participate in decision-making processes and making sure their voice gets heard. These actions are assumed to enhance employee perception of inclusion (Shore, et.al., 2011). Shore, et.al. (2011) define inclusion as the degree to which the employees perceive that they are involved in the mission and operation of the organization with respect to their uniqueness.

Managers' Perspective vs Employees' Perspective

To fully understand the inclusion practices at The University, the framework will be used as a tool to examine the empirical findings and to find the main differences and analyzing these differences. Therefore, the managers' answers will first be presented according to the structure of the framework, thereafter the employees' answers will follow the same structure. Based on the answers, each component will have one or several sub-headings to categorize the main

findings. Lastly, the two different perspectives will be compared in the last part of the framework.

3. Methodology & Method

This chapter will provide an explanation of the methodology and method used in this thesis. A discussion will be provided on why this method and strategy was chosen and how it was used in the thesis. Furthermore, this chapter will also examine the data collection and data analysis. Lastly, it will conclude with the trustworthiness and ethical issues regarding the sources.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is a term that refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge. For example, it allows the writers to relate and make assumptions to the defined ideas on how researchers view the world (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Philosophical assumptions fundamentally shape the way how one understands and use theory. Theoretical orientation is also a fundamental factor since it influences the practice of business research. To understand and conduct business research effectively, we need to engage and gain knowledge about the philosophy of social science. Philosophical assumptions are underpinned in all researches in which firstly will shape the practices of research and secondly the theoretical conclusions. The research philosophy of social science seeks to understand assumptions in two spheres: ontology, which is about the understanding of what reality is and epistemology which is about the understanding of how we can know reality (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019).

3.1.1.1 Ontological considerations

Ontological considerations are referred to the assumptions about the nature of social phenomena influence the research process. Ontological considerations are about sorting out if the nature of social phenomena is relatively inert and beyond out influence or are they a product of social interaction. Ontology is also about answering the questions of *what it is that we seek to understand through research* and to determine *how we go about research reality*. The importance of ontology can be considered by two positions: *objectivism* and *constructivism*. Objectivism signifies that social phenomena confront us as external factors beyond our influence and reach, and they exist whether we are aware of them or not. On the other hand, constructivism asserts that social phenomena and its meanings are persistently being accomplished by social actors. Constructivism implies that social phenomena and categories

are produced through social interactions as well as they also are in a constant state of revision (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019).

Our thesis has constructivism as an ontological position. A constructive position means that social actors can view and perceive social phenomena differently (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). The reason behind our constructivist position is that we are interested in sorting out (1) how managers in the university are working with diversity with an inclusive approach and (2) how is it received by the employees. The perception among the informants might differ since the phenomenon of diverse workforce and inclusion practices is not always black and white.

3.1.1.2 Epistemological considerations

Epistemological considerations refer to the views and assumptions about how research should be conducted influences the research process. Epistemological consideration emphasizes how the social world should be studied. Simply explained, epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge. Logically, the epistemology of a thesis follows from the ontological considerations (Bryman, Bell, & Harley, 2019). "*A given ontological position – a particular understanding of what reality is – will imply a particular epistemological position – a particular understanding of how we can gain knowledge of that reality.*" (Bryman, et al., 2019, s. 29). Hence, epistemology is dependent on the ontological assumptions and underpinned by them. There are mainly three philosophies within epistemology: realism, interpretivism and positivism (Bryman, et al., 2019).

Researchers who chose to work with the philosophy *Positivism* view the social reality by an objective and impartial position. Positivism is linked to quantitative data and the best way to gather data is to observe the phenomena directly. *Realism* is another philosophy and relates to how people sense and observe the world and if there is a reality that is separate from their descriptions of it. Realism emphasizes that through the use of appropriate methods, reality can be understood. *Interpretivism* is the last philosophy to be mentioned. Writers with a philosophy of interpretivism share a view that people and their institutions are vitally different from that of natural science (Bryman, et al., 2019). The philosophy of interpretivism challenges positivism in the belief that social reality can be viewed from an objective position. Here, social reality is considered to be subjectively constructed by people's thoughts and actions (Denscombe, 2014).

Saunders et al. (2016) state that it is necessary to include an understanding between humans and their role as social actors in interpretivism. Furthermore, interpretivism is more concerned with the processes whereby things happen, meaning the *'how'* and the *'why'* of social actions are more interesting (Bryman, et al., 2019). The interpretive philosophy tends to be associated with qualitative data where the purpose of the research is to develop knowledge and insight about individuals' beliefs and own experiences (Denscombe, 2014). Hence, this thesis will lend itself to be inspired by the interpretivism philosophy as it is the most aligned with our research purpose. Since this thesis intertwines also has an explorative aspect within the social reality phenomenon, diversity, and its effect on organizations like universities. Put differently, we aim to understand social action in an interpretative way.

3.1.2 Research Approach

The research approach can be viewed as the base of a study since it plays an important role in organizing the paper and it also indicates the research interests. The research approach is a guideline that helps the study to become more systematic. Consequently, it helps to organize research findings. The relationship between research and theory is portraited as a choice of selecting theories that drive the research process in all its phases. There is a choice between three different research approaches which can be used: deductive, inductive abductive. A deductive approach means that one starts with choosing a theory, create hypotheses, collect data, present the findings, confirm or reject hypotheses and lastly the theory is revised if necessary. On the other hand, an inductive approach means that the theory is the outcome of the research. The last-mentioned method, abduction, is set to address the limitations related to the deductive and inductive approaches (Bryman, et al., 2019).

In this thesis, an abductive approach will be used since it is a combination of both deductive and inductive approaches. Additionally, in an abductive approach, the theory is used in an integrated way with the empirical data. Abduction involves back-and-forth engagement with the social world as an empirical source for theoretical ideas, and with the literature (Bryman, et al., 2019). In this case, we take our central concepts as a starting point as we are theoretically informed but at the same time, we are open to developing our framework in relation to the empirical data. The abductive approach enables us to analyze existing ideas about diversity, but also to embrace potentially new findings.

3.1.3 Research Strategy

Research strategy refers to the general approach to research which reflects a paper's methodological assumptions. There are two general approaches that can be used to solve methodological issues: quantitative and qualitative approaches. A research strategy with a quantitative approach is particularly useful when there is a quantification in the data collection which is to be analyzed. Qualitative research, on the other hand, emphasizes words and images in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, et al., 2019).

Qualitative research also emphasizes inductive approaches to relationships between research and theory. The general orientation to be conducted of this business research is a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is suitable in this thesis because it is based on interpretivist paradigm. An interpretivist paradigm emphasizes the depth and quality of the data collected. A qualitative is a more suitable approach for this thesis as the focus lies in collecting in-depth information about mangers' inclusion practices as well as employees' perception of these practices.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Data Collection

The purpose of the data collection was to gather information so that the research questions can be answered. Our objective was to understand how the university works with inclusion practices to benefit from a diverse workforce. Therefore, primary data were collected from semi-structured interviews. The respondents of the interviews will be managers and employees to get the two different perspectives. Furthermore, for this thesis, both primary and secondary data were collected to gain as much rich and relevant information as possible regarding diversity and inclusivity. To minimize the risk of the sound-record to fail or be of bad quality, two recording methods were used.

3.2.2 Primary Research

We conducted face-to-face online interviews via an online platform to acquire first-hand information. Interviews are a method of data collection using people's answers to the researcher's questions as a data source. Interviews focus on self-reporting, meaning they focus on what people say they do, what they say they believe and the opinions they say they have

(Denscombe, 2014). This method was preferred because it provided detailed information about inclusivity and diversity in the workplace. The interviews were done to get an overview of how the respondents worked and what policies they implement in their practices at the university.

We selected interviews as our method because they would provide opportunities to get deeper knowledge from different perceptive about our chosen topic. Thus, interviews could give the information in detail, about the respondents' opinions, experiences, feelings and attitudes towards the research question (Collis & Hussey, 2013). The reason behind the chosen method is because interviews are most suitable due to that they give the best dividend when the purpose is to explore complex and subtle phenomena such as opinions, perceptions, feelings and experiences. In these situations, the authors emphasize an in-depth understanding of the respondents. Also, interviews could provide the opportunity to speak to key people in which we provide privileged information. The privileged information is referred to the particularly valuable insights and knowledge based on their experience and position (Denscombe, 2014).

3.2.3 Criticism of the Chosen Method

However, interviews can come with some disadvantages as well. Employees may conceal confidential information as they feel uncomfortable with sharing inside information which will result in us not getting a full view on what is being asked. The respondents may also be biased when delivering responses (Kvale, 2007). The respondents' statements may be also influenced by the researcher's identity. An interview may involve a violation of privacy and/or be upsetting to the informant. Interviews can be pleasant, but the personal touch has its risks (Denscombe, 2014).

