



Griffith College

**A study of the impact of employability criteria on the employment level
of minority ethnic groups in small and medium scale enterprises in
Dublin**

Research dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

MSc in International Business Management

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22nd May 2020

Candidate Declaration

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I certify that the dissertation entitled: **An exploratory study of the impact of employability criteria on the employment level of minority ethnic groups in small and medium scale enterprises in Dublin**

submitted for the degree of: **MSc in International Business Management** is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to everyone who has been a part of the chapter of my life. Firstly, I'll like to specially thank my parents for supporting me throughout my MSc programme.

Special thanks to Justin Keogan for the guidance and feedback he provided during the research methods module.

To all the respondents I'll like to say a big thank you for participating in the data collection phase.

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A study of the impact of employability criteria on the employment level of minority ethnic groups in small and medium scale enterprises in Dublin

Sopiriala Tekena-Lawson

Abstract

Studies carried out by previous authors suggested a perceived labour market inequality towards minority ethnic groups (persons from outside the EU) within the Irish labour market which was deemed to be caused by different forms of taste-based discrimination and prejudicial views against minority ethnic individuals. My research was aimed primarily at identifying the particular employment criteria that have impacted the employment level of minority ethnic groups and test if the same situation argued by previous researchers still exist today.

The review of the available literature built the base from which the conceptual framework was built which served as a guide in carrying out my primary research. The study was based built around specific concepts like how cultural differences influence recruitment, the effectiveness of employment equality policies and factors that influence decision making in the recruitment process.

The data was collected through semi-structured telephone interviews with recruiters and HR officers on what goes on during the recruitment process and how various employability criteria impacted their decision making.

The findings showed that the major employability criteria that has impacted the employment level of minority ethnic nationals are societal culture in terms of communication, legal right to work in terms of legal right to work in many SME's and the rating of educational qualifications based on countries where they were obtained. The findings also contrasted with the views of previous researchers in that the cause of perceived labour market inequality is not due to prejudice but rather difficulties in cultural assimilation and factors outside the scope of employment equality policies available in Dublin based SME's. I have therefore recommended additional primary research be done from the job seekers point of view and a need divide minority ethnic groups into smaller distinctive groups based on culture and nationality as they each have different characteristics.

Key words: minority, employability criteria, labour market

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This paper aims to explore the relationship between the employment levels of minority ethnic groups in Dublin and several factors such as cultural differences, countries where educational qualifications were obtained amongst others and establish if there are discriminatory practices within the labour market, and if there are, how have they affected the level of employment of ethnic minority nationals in Dublin.

Since the foundation of Ireland as a nation, the population growth the growth in population has been characterised by annual natural increases of circa 25,000 per annum. From 1946 to 1970 growth in the Irish population was countered by a continual increase in net migration, many of which were young Irish citizens which constituted a large section of the labour market (FitzGerald, 2018). A combination of several factors like increase in government spending on education, economic development and foreign direct investment there was a reduction in emigration from 1970 onward. This trend was reversed in the 1980's as significant emigration increased as many Irish nationals were emigrating to countries like the US and UK in search for better opportunities.

From 1991 onwards there was a reverse in this trend due to a significant increase in economic activities and an influx of skilled labour and the downward pressure of the wage rate increasing the competition in the labour market this increase has come to be known as "Celtic tiger economic growth" (FitzGerald, 2018) . This led to an increase in immigration creating balance between the demand and supply of labour. The Irish labour force was historically characterized by been ethnically homogenous and born in the country, the 2016 census established a deviation from the traditional demography as it was recorded that 12.5% of the labour force consisted of employees who did not fit this traditional type. While the ethnic diversity has resulted in economic development it has also resulted in a fight for equality within the labour market.

The objective is to identify the relationship between the employability criteria and the employment level of minority ethnic groups within Dublin based SME's. I have identified the following objectives and questions this research aims to answer:

1.1.1 *Objective question one*

To what level are small and medium scale enterprises in Dublin supportive of intercultural diversity?

1.1.2 *Objective question two*

What is the impact of cultural values on corporate culture in SME's?

1.1.3 *Objective question three*

Does the corporate culture in SME's in Dublin influence the recruitment and selection process?

1.1.4 *Objective question four*

If it is found to does it affect the decision making in terms of minority ethnic nationals in Dublin based SME's?

1.1.5 *Objective question five*

How effective have the policies and procedures for equal employment opportunity in SME's been?

1.1 Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to establish a relationship between the employment level of minority ethnic nationals and the different employability criteria used to assess candidates, such as where educational qualifications were obtained, cultural perception in terms of different ways of thinking and assess if any of these would be disadvantageous towards minority ethnic nationals and generally to measure the level of acceptance of inter-cultural diversity in SME's in Dublin.

The interest on researching this topic was born out of my past working experience of working with people from various ethnic groups in my home country as an HR officer for HR on Wheels a two-year period. During that period, I was able to get some insight into the different processes that went into the recruitment of staff and the role cultural diversity plays in the selection process.