Furthermore, interviews require a lot of time both in generating and conducting them, and the respondents may have a busy schedule. Since the interviewees influence the interviews there could be interviewer bias because of the way the questions were asked (Kvale, 2007). In conclusion, data from interviews are based on what the respondents say rather than what they do. What the respondents say they do, what they say they prefer and what they say they think, cannot automatically be assumed to reflect the truth (Denscombe, 2014).

3.2.4 Secondary Data

The information of the university was gathered from its webpage. The webpage aided in getting a reliable insight into the University and its practices, and additionally, what its strategies and policies are. Further, other documents and reports regarding diversity management of the University were used.

3.2.5 Sample

With reference to the time limitation, the participants were mainly recruited through a convenience sampling strategy. Thus, we recruited participants that were simply available for the research (Bryman *et al.*, 2019). This sampling method was the most suitable for our research which had limited resources. The sample chosen for this thesis was five teachers from different backgrounds, countries and ethnicities within the university. We tried to include participants who we thought could contribute to dialogues and discussions. We also tried to choose participants based on their characteristics. The sampling method was, therefore, influenced by a purposive sampling method. We purposively selected participants that we believed would contribute to the research (Denscombe, 2014). Following, Bryman *et al.* (2019) mention that the problem with a comvienience sampling method and a purposive samplig method strategy is that it is impossible to generalize the findings, because you don't know of what population this sample is representative. The managers and employees in our case are only a group of participants that were avaialble to the research. They are surely not representative of managers and employees as a whole (Bryman *et al.,* 2019). However, Bryman *et al.* (2019) stated that in the field of business and management, convenience samples are surely very commom. Above all, the interviews were conducted with the consent of the employees within the university premises. Additional information was also gathered about the university's practices and policies through one department manager and one manager of one specific program. Some teachers that were interviewed gave several suggestions of other teachers from different backgrounds and ethnicities that were later emailed to book time for interviews. The teachers also recommended talking to the program manager who supports the department manager, for further information regarding policies and practices at the university. We believed that interviews with seven participants would be enough to create valuable data to successfully conduct our analysis. The risk of interviewing participants that are recommended is that you experience the same problem as with using the convenience sampling method with influence by a purposive sampling method. You get almost the same answers which makes it impossible to generalize the findings.

3.2.6 Interview Design

Research interviews focus on what the respondents say they do; what they say they believe and the opinions they say that they have. The interviews were conducted using a platform ZOOM to collect data from the respondents. We constructed two different interview guides: one interview guide for the managers and one for the employees (see appendix A).

Firstly, as a part of the research ethics, we asked the consent of the respondents to participate in the interview and in this research. We clarified that the purpose of these interviews was to produce data for research purposes. The respondents were aware of these terms and gave their approval to preselling. Furthermore, we asked for their consent to record the interview so that we could transcribe the material later on.

Secondly, it is we as authors who guide the interview by having prepared a set of question which we ask. The questions were structures in a particular order since some of the questions are depended on prior questions. Questions were also be developed during the interviews depending on what the respondents answer for us to be more flexible. The main questions were inspired by the framework we created, *Workforce Inclusion Framework* (see figure 1), to get the relevant data needed to answer the questions. All the questions were open questions to give space to the respondents to answer more freely which subsequently would give more in-depth information in comparison to closed questions. We also asked to exemplify their answers in order to get a wide knowledge of their perceptions and experiences.

Table 2 - A summary of the interviews at the university

INTERVIEWEE	POSITION	DATE	LENGTH OF INTERVIEW
EMPLOYEE A	Coworker	21-04-2020	50.14
EMPLOYEE B	Teacher	22-04-2020	54.17
MANAGER A	Manager	24-04-2020	38.30
EMPLOYEE C	Teacher	27-04-2020	67.19
EMPLOYEE D	Teacher	27-04-2020	43.50
MANAGER B	Manager	28-04-2020	22.40
EMPLOYEE E	Teacher	29-04-2020	85.10

3.2.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a stage that includes several elements. As we are working with qualitative data analysis the process can differ from the application of obvious statistical techniques to data. Instead of statistical analysis of the questionnaire data, a thematic analysis of interview transcript will be applicable in this thesis. Bryman, et al. (2019) mention some initial steps that are good to follow when analyzing. First of all, the raw data has to be managed. Meaning that we need to check the data to establish whether there are any obvious flaws. Thus, the interviews should be audio-recorder and later transcribed. Hence, during the interview, we audio-recorded through the Zoom-application. Secondly, the interviews were transcribed in order to be analyzed and categorized. The transcription was made in Word-documents. The transcription was later read multiple times by both to gain alternative perspectives of the data, which Bryman, et al. (2019) argue to be very important. In this stage, we sought for similarities and differences among the different transcripts. Thirdly, the data was broken down into component parts which were then given labels. In this stage, we sorted the material into common denominators and later discussed and compared the data to make sure we had the same perceptions. The categories were directly based on our theoretical framework. We realized that some comportment in the theoretical framework had several aspects to them. Therefore, we added several sub-headings to the theoretical framework, as a way of labeling and categorizing the data in the analysis. Categorizing the data helped us to create an image of the information. Fourthly, we need to remember that the analysis stage is fundamentally about data reduction. Hence, reducing a large principal sum of information gathered to make sense of it and to arrive at a credible outcome (Bryman, et al., 2019).

3.2.8 Trustworthiness of Sources

Trustworthiness and reliability concern questions whether the sources and the result of a study can be repeated and used again or not (Bryman, et al., 2019). The sources used throughout this thesis were chosen carefully to collect trustworthy and relevant data, hence only scientific articles and published books have been used. It can be argued that some of the articles or books are rather old, however recent articles still refer and mention these articles to date. Therefore, it can be argued that the chosen articles are still relevant and reliable to be used in this thesis. Interviews were done face-to-face on online platforms, which makes it relevant when conducting the interviewee's own experiences and opinions regarding the topic. However, they

may conceal information they do not intend to discuss with the interviewer. As the respondents were from a rather small department at The University, several of the respondents expressed concern about how their answers could be linked to identifying them. These concerns might affect the trustworthiness of the thesis. Also, since the subject of diversity and inclusion as sensitive, some of the participants were not able to speak freely.

3.2.9 Trustworthiness of the study

When it comes to the trustworthiness of the study Bryman, et al., (2019) mentioned some criteria that ensure the quality of qualitative research. *Credibility* is the first criteria to be mention and it referrers to if the study can be classified as credible. During our interviews we used an interview-guide which allowed us to manage the discussions and make sure the discussions were held within the topic. However, some of the questions and discussions were adapted to the participants' own experiences and opinions. The design of the interview sessions allowed the participants to discuss perspectives which we did not recognize ourselves. According to Bryman, et al., (2019) this opennes participants' own opinions and values cintribute to the credibility of the study. Further, we have *Transferability* that is another of the criteria and it indicates the extent to which the results of the study can be generalized and applied to other universities. Since this research aims to understand the inclusivity of a diverse workforce at a specific university, transferability is not the aim of this study. *Dependability* is another criterion and it refers to consistency in the research with, for example the sources, transcripts and data analysis. In the making process of this research, all the recorded material and the transcripts are stored on our devices and available in printed format. The last concept to be mentioned is *conformability*, this one explains if the researchers have acted in good faith and left out personal values. During this research, we strived to analyze the data objectively since we did not have any previous experience of studying inclusion at an organization (Bryman, et al., 2019).

3.2.10 Ethical Issues with Interviews

It is very important to consider ethical issues when conducting research. The participant shall not be harmed by the study of the methods used in the study. With that said there are some ethical issues and concerns that should be considered from the beginning of the research until the thesis is finally finished. Participants involved in the data collection were provided with information on the research purpose, as well as asked if they had a desire to participate as the

participation was voluntary. Furthermore, the respondents were informed that they could end the interview whenever they desired and that their answer would be anonymous. The data collected from the participants was only used to help answer the research questions. The respondents were treated confidentially in respect of their choice, as well as, the university's choice to be anonymous. Finally, the participants were not given any misleading or false information about the research study (Bryman, et al., 2019).

4. Case Presentation

The following chapter aims to create an understanding of the University. Further, general information will be presented in order to give an insight of how the University as a whole view diversity and inclusion of diversity. Lastly, this chapter will present legal regulation which the University have to take into consideration in order to in inclusive. The university that is examined in this thesis will be anonyms. *Therefore, the organization will be called and referred to as "**The University**" throughout.*

4.1 The University

The University that was chosen in this study is based in southern Sweden. It was chosen due to that it is an international university which emphasizes diversity. On its webpage, it states that in today's globalized world, effective internationalization is a prerequisite for increased quality in education as well as in research. It is through collaboration, exchange and contact creation that they as a university broaden their perspectives and develop new ideas (University, 2020).

"At XXX University, international cooperation is a matter of course and we are actively working to increase international mobility. It is important for us to foster an environment where students and staff work together to create an understanding of other cultures and traditions. We participate in exchange programs and network with universities all over the world." (University, 2020)

The University's internationalization work is conducted in several different forms, including student exchanges, teacher exchanges, research collaborations, assignment training, degree projects in other countries and international surveillance. The University assumes that in an increasingly global labor market, international experience can be valuable merit. As an international University, it has partnerships with about 130 partner universities around the world (University, 2020). These international partnerships are seen as an attraction factor for students, professional staff and researchers. The University's business program received the highest grade in the quality of education, which is "Very High Quality". Proximity, openness, curiosity and respect are key words that characterize all development at The University. These keywords are also central to The University's quality culture and give the feeling of interaction between students, employees, management and administration in the quality work according to

The University. In a report about employee regulation, The University emphasized equal opportunity and equal treatment among the employees. It especially emphasized gender equality as the University strives to be equally represented by the different genders. As part of the process of making the University a more equal place, it is expected from the employer to make a special effort to increase the proportion of the underrepresented gender. The employer shall also give an equal opportunity for people regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion or other belief. The University follows the policies of the Discrimination Act.

The Swedish government has assembled a Discrimination Act which all organizations in Sweden need to follow. The purpose of the Discrimination Act is: "*to combat discrimination and in other ways promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age*" (Government Office of Sweden, 2015). Thus, the University strives for inclusivity of diversity in the workplace.

5. Empirical Findings & Analysis

This chapter will present the empirical findings and analysis of this study. It explains the organizational level information that was sought from the managers who knew hos cultural diversity is being managed and experienced at the university, followed by interviews made on selected teachers and their analysis. The respondents expressed the wish to stay anonymous and therefore the decision was made to keep the university anonymous as well. The empirical findings will be presented in different sections which will follow the layup of the conceptual framework. In the last part of the framework, "Perception of the Inclusion Practices", there will be an analysis of the perspectives where the contrasts of the perspectives are highlighted.

5.2 Managers' Perspective

The following part aims to understand the mangers' perspective on inclusion and a diverse workforce. The empirical findings are presented, and some parts of the interviews are left out with the purpose of not revealing information that might identify the respondent. The empirical findings presented are based on the respective managers' perceptions. There might be a contrast between the presentation of the empirical findings of the managers' lengthwise. The reason behind this is the duration of the interviews varied (see Table 2). The sub-headings are based on the empirical findings and were derived from the answers from the manager to create a structure that will facilitate the reading. The sub-headings are based on the empirical findings and were constructed after our findings from the manager to create a structure that will facilitate the reading.

5.2.1 Inclusive and Diverse Workforce

Official Policies and How Employees Perceive Them

The understanding of differences and use of policies that promote employee-friendly workplaces are crucial for organizations (Sabharwal, 2014). What can be interpreted from the managers' answers is that there are not any direct documented policies regarding inclusion of a diverse workforce. However, since The University is an organization operating under the government, it does have some legal regulation it needs to consider such as the Swedish Discrimination Act (Government Office of Sweden, 2015). Furthermore, manager A stated that they work with inclusion when it comes to the recruitment process. In the recruitment process,

they strive for a greater width of diversity. Like manager A, manager B states that when it comes to the recruitment process, the applicants are only selected based on their competences and that the management strives after creating a diverse workforce. The work with inclusion in the recruiting process is positive because according to Randel, Dean, Ehrhart, Chung & Shore (2016) recruiting and selecting diverse individuals have been increasingly recognized as important of today's workforce.

Inclusion Practices

Furthermore, Randel et al. (2016) stated that research has highlighted the impotence of inclusive practices as a means for organizations to welcome the contributions of a broad range of employees. Yet, neither of the managers highlighted the importance of inclusive practices. Instead, manager A said that the subject of diversity is part work-environment related questions and inclusion is a part of creating a pleasant social work environment. Manager B, on the other hand, said that there are clear policies on the programs for the students, however on a department level, there is not anything concrete about inclusion of diversity. According to manager B, they emphasize on educating the students about inclusion rather than diversity. When educating the students, all the teachers and co-workers are invited to participate, but not all employees of the department choose to participate.

Managers' View of a Diverse Workforce

Further, manager A views a diverse workforce as something positive. People with other ethical backgrounds than Swedish can bring competences that currently do not exist at The University. Manager A expresses that if they were forced to employ only Swedish persons the level of competence would be significantly lower at their department. A diverse workforce also creates a workplace that becomes more open-minded. Additionally, manager A states that inclusion of the entire workforce is needed, regardless of the employees' background. Because as a unit you operate as a team not as individuals to reach common organizational goals. Manager A said, "*The advantages of inclusion are that it is a prerequisite for us to be able to do a good job as a workforce, where everyone must be involved, no one should run their own race and it does not matter what ethnicity they have.*"

Like manager A, manager B has a very positive view of diversity as it brings different perspectives. At the department, there is a great width of different nationalities. Hence, the English language is used frequently because some co-workers, who are not comfortable talking in Swedish and, therefore, at the coffee-table English is usually used. An advantage that comes with a diverse workforce at The University is that the students get different perspectives since the teachers have different backgrounds and experiences which come with widespread knowledge. Manager B also stated that the possible advantages of inclusion can bring are synergy-effects. More specifically, manager B expressed that they will achieve greater things while working as a united workforce than working as individuals. The majority of the advantages expressed by the two managers are very similar to the advantages stated by Sharma (2016); Saxena (2014); Ongori and Agolla (2007). For example, both the managers and Sharma (2016) mention that the organization will have a greater set of skills and competences with a more diverse workforce.

5.2.2 Communication

Communication is said to hold the organization together (Farren & Nelson, 1999). Openness in communication appears to encompass the possibility to use different communication styles, depending on the situation. Thus, the degree of flexibility in interactive communication is increased which is considered appropriate in the workplace (Hofhuis, van der Rijt, A, & Vlug, 2016). Since there are no specific policies at The University, communication policies become difficult for the employees to understand. Manager A states they do not communicate specific inclusion information towards the employees. When an employee first starts at The University, he/she will be given all information needed regarding the practical things at the office. There is an observable issue according to manager A who said that "*What can be difficult maybe that if a person does not master the Swedish language, then there will automatically be some form of exclusion since Swedish is the official language and our communication is in Swedish, in this area, I would say that there are problems".* Since many of the classes are in English, usually there is not an issue for those who do not speak Swedish according to manager A. As for employees who do not speak the Swedish languages well, the University offers courses in Swedish. In their department meetings, manager A uses the Swedish language to communicate information to the employees. Manager A motivates the use of using the Swedish language due to that is the official language in Sweden. Further, manager B stated Swedish is the educational language.

Moreover, manager A said that the employees have a responsibility to tell them if they feel something is wrong because manager A cannot ask every day if someone feels mistreated:

> *"We also have employee yearly appraisals with each and every employee where we talk quite honestly. I usually ask the question if there is something regarding the work environment that is bothering the employee which I ask each employee. Then they have the responsibility to tell me if they feel like they have been mistreated or discriminated. Then they have to tell me in order for me to have a chance to work with it. So that is a question which I ask at least once a year to all employees."*

Manager B mainly focuses on inclusion with the students at The University as manager B's responsibility is mainly the students.

5.2.3 Education & Learning

As mentioned before education refers to mangers educating employees on how to handle problems that might occur because of a diverse workforce. Learning refers to having an open mind towards differences that employees might have (Frost & Alidina, 2019). It is important to educate employees about other cultures and informing them of the discrimination and biases diverse employees may feel. Many organizations provide real-life training to teach employees how to handle different situations that may arise due to cultural differences (Farren & Nelson, 1999). Personally, manager A said that they had participated in courses regarding workplace-environment and on these occasions, the matter of diversity had been addressed. Manager A feels like diversity is not something people should make a big deal out of. One should simply act the same towards every person they meet. When asked if the employees also participated in similar courses about diversity, manager A said that they have, however not to the same extent.

According to manager A, previous education has not prepared the manager to deal with people with another ethical background. However, experience was the main source of knowledge about diversity. Manager A expresses that it is their inherent values that have taught them to treat everyone equally regardless of their ethical background. For manager A it is not even a question

to address since they find it to be so obvious. As for manager B, they express that they have not been educated in the same way as today's students are about inclusion and diversity. However, manager B's experience has played a huge part in the process of understanding the importance of inclusion. Again, manager B emphasized of inclusion when it comes to the students. The work with students and other lecturers who talked about inclusion has increased manager B's understanding of diversity and inclusion.

Manager A also reflected upon the reason why one might act differently toward those who are different from oneself. Manager A said that the act and choice of not interacting with people with diverse backgrounds is a matter based on insecurities and fear of differences rather than a matter of discrimination. It is the fear of not knowing how to interact. However, when one gets to know other people and understand their behavior and so on, it is not an issue anymore.

5.2.4 Implementation of Inclusive Practices

Implementation of Inclusive practices is a way of showing how the manager's inclusiveness captures the diversity-friendly notion of welcoming and valuing the contributions of employees (Randel, et al., 2016). When it came to how they managers felt about their inclusiveness, manager A began with a story *"As an outcome of the internationalization, people are taking advantage of the free movement"* - Manager A. Therefore, the workforce at the University now consists of people from diverse backgrounds in comparison to previous years. To adapt to the changes caused by internalization, the best way of including diverse people is to solely judge based on their competences. Furthermore, Manager A said: *"And in the department where I work, we have many people with all kinds of backgrounds, so it is very natural for us and none of us think it is weird, nothing we think about, we hire based on skills and then you be wherever you are from".* Other activities of inclusion are kick-offs and joint reviews of the programs at the University. These occasions are opportunities to create a sense of affinity within the workforce. Manager A continues to say that on these occasions, the focus is on the entire workforce, not solely on people with diverse backgrounds. According to manager A, "Swedish fika" is another important inclusion activity. It is an everyday activity that creates affinity within a workforce. This is good, because, according to Sabharwal (2014) a basic form of inclusion as a manager is to make sure that your employees feel they belong to a group and at the same time can maintain a unique identity.

Furthermore, manager A said that new employees usually have difficulties to adapt in the beginning. As part of an inclusion activity, the manager tries to be more observant of the new employees to make sure they become part of the group as fast as possible. However, these inclusion activities are not directly aimed towards individuals with other ethical backgrounds, they are based on the employees' personality according to manager A. Manager A continued to say that of course some new employees have a harder time understanding the social codes, but that is also dependent on one's personality rather than one's ethnicity. When it comes to the language, manager A said: *"on our usual/official meetings we use the Swedish language because it is the official language of our university. For those who do not master the Swedish language to 100%, it is possible that they'll miss some information"*.

The implementation of inclusion practices can be challenging according to manager B. The challenge is not being able to allocate the number of resources needed with inclusion according to manager B. Manager B said that they need to put a great number of efforts into becoming inclusive in the recruitment process. Another difficulty is the lack of flexibility. Since the University is an organization operating under the government it is thus a mechanistic organization. Because they are a mechanistic organization, it is difficult to implement some inclusion practices when they want and needs according to manager B. In conclusion, both managers explained some of the inclusive activities they implement trying to capture diversity. Thus, neither of the practices the manager's mention is congruent with what Randel, et al. (2016) mentioned to be examples of practices from an inclusive manager. Randel, et al. (2016) mentioned that inclusive managers attempt to include others in decisions in which their voices might otherwise be absent. Maybe some of this appears at the "Swedish fika" where manager A stated that they try to create affinity within the workforce but on the other hand no big decisions are made at the "Swedish fika".

Furthermore, manager B stated that:

"we have had some reviews regarding diversity which in all honesty have not been successful and have been a bit boring too. But we have gone through what was needed to go through. Also, I've not experience that there are any issues regarding diversity in our workforce which is why this matter is not prioritized highly since I experience that everything is working"

5.3 Employees' Perspective

The following part aims to understand the employees' perspective on inclusion and a diverse workforce. The empirical findings are presented, and some parts of the interviews are left out with the purpose of not revealing information that might identify the respondent. The empirical findings presented are based on respective employees' perceptions. There might be a contrast between the presentation of the empirical findings of the employees lengthwise. The reason behind it is the duration of the interviews varied (see Table 2). The sub-headings are based out of the answers from the employees to create a structure that will facilitate the reading.

5.3.1 Inclusive and Diverse Workforce

Official policies and how the employees perceive them

The knowledge regarding the policies at The University was rather dissimilar among the employees. Employee A stated that there are plenty of documents regarding inclusion that The University works with to a great extent. However, employee A is not familiar with all the existing documents. Further, there are many policies but many of the employees are unaware of these inclusion policies. Employee B said that the policies do not concern anything specifically about inclusion of a diverse workforce. The polices focus more on creating gender equality rather than inclusion of a diverse workforce according to employee B. Employee C said they are not familiar with any policies regarding inclusion of diversity. Employee D stated that reasonably there should be policies regarding inclusion however, they do not know exactly what they are about. According to employee E, there are policies that The University needs to relate to, especially regarding inclusion. The policies mainly emphasize everyone's equal value and also that the employees are to be judged solely on competences, not the ethical background. However, in the department, there is not something that is actively discussed regarding the policies. Employee E also said that they learned about these policies by searching for the information themselves, meaning that is information was not given to them.

Employees' View of a Diverse Workforce

All the employees' perception of a diverse workforce was noticeably positive. Employee A and employee B both said that a diverse workforce comes with advantages such as new ideas and new thoughts. In addition to that, employee B said that people tend to focus on the differences which can be problematic. One should instead focus on the similarities that we share with

others, so it does not become the "we vs them" environment. Employee D has similar thoughts as employee B saying that a diverse workforce means that there are going to be many differences among the employees. The differences can be such as having different working morals and ways of working according to employee D. However, one should focus on finding a common ground a focus on the things that people do have in common according to employee D. Employee D also stated that competences should decide whether a person should work at the University, regardless of their ethical background. However, with the condition that this teacher can teach in Swedish. The reason for this condition is related to the teaching of the students according to Employee D.

Employee C valued diversity positively by saying the following:

"My thoughts are that every person is an important person. Every colleague, even if we do not get along well, does not matter it is an important person. For one reason we all sit in the same boat, in the same room. It may be because we are two teachers on the same course or researchers working on the same project. It is fantastic. It is an opportunity to become richer in a way. You can understand better".

"The diversity needed to move forward. It is needed because otherwise we always talk in the same lanes. Benefits are that you always learn something new, you get an open mind and you can learn from each other. So, if everyone has the right attitude, the potential is huge".

Moreover, employee E said that a diverse workforce leads to gaining more perspectives and also lead to more discussion which subsequently means that there is some openness to talk about matters which they otherwise would avoid. Employee E also had another view of a diverse workforce. Employee E emphasized the fact that ethical Swedes and people with other ethical backgrounds do not start with the same prerequisites. Furthermore, employee E said:

"They really want you to assimilate to them as much as you can. It is a matter of integration and assimilation. Integration is about meeting each other halfway, but at The University it is not anywhere. It's assimilation straight off. Where you have to try to adapt to them as much as you can if you want to have a chance."

What can be interpreted from the employees is that a diverse workforce engenders a more fruitful environment at the workplace. As can be interpreted by the managers and the employees generally share the same view about a diverse workforce.

However, as employee E stated the advantages that a diverse workforce might bring are not reached at The University as people with other ethical backgrounds than Swedish do not work or are treated the same as Swedish employees.

The University represents a greater variety of differences in their organization, the answer from employee E shows that just representing something does not mean that it magically leads to a path toward greater performance. It is not the presence of diversity itself that leads to a positive outcome but how it is addressed (Fredman & Deane, 2014). Hence, it is important that the managers at The University address the presence of diversity in order for it to fully lead to a positive outcome. Furthermore, it is important that managers create an environment that is inclusive for all employees (Sabharwal, 2014)

Challenges with a Diverse Workforce and Non-inclusion Activities

Even though the employees had a positive view of a diverse workforce, there are still some challenges that come with a diverse workforce. Employee A said that there is a possible fear of working with the "unknown". It is not a matter of discrimination. It is more a matter of hiring people that one is used to because working with people that are different from oneself can be more challenging according to employee A. Hiring someone is a big commitment according to employee A. Therefore, the employment of a new person is done with great caution since the manager want to make sure that this person will fit in the workforce. Hence, manager tends to employee persons which are alike oneself since it is more reassuring that there will not be any major difficulties according to employee A. The disadvantages that may come with a diverse

workforce is that the group becomes heterogeneous which might make some people uncomfortable. Employee B also made a similar statement by saying that people with another ethical background than Swedish usually are more emotional and honest, which can come across as something negative to Swedes since they are not used to it. Employee B mentions that the reasons behind people with other ethical backgrounds are viewed as foreign are homosocial reproduction and similarity attraction paradigm. Furthermore, employee B stated: "They *say you are attracted to those what you are alike. And then as quickly you see that someone is different, the neutral response stimuli categorize the individual as different: us vs them. It is unconscious to begin with, but then these differences become more conscious".* Another issue which employee B put into the light is that there is a hierarchy of how foreign one person is. For example, a German is more accepted in Sweden than a person from Iraq, because a German is most likely to act like a Swede.

Employee B also said that foreign people also play a part in failed integration:

"I think there is a misunderstanding of what is right and wrong, how the Swedish system works and what you get and can't do. It is on both sides. But then the leader must be clear. There is a limit for were inclusion ends and then you have to do as you please. I don't take anyone's side. I think that inclusion should take place, but also that foreigners must also accept certain things, and not only be included on their own terms but on the employer's terms as well. One must have respect for the rules that exist".

Employee B stated that one of the challenges of having a diverse workforce is the way of working. For instance, some people consider time and deadlines differently. Moreover, attitudes and different ambition-levels are also challenging. Employee D also expressed similar thoughts saying that the way of working can become a challenge. People with another ethical background tend to have a higher work moral than most Swedes which can be seen as a disadvantage according to employee D. Another perspective of diversity is mentioned by employee B who

said that diversity alone is not something positive. However, it can become something positive if you learn how to deal with it.

Moreover, employee C expressed that:

> "*Disadvantages are that it takes time and energy because it is much easier to work with people you are equal. But I think sooner or later you will have to deal with diversity, so it is good to start already. As mentioned, it takes time and energy and sometimes you get resistance.*"

5.3.2 Communication

Some of the employees expressed their concerns regarding communication at The University. According to Employee A, there are not any direct communication directives from the mangers to be inclusive. It is not something that is discussed or talked about. A perceived challenge working with people with other ethical background is usually the language according to employee A. Employee B also felt like the language is a barrier for communicating; *"It is very problematic. Especially in the academy where English is the main language used. Knowing the language is very important. For example, at other universities, all the information is in English. At The University everything is in Swedish, which discriminates against many. It is very problematic. I have struggled to get the information in English, but it has not happened yet."* Another issue employee B put into the light was that diversity is not discussed between the managers and the labor union:

> "*One thing I have noticed is that there is always a central interaction between the union and the employer. And I always read them. There is a point at the end of this document about diversity that must be included. Inclusion and diversity work. But I have never seen anything raised in that point and I have followed this since 2008. And it has not ever appeared, and then it does not have to be a problem discussed but it can be challenges, or something good, or discussions but this point is always empty*".

Employee B further said that there are noticeable issues regarding inclusion of diversity and the fact that it is not brought up nor discussed is problematic. Regarding the language, employee D stated that there is an expressed wish that communication at work should be in Swedish. The management has expressed that a teacher should be able to teach in Swedish according to employee D. According to employee E they recognized some concerning issues regarding the use of language.

Like employee B, employee E said that English is the Academia language and should therefore be central:

"The manager can totally refuse and does not want to speak English even though we have many employees who do not know the language well. And it is not a requirement either when we are in the academy, it does not matter if they only speak English, but then when we sit in the fika room they are very, very careful not to speak English but you have to speak Swedish."

The fact that Swedish is used to the extent that it does is problematic according to employee C. Some of the employees talk very limited Swedish. At the department meetings, Swedish is still used which is problematic for those who do not speak Swedish well according to employee C. Furthermore, the information is also not in English nor translated into English even though there still are employees who do not speak Swedish. As a consequence, these employees miss out on important information. These mentioned issues are not considered at The University neither does The University have an active strategy to facilitate communication among all employees according to employee C.

Employee E stated that they participate in regular surveys at the department where they can express satisfaction, perceived issues and so on. Employee E said that in these surveys they expressed that they perceive certain issues regarding inclusion of people with other ethical backgrounds. However, these concerns were never talked about nor discussed. Employee E: *"In this questionnaire, you had to take a stand and the point is to bring up possible issues to*

discuss, and I always think: "this time they will mention it". But no, they avoid it, they skipped that part. I don't know why they have difficulties to discuss these things."

Another aspect regarding communication is of be more responsive and also to adapt to the people you are interacting with according to employee B. Employee B said that for instance, at The University, the way of talking has a greater influence rather than the substance of what one is saying.

5.3.3 Education & Learning

Experiences

As there are not any direct policies regarding inclusion of a diverse workforce, there are not any activities to educate the employees about inclusion of a diverse workforce. Therefore, it was the employees' experience that has taught them to relate to diversity. For example, employee A states that they have not done anything consciously to learn how to work with people that are different from oneself, it is something that has come along with the nature of the work. Employee A has met many people with different ethical backgrounds on business trips. According to employee A: *"I also think that some things you can't learn from books, but you have to do it practically, so I don't think it is enough to look at all policy documents. So, I think the practical work is so much more valuable"*. The experiences that employee A has had have made them humbler in many ways. Firstly, employee A said that "*Sweden has a good reputation in many aspects, but when you travel or meet other people you realize there are amazing thing happening all over the world*".

Moreover, employee C found diversity challenging to learn and adapt to:

> *"The more I hear about diversity, the more I get scared. Because of how wrong you can do when you want to do something good, you can instead make a giant mistake. So, I think as I get older, I understand that it depends a lot on personal experience, for example, learning to be quiet sometimes. Try to be careful and catch signals that are not oral. I know what it means to be different. Therefore, I can analyze people and understand how to behave. I can adapt better. I am more sensitive to differences. But I am also myself. I have my preferences. I can adapt but do not want to adapt to everything."*

Employee D stated that experiences mainly have thought them to relate to people with diverse backgrounds. The experiences have taught employee D that people have different prerequisites which has made employee D understand the context of someone's behavior which might differ from others. According to employee E, they have the will to learn and practicing inclusion in the workplace. However, employee E feels like these actions are in vain since the workforce is not unitary. Therefore, the only thing left is to follow the crowd in order to keep their job.

5.3.4 Implementation of Inclusive Practices

The development of Inclusive practices

Employee A stated that in the past 5 – 10 years, The University has become much better at implementing inclusion practices, however, there is still a long way to go. Employee B said that their perception was that at their department they only do what is necessary according to the law, not anything further.

There are not any discussions or conversations about inclusion according to employee B:

> *"I do think the University work in an inclusive way. I think the University is narrow minded when it comes to diversity in general. And above all a lot of focus on gender and little focus on ethnicity and culture. Although it seems that it is trying to include everyone and so on, I think there is ethical discrimination in the workplace."*

Further, employee B stated that there is a dominance of Swedish middle-aged people who are lacking the knowledge of managing a diverse workforce correctly. Employee B said that the younger generations have been exposed to people with diverse backgrounds to a longer extent than the older generations. Therefore, younger generations have gained more experience and know how to deal with diversity better.

Employees' View of Inclusive Practices at The University

The employees' view of inclusion practices at The University differs. Employee A said that the University could become more open toward people with other ethical background and value them as an asset rather than viewing them as a problem or liability. Employee A expressed that the use of the Swedish language instead of English is not an act of inclusion. For instance, if an employee does not master the Swedish language well, it will immediately have a disadvantage since the courses and all documented information, including the Swedish laws, are in Swedish according to employee A. Further, employee A stated that some have a fear of employing foreign workforce since it is harder to work with the practical issues such as translating all information into English. Employee A expresses that the efforts from The University to translate the documents into English are terrible. To be inclusive, everything should be translated since the common language in academia is English. Employee A states that The University need to sometimes look for foreign teachers because the teachers from Sweden are missing the competencies that are needed in order to create quality education. Employee A also explained that the average age has decreased meaning that the younger generations of managers and employees are more comfortable talking in English in comparison to the workforce 20 years ago.

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Employee B shared similar opinions as employee A regarding the language. Employee B said that the manager is good, however, the manager does not speak English which makes it hard for the manager to handle individuals who do not speak Swedish. Employee B also stated that the manager tries to make everyone feel safe and included but the question is whether it is natural act or not. According to employee B:

> *"The language is the key, even though teaching and things like that take place in English, we have meetings where we have to find some common ground with, for example, supervision where we explain for example, new teachers how we do at The University, so it is a learning process that is facilitated by the language, when you can talk to each other. So, the language is really important and then the English language is good then because most people are comfortable with it."*

Further, employee B stated that *"The manager could understand differences and adapt to certain differences that arise when people from different cultures come in. You have to be a little more flexible as a leader when other cultures come in. The manager may do the best they can, but I think they lack knowledge of diversity hand how to handle diversity in general."* Further, employee B also said that there are inclusion practices regarding equality, however, not at every level or dimension. For instance, there are many discussions about gender equality, but people should consider other dimensions of equality as well. Employee B gave an example: *"An Afghan woman will be perceived and discriminated against and treated differently than a Swedish woman. So, I mean you look at both gender and ethnicity, and a lot more. There are many lawyers to diversity."* The workshops that employee B have been on regarding equality have not been rewarding.

Employee D said that at The University they actively work with including the employees. However, in some areas, they may not be inclusive. Employee D said that there can be occasion where the employees are not inclusive towards each other. According to employee D:

> *"Instead, there may be colleagues in between who do not include each other. For example, we receive funding for a development project and Colleague X is really annoying and does not want to have that person in the project, so you can fix in a way that you do not have to work with that person, or you tell the manager that "I can have this course but not with that person". Then either I will do it, or the other person can do it."*

Employee C expressed that they did not experience inclusion when they first started working at The University. Now, employee C stated that the current manager is trying to be more inclusive by requiring the teachers to work together rather than by themselves. Additionally, employee C stated that The University talks about diversity and genus, however it is because it is politically correct, they do not work actively with diversity. Employee C expressed that they do not feel discriminated, but they are doubtful towards how effectively The University work to include a diverse workforce. Additionally, employee C stated that they have included themselves. One way was by learning the Swedish language even though it was not required (not written anywhere that Swedish is required) according to employee C. In other words, employee C describes that they have taken the responsibility to include themselves into the workforce. Those who have included employee C are the ones who have another ethnicity than Swedish according to employee C. On the other hand, Employee E expressed that their experiences of inclusion at The University are almost non-existing.

When asked if they perceive that The University works with inclusion of a diverse workforce employee E said:

> *"I would rather say that they work against counteracting what is small. So, they're not good at it, they're disastrous. No, never in life, there is no chance that The University works in an inclusive way. And I base this on several things, for example, if we look at immigrants in general, today we must constantly prove so much more to everyone, if we are to be accepted, I must always over perform. I have to constantly prove that you know what this and that. Unless I succeed in fulfilling this, I am held accountable in a different way than others are. Let's say, I've been vetted for checks, evaluations that some others don't have. But yeah you notice that I always have to over perform because if you don't, you are at risk."*

Additionally, employee E said that as a foreigner, they have to work much harder than Swedes to prove themselves. Employee E expressed that they are not judged by their competences at The University:

> *"But one thing is very clear that this with being judged on the basis of their competence, you can forget that, there is no chance, not even in the vicinity, never in life that it would matter. There are several examples where an ethnic Swede and a foreigner must do or apply for exactly the same things and where that Swede gets his application granted directly while the foreigner got his application denied and also a lot of questions in addition. The two applicants had exactly the same rights."*

Lastly, Employee E said that they cannot voice their own opinion because of two reasons. The first reason is that they feel like their opinion does not matter. Even if they were to be expressed, people at The University would not consider their thoughts. Secondly, employee E stated that foreigners who have voiced their opinion in the past have had consequences and many of them do not work at The University any longer. In their own words, employee E said:

"If you want to be accepted in that environment, I have learned that it is just to keep up with the flow, say nothing, just be quiet, have no opinions, just follow along. Which has meant that I do not get involved, I do my job and then I go home. But unfortunately, in the long run, acting invisible leads to still having a job, which means that you lose valuable resources and very valuable information that you could have used for educational purposes. But it becomes such a paradox, in a way it is bad, but you have to keep your job, you have no other choice. We have had so many immigrants who have become so frustrated that they have chosen to leave."

Employee's feelings and thoughts about being excluded

According to some of the employees, not being inclusive have its consequences which in the end backfires The University as a whole. For instance, employee B stated that if they were to be discriminated against, it would backfire those who discriminate in the first place. Employee B said:

"If they start to discriminate against me then I can start discriminating against them. I have a specific position in the academy, I have power in addition to who I am here at The University: meaning a network. And if you start to discriminate against me then I start to discriminate against you in some other way. I am dangerous, some are not as dangerous as I am."

Employee C also stated that by not being inclusive, it can affect the students negatively also. Employee C said:

> *"When we hire staff and we have the announcement, I always struggle to have the announcement in English as well. To have the chance to attract people who may be interesting who cannot speak Swedish from the start. I always say to my manager, to my dean "you all say you are happy with me, so I ask the question: has it not been a pity if you have not hired me because of the language?" /.../ And we got comments from students: "It is better to have a teacher who speaks English who knows what they are talking about than to have a Swedish teacher who does not know what they are talking about. Over the years I have been disappointed when some persons whom have had an interesting profile have not been employed because of the language.*"

Employee E had similar opinions as employee C about the loss of highly competent teachers not being selected due to the language. According to employee E:

> *"It is sad that it should be like this, to not include highly competed teachers. It is a pity because unfortunately you waste so much resources. One of the biggest consequences of not being inclusive is losing a lot of quality that you could have achieved. Resources, quality and skills*. And at the end it is the students who will suffer from these losses. *When you start to question, a discussion starts, you have to discuss. Then this discussion in turn leads us to discussing uncomfortable stuff, which leads to better quality. But now you don't really do that much. After all, I've noticed that people who have tried to comment and question ask how things were going for them. After all, it wasn't something they thought was a good thing*. I have seen many teachers, which not are ethical Swedes, who have quit due to the lack of inclusion at The University."

Which Inclusion Practices Employees Require

Employee B stated that language is important. Therefore, all information should be in English so that all employees can understand the information properly. Besides that, there should be group activities where the importance of diversity and inclusion is highlighted. These activities could also be away from the workplace, where they create opportunities for the employees to interact with each other according to employee B. Moreover, practices that would facilitate inclusion is to communicate in straight-forward terms so that each employee knows what is expected from them regardless if you're a foreigner or not employee B stated. Employee B said:
"There must be clear expectations. And if you do not know the Swedish system and you come from somewhere else then somebody must be sufficiently straightforward to say you must not do this, you must do that. /.../ You have a choice; you can act the way you want but it has consequences. And this is inclusion as well, to help someone who comes from another country to integrate into Swedish society and the Swedish system, it is very important."

In addition to a clarification of expectations, there should be some sort of education to both Swedes and people with other ethical backgrounds. Employee B also said that for people to get along, regardless of ethical background, they need to focus and bond over things they have in common rather than emphasizing the differences.

Employee C expressed that they wished for a more active behavior from the manager regarding inclusion, especially at the beginning of employment. Employee C also emphasizes the importance of being more inclusive as a workforce:

> *"You can be more active as a workforce, so I see development potential. Then when it comes to employees, I think we can be more open when it comes to hiring. And be flexible sometimes. I mean we have had people who were interested in working at The University. Then they got great jobs in England at top universities. Can you imagine that? But that's my opinion. But in the long term, have a vision of quality, not just for teaching but in research, in everything possible. But then, as a single employee, I cannot influence the manager."*

Employee E expressed that at The University, people should not only discuss about inclusion, they should take real actions. Furthermore, Employee E stated:

"They (the University/managers) need to do something about it. Since there is very clear discrimination, I think there should be very standardized and clear rules. Have some standardized criteria on these employee interviews showing:"
if you have worked here for this long you will get this, and it led to this and so on. To put it black on white. Other ways, the managers can make decisions that are not based on anything specific. In this way, there will never be any justice. I need to be able to require what I deserve and the only way to do that is through strict criteria. Otherwise I need to continue to work harder than anyone else."

Employee E also said that having this strict criterion is the only way justice can be served for those who are excluded. According to employee E, there is a lack of will to be more inclusive. Now, there are too many preconceptions that are affecting their will to address inclusion of all persons regardless of ethical background. What can be interpreted by employee E's answers is that they feel like they need to work much harder than others in order for them to keep their job. Also, employee E stated that ethical Swedes are hired more easily at The University. Additionally, there are large differences in salaries: Swedes have a higher salary than persons with another ethical background according to employee E. Therefore, employee E suggests that there should be strict criteria for the employees to be judged upon. That is the only way the employees can require what they are entitled to. By having strict criteria, all employees work under the same circumstances and have the same rights.

5.4 Managers' and Employees' Perception of Inclusion Practices

The presented empirical findings are based on the respondents' perception of the inclusion practices. To answer the research questions, what will be analyzed in the following section is the differences and similarities in the managers' and employees' perceptions. To clarify, the findings are based on the respondents' perception and not an absolute truth.

According to Sabharwal (2014), committed leadership that supports individuals and cultural differences among employees is one of the essential factors that contribute toward creating an inclusive environment. Also, it is important that managers in the organization must derive strategies to eliminate systemic barriers and create ways where all the employees can contribute to their fullest (Sabharwal, 2014). Furthermore, Sabharwal (2014) stated that organizations that use an inclusive framework will consequently have better productivity, these organizations go beyond hiring for diversity as a legal cover instead they realize that each employee is unique and has the potential to contribute toward the organization goals.

Based on our findings there might be lack of that committed leadership. First of all, the managers lack information on what specific kinds of policies they have about diversity. Which is confirmed by the majority of employees' perception. The employees' perception is that there should be some policies regarding diversity at The University, however, they were not sure and couldn't give any example of any specific policy. When it came to policies regarding inclsion, some of the employees perception was that there were some policies concerning inclusion, while others said that they do not agree. In sum, the policies are not something that is actively discussed at The University.

Secondly, neither of the managers highlighted the importance of inclusive practices. Maybe because their knowledge about the importance of inclusive practices is ambiguous. The majority of the employees expressed that they were a bit unsure of how the managers implement inclusion practices. One employee's perception was that The University actively works with including the employees, however, they couldn't give any examples of how. Another one experienced that the practices of inclusion at The University are almost non-existing. Many of the employees are critical towards the managers because they experience lack of implementation of inclusion practices at The University. The employees are expecting some level of inclusion from the managers, but these expectations are not met. Many of these employees have a foreign background. According to Rabl, del Carmen Triana, Byun and Bosch (2018) people with a foreign background, usually experience stronger and higher personal value towards inclusion of diversity. Hence, people with foreign background are usually more likely

to better identifying the practices which are needed to include employees of a diverse workforce. Since Swedes most likely have not experienced the adaptation to a foreign society at a great extent, they might not realize the need of inclusion at the same extent as people with foreign backgrounds. Since the managers have not experienced adaption to a foreign society to the same extent as the employees with a foreign society, the managers most likely do not have the same personal value of diversity and the need of inclusion practices. As a consequence, managers might not realize the needed inclusion practices and consequently, it can also affect the negative perception the employees have of the inclusion practices at The University. Previous experiences of dealing with diversity could be the reason behind the significant contrast between managers' perspective and employees' perspective (Rabl et al., 2018). Furthermore, some of the employees had a hard time giving examples of what kinds of inclusive practices the managers implement, instead they gave examples that the manager should use the English language more. The English language would ease the misunderstandings that can occur when not all the employees understand. Also, the documented information could be translated as well. Not speaking English makes it hard for the manager to handle individuals who do not speak Swedish. Thus, some of the employees stated that The University has become better.

Thirdly, when it comes to communication which is said to hold the organizations together, there are some signs of a lack of that committed leadership towards inclusivity. One of the managers states they do not communicate specific inclusion information towards the employees. Furthermore, one of the managers uses the Swedish language to communicate information to the employees even though they know that all the employees do not understand the Swedish language that well. This is also confirmed by some of the employees. Some of the employees' perception was that they feel excluded not knowing exactly what is discussed during meetings. The argument for speaking Swedish is that it is the official language but, on the other hand, one of the employees expressed that knowing the Swedish language is not mandatory when applying for a job at The University. Some of the employees' perception was that in the academic world, the main language is English, hence, there should not be a problem to talk in English. Since many of the employees come from abroad, at least the information should be in English. What can be interpreted is that some of the employees feel excluded and like their voices are not being heard. Some of the employees expressed that they have tried to get the information translated since many other universities translate information in order for all employees to take part of necessary information. The fact that the manager also acknowledges the issue by saying that there is a risk that some of the employees are missing out of some

information is not in line with the inclusion practices which are preached at The University. In sum, as Farren and Nelsons (1999) said and as stated above having open communication is essential in organizations in order to avoid misunderstanding. Farren and Nelsons (1999) also stated that not only should communication be open, but it should be two-way as well. The managers are the ones accountable for communicating the inclusion practices to their workforce so that they are aware of the practices. The employees are responsible for receiving and considering these policies and applying them. A reflection that can be made is that the managers need to get better on communicating the inclusion practices to the employees for them to be responsible. Additionally, one way of being fully aligned with the employees is by having open communication about inclusion (Rabl et al., 2018). When managers communicate their incentives regarding inclusion, and there are aligned with the employees' expectations (Adams et al., 2019), there is a greater chance that managers' and employees' perception become more alike.

Furthermore, when it comes to the managers' and employees' views of a diverse workforce, the findings show that they have unified views, which is that a diverse workforce is something positive. However, managers' and employees' perception of the inclusion practices are not completely unified. Several of the employees' perception was that inclusion of diverse people is only done to the extent to where it is politically correct. Some of the employees are unsure of whether these practices are neutral and based on their true will of being inclusive or of it is a matter of just being politically correct. The managers stated that without foreign employees and their knowledge, the level of competencies at the department would be significantly lower. Therefore, people are judged solely by their competence. The employees had some contradictive opinions on this matter. Other factors play a part in how they treat employees. One matter which was brought up by several employees was the concept of homosocial reproduction. Homosocial reproduction is when people pursue to form a homogeneous group and pursuing social similarities. The consequences that come along with homosocial reproduction is that it potentially is to create a greater divide in the workplace environment (Hudson, o.a., 2017).

Another explanation to the significant contrast between managers' and some of the employees' perception, can be related to the leadership of the managers. Some of the employees have expressed that they experience that the inclusion practices are passive, and some employees say

the practices are non-existing. According to Adams, Meyers and Sekaja (2019) in order for employees to feel included, the managers have a vital role of actively implementing inclusion of diverse workforce. Further, Adams et al. (2019) state that when managers are fully aligned with identifying and implementing the needed inclusion practices, they are enabling the most conductive way for achieving favorable employee outcomes, such as felt inclusion (Adams et al., 2019).

In addition to the important role of communication, there are other factors that which The University might need to consider. In order for employees to feel fully included, there needs to be a high level of trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, fairness and caring within a workforce, which starts with the managers (Rabl et al., 2018). When these five acts are fulfilled, then there is a higher possibility for managers and employees to have mutual perception about the inclusion practices (Rabl et al., 2018). Some of the employees are experiencing that they have no trust for their managers since the employees feel like their competences are not valued and they as employees are not treated fairly nor equally as other employees. Some of the employees also experience that the managers do not have the incentives to be as inclusive as needed. Further, Rabl et al., (2018) state that when organizations show and desire to implement inclusion practices, it changes how employees experience inclusivity: this can be related to the findings in this study. Many of the employees with a foreign background expressed that their voices are not being heard and their competencies are not being valued in the same way as other employees. On the other hand, managers express that they only value the employees based on their competencies. According to Rabl et al., (2018) the misconception of believing to be inclusive and actually implementing inclusion practices might not me consistent. The reason behind this misconception at The University might be because the managers are not realizing and understanding that some of the employees feel excluded. Hence, the managers might feel like there is no need for any further implementation of inclusion practices and therefore, there is a risk for manages believing that there is no need for further inclusion practices. This phenomenon could explain the great contrast among employee's perception and manages perception of inclusion practices.

What can be understood from the employees' perception is that there does not seem to be a conscious inclusion implementation from the managers nor from some of the employees. As can be interpreted from the empirical findings, the ones who include people with foreign

background, are those which have another ethical background than Swedish. One possible reason could be that these people can relate and understand those who do not have a Swedish background and the difficulties they might experience when working in Sweden. Since some of the employees express that they feel excluded at The University, they came with several requirements for The University and the manager to become more flexible and open to differences. The employees emphasized the great losses which come with not employing and including current employees.

What can be interpreted from the majority of the employees' perception is that they wish The University were more open to hiring people from abroad. The University should not see the language as a barrier, instead they should focus on the potential advantages these teachers might contribute with.

6. Conclusion

This chapter will provide a brief summary of the different chapters of this thesis followed by a conclusion of how the managers at the university work with diversity through an inclusive approach and how these practices are perceived by the employees. Furthermore, this chapter will present possible research implications and how this thesis might contribute in both theory and practice. The section ends with a critical review of what could have been done differently and some suggestions on future research within the field of diversity.

6.1 Summary of the thesis

A conceptual model was created based on previous research concerning diversity and inclusion. The model helped to apply both the managerial and employee perspective on diversity and inclusion. The empirical material is based on seven semi-structured interviews with current managers and employees at a University located in the south of Sweden. The interviews aimed to provide information and understanding of how the managers work with a diverse workforce through inclusive practices and how the employees perceive these practices. The aim of interviewing both managers and employees were to obtain two different perceptions of how diversity is managed through inclusive practices. The results indicate that the managers are a bit unsure of what policies they have regarding diversity. Also, their inclusion practices are presented as general and non-discriminative, not actively practicing inclusion. For this reason, the employee's perception of how the managers work with inclusivity is weak. The employees' mainly feel like the managers need to improve their abilities while working with inclusivity. However, some perceptions were positive, and some employees said that the managers' have become better. The practical findings are beneficial both for The University in which this research was conducted but also for others that are interested in knowing about the employee's perceptions of inclusive practices. For example, our findings show how the employees feel that the organization should work inclusively and how they feel when being excluded.

6.2 Conclusion

To conclude, this thesis aimed to examine and to provide a better understanding of how diversity is managed through inclusive practices and policies, and how these were perceived by the employees. In general, the number of practices and policies used concerning diversity in

The University is vague. The lack of communication may be a factor that might indicate the reason for Managers' and Employees' absence of knowledge regarding what practices and policies are used at The University. For example, one manager stated that there are clear policies on the programs for the students. However, on the department level, there is nothing concrete about inclusion of diversity. One of the employees expressed that there are some policies that The University needs to relate to, especially regarding inclusion which emphasizes everyone's equal value. However, these policies are not actively discussed, neither by the managers nor the employees at the department. Both Bassett-Jones (2005) and Shore et al. (2018) argue that if diversity is not managed well, the outcomes could be harmful for an organization since it may lead to poor quality production, reduced communication, distrust and loss focus of market orientation. This study signals that the managers at The University need to become better at communicating what practices and policies they use to make an inclusive workplace environment. This, in order for them to manage diversity in a way that they can pursue a good outcome of it.

When it comes to how the managers at The University work with diversity through an inclusive approach, the results reveal that there are some important matters to consider. For example, neither of the managers highlighted the importance of inclusive practice. This, even though that implementation of Inclusive practices is according to Randel, et al. (2016) a way of showing how the manager inclusiveness captures the diversity-friendly notion of welcoming and valuing the contributions of employees. On the other hand, the managers did mention some inclusions practices that they have implemented over the years. For example, they have undertaken activities like kick-off and joint reviews of the programs at The University. Also, they have an everyday activity called "Swedish Fika" which according to one of the managers is an important inclusion activity. These activities are opportunities to create a sense of affinity within the workforce which is a basic form of inclusion (Sabharwal, 2014). However, based on what the managers said, the activities are not involving occasions where the employees are included in decision-making processes where their voices might otherwise be absent. Including employees in decisions is important and an example of practices made by an inclusive manager according to Randel, et al. (2016). Furthermore, the employees stated that there can also be occasions where they miss information due to the language used. One manager said, that in their meetings they use the Swedish language because it is the official language, for those who do not master the Swedish language to 100% they may miss some information. Since the employees may feel

excluded and feel like they do not understand, it might be difficult for them to create a strong relationship with the organization.

The uncertainty in the managers' answers regarding how they work with diversity through an inclusive approach might overshadow the employee's perceptions of it. Some of the employees mentioned that The University does not implement inclusion practices at all, whilst others said that The University has become better the past 5 – 10 years. However, they did not give any examples of. Hence, the majority of the employees feel like the experiences of inclusion at The University are almost non-existing. Some of them even feel discriminated and excluded which is the opposite of what inclusion practices aim to achieve. One issue that was commonly discussed by the employees is the language used by the manager. The manager does not use the English language even though some of the employees do not speak and understand Swedish. Also, all of the written information is solely in Swedish even though the employees have asked for it to be in English as well. Another concern among some of the employees is whether the manager has the knowledge and will to handle diversity correctly. Consequently, they feel like there are not any standardized strict criteria that the employees are judged upon. Moreover, some of the employees are not given what they are entitled to and, therefore, they cannot require anything because there are not any criteria which will invigorate their rights. Furthermore, something worth mentioning is that some of the employees do not feel like their voices are being heard. Moreover, the fact that The University does not implement inclusion practices at the extend that is required, they are also risking losing potential quality than can be achieved from current but also future potential employees.

Furthermore, this thesis might in turn indicate inconsistencies between the managers' and the employees' perceptions. Additionally, there might be difficult for employees to create strong relationships with the organization. For example, one of the employees said that they have learned to just to keep up with the flow, say nothing, just be quiet, have no opinions, just follow along. Which in turn has led to them not getting involved, they finish their job and go straight home. Lastly, this study shows that the stated inclusion practices of a diverse workforce are not viewed the same among the managers and the employees. Not all of the current employees share the same perception regarding how the managers work with inclusion in a diverse workforce. Consequently, one conclusion can be that the managers need to be clearer about how they work with a diverse workforce. Otherwise, like one employee said that even though

the manager tries to make everyone feel safe and included, they sometimes feel like it isn't a natural action. Another employee expressed that they are doubtful towards how effectively The University works to include a diverse workforce.

6.3 Theoretical Contributions

Researchers in the field of management and organizations have increasingly developed an interest in the topic of diversity in a work environment. This thesis contributes to a further understanding of how managers at a University work with a diverse workforce inclusively. As far as we are aware, previous research has only looked at either managers' or employees' views of diversity and inclusivity. For example, Aigare, Thomas and Koyumdzhieva (2011) conducted a research in higher education institutions were their purpose was to study the key motivatiors for ethnic diversity management. They did their study in several universities and interviewed only managers at these universities. This thesis, on the other hand, focuses on only one university and takes both the employee and managers' views of diversity and inclusivity into consideration. Previous research has not identified the three steps Communication, Education & Learning and Implementation of inclusion practices altogether to explain managers' way of working inclusively when having a diverse workforce (Aigare, Thomas, & Koyumdzhieva, 2011). Aigare, Thomas and Koyumdzhieva (2011) focuses more on the releataionship between management of Diversity and performance. Our study shows that in order for the managers' and employees' perceptions to be the same the managers' need to focus on all three steps, because only embodying a greater variety of diversity in an organization or group does not magically lead to a path towards greater performance, which is the ultimate goal of having a diverse workforce.

6.4 Practical Implications

This thesis contributes by firstly showing how managers and employees view inclusion practices of a diverse workforce. Secondly, the thesis contributes by showing how much managers' and employees' perceptions within the same organization can differ. The findings in this thesis may be viewed as valuable since there is a clear paradox regarding the actual inclusion practices at The University. The empirical findings might give some insight to The University of how the inclusion practices are actually perceived. Additionally, the empirical

findings also put light on the potential that inclusion practices might bring to an organization and also the damaging consequences of exclusion. Our recommendation to The University is to create an effective communication structure where the employees' opinions are taking into consideration and addressing the issues which employees are expressing. The second recommendation is based on the wishes of the employees to become more open and flexible to differences. On the way of doing so is by translating their information into English so that all employees have the same opportunity to get all the information that they are entitled to. Thirdly, The University is recommended to become aware of the occurring inclusion issues and not only taking them into consideration, but also to not delay implementation of inclusion practice. The last recommendation to The University is to implement strict and standardized criteria where the employees can be reassured that they are getting what they are entitled to.

6.5 Suggestions for Further Research

In hindsight, it would also be relevant to have examined how the managers believed that the employees perceived their inclusion practices. Therefore, one suggestion would be to investigate managers' and employees' perceptions but also to examine how the manager believes that the employees perceive the inclusion practices within the organization. Then it would be interesting to investigate whether the managers take the feedback into consideration to then take actions to be perceived as more inclusive by their employees. Another suggestion would be to compare if there is a significant difference between private corporations in comparison to organizations operating under the Government. Organizations operating under the Government practically have more regulations to consider which might affect the inclusion practices.

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Appendix A – Interview guide

All the respondents gave their permission to use their answers as data for paper. They also gave us the permission to record the interviews. Before we began to ask the questions, we gave them a short introduction of the purpose of our research as well as the purpose of the interview. We also explained that we have made some limitations with the concept of diversity. That means that every time we talk about diversity, we refer to ethnicity.

Arbetsgivare/Ledare

1. Finns det några policys på Universitetet som handlar om inkludering av mångfald?

   - Exempel?

2. Jobbar ni med inkludering?

   - Om så, hur jobbar ni med inkludering?

3. Hur kommunicerar du dessa inkluderings-aktiviteter till medarbetarna?

4. Hur ser du på en mångfaldig arbetskraft?

5. Har din bakgrund samt dina erfarenheter förberett dig effektivt till att förhålla dig till mångfald?

   - Om så, på vilket sätt?

6. Fördelar respektive nackdelar med en mångfaldig arbetskraft?

7. Vilka fördelar medför inkludering? - Exemplifiera

8. Vilka utmaningar finns det med inkludering? - Exemplifiera.

   - Hur jobbar ni för att motarbeta dessa utmaningar? - Exemplifiera.

   - Vilka typer av strategier har ni använt för att hantera dessa utmaningar, och hur?

9. Vad har du gjort för att ytterligare öka din kunskap om mångfald?

   - Hur har du påvisat din inlärning?

Anställda

1. Vad vet du om Universitetens policys och aktiviteter kring inkludering?

2. Upplever du att Universitetet jobbar på ett inkluderande sätt?

   - Vilka är dina tankar kring detta?

3. Upplever du att din arbetsgivare/ledare jobbar med inkludering?

   - Om så, hur jobbar de med inkludering? - Exemplifiera!

4. Hur väl upplever du att Universitetet jobbar med att uppnå aktiviteterna för att möta policys angående inkludering av mångfald? - Exemplifiera!

5. Vilka aktiviteter har underlättat inkludering av en mångfaldig arbetskraft?
   - Om det finns några, exemplifiera.

6. Kan du ge ett exempel på hur du har anpassat dig att arbeta effektivt med personer som är olika i jämförelse med dig?

7. Vilka utmaningar har du stött på när du har jobbat med någon från en annan bakgrund än din egen? - Exemplifiera!

8. Vad har du gjort för att ytterligare öka din kunskap om mångfald?
   - Hur har du påvisat din inlärning?

9. Hur skulle du beskriva dina nuvarande tankar kring mångfald och inkludering?
   - Exemplifiera.
   - Hur har dessa tankar utvecklats över tid?

10. Vilka nackdelar samt fördelar upplever en mångfaldig arbetskraft medför?