During that period, I was contracted to several firms, many of which were from different ethnical, cultural and religious backgrounds and this played a role in the recruitment and selection of staff. In that period the author observed some bias during conversations with senior officers, this elated the view that in the screening process for certain position some candidates were disqualified based on their religion and some employees of certain ethnicities were not being promoted pass certain levels, this same conditions were somewhat found to exist in the Irish labour market by Becker in his research where he stated that employers may discriminate against immigrants or ethnic minorities as they may view this group as been less productive, which can be referred to as statistical discrimination or sometimes preferred to hire people from their own ethnic group or nationality, this can be said to be a form of taste-based discrimination (Becker 1975 cited by Frances McGinnity, 2018)

Upon coming to a different country the author would like to test to what extent this conditions can be found in the Irish labour market, the research objectives will be based on legal views points from the angle of the employment laws , recruitment and selection practices and the criteria's for employability.

While there has been some statistical research done on the topic by Gillian Kingston and Frances McGinnity there has been little to no research why this phenomena exist or the role that the difference in culture plays in recruitment and selection in small and medium size enterprises.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The aim of this dissertation is to draw support for minority ethnic nationals in the labour market and to raise awareness for the importance of inter-cultural diversity in the workplace as it would improve the general performances in SME's while uncovering any form of bias in the evaluation system being used to assess candidates.

This research aims to be a valuable article which provides qualitative information about the subject matter in question that is to evaluate the perception of inter-cultural

diversity, minority ethnic groups in the workplace. It is aimed to act as the basis for further research into this subject matter by researchers and students alike and ultimately to create an environment of harmony within various ethnicities in the labour market.

1.3 Research Objective

This research rather than aiming to quantify the perceived biases in recruitment and selection aims to identify the cause root of said biases if at all they exist and find answers to questions surrounding people's perception of the subject matter. I aim to do that using the following objectives:

The research objectives are:

- I. To analyse how SME's fill skilled positions and what impact the employment equality act have had on their recruitment and selection process.
- II. What are, if there are any; the recruitment and selection practices that could be perceived as disadvantageous towards minority ethnic groups in Dublin and has it had an impact on their employment level.
- III. To critically analyse the key employability criteria's that are being used by businesses and recruitment agencies in the selection of candidates and assess if this criteria's give rise to any forms of bias towards minority ethnic groups.

Research objective questions

- I. To what level are small and medium scale enterprises in Dublin supportive of intercultural diversity?
- II. What is the impact of cultural values on corporate culture in SME's?
- III. Does the corporate culture in SME's in Dublin influence the recruitment and selection process?
- IV. If it is found to does it affect the decision making in terms of minority ethnic nationals in Dublin based SME's?
- V. How effective have the policies and procedures for equal employment opportunity in SME's been?

1.4 Structure of the Study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters and each chapter contributes to the major research objective:

Introduction: This situation of the Irish labour market is reviewed along with the level of diversity present. The purpose of the research is given context through the personal experiences of the author, a brief review of discrimination found in Irish SME's found by previous researchers. The research supports intercultural integration and fairness in recruitment and selection process.

Literature review: This focuses on answering the research objectives and questions through examining works done by previous researchers. The perceived labour market inequality reported by Frances McGinnity, Fleischmann amongst others and the experiment performed is examined. Recruitment and selection practices present in Dublin-based SME's are explained as well as the elaboration of the discriminatory practices found to exist by previous researchers. The link between corporate culture and recruitment and selection is drawn and the different cultural theories used to show cultural differences are analysed. The employment equality act is appraised through the policies and procedures it uses in settling disputes. Individual diversity and equality policies of SME's are reviewed in line with the prevalent situation in the labour market. Finally, the conceptual framework is constructed based on the research questions and taking a wholistic view of the literature review from the peer reviewed articles.

Methodology and research design: Here an interpretivist approach will be applied, and interviews will be conducted with various respondents ranging from managers at SME's to professional recruiters. Based on the framework the questions will revolve around cultural integration, company policies and appraisal methods used in appraising job applications. All participants are allowed to have their identities hidden for privacy and security sake; they are also not required to answer any of the questions if they feel uncomfortable due to any personal issues that they might have. The data will be analysed by codifying it into segments of different themes, factors such as body movement, tone of voice amongst others will be taken into consideration.

Presentation and discussion of findings: This chapter goes the responses gotten during the interviews; it also discusses the qualitative data. The main purpose of this chapter is to explore the results of the study to a deeper level and gauge the perception of Dublin-based SME's towards diversity in the workplace.

Concluding thoughts on the contribution of the research: Here the limitations and suggestions for further research will be provided, this part also provides recommendations for SME's based on discussions in previous chapters and the research findings. A major aim of this chapter is to link the research objectives, questions and the findings to generate a concurrent argument.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This chapter will explore, define and analyse the previous researches that are relevant to the research objectives and key research questions in order to create a conceptual framework for the study of the impact of various employability criteria on the employment level of minority ethnic groups. This chapter will explore this topic by expanding further into previous literature and approaching them from various angles.

The Irish labour market demography over the years has undergone significant changes due to high levels of immigration as before 1990 the emigration levels were on the high and this was one of the main contributors to the shortage of skilled labour as the Irish market predominantly constituted of mainly Irish citizens and the portion of school leavers going further to obtain tertiary education was relatively low (Bergin, 2009) making the prospect of residing in the country vastly unattractive to majority of the younger facets of the population. Recently reports from the CSO revealed that there were 535,475 non-Irish nationals living in the country as at 2016 and although this was seen as a reduction from the figure in 2011 which was 544,357 it was largely attributed to an increase in the number of them obtaining dual Irish nationality. As at 2016 it was discovered during the census that the Irish population had grown by 0.8%, major discovery was the fact the Irish ethnicity only increased by 0.2% while the rest of the increase was owed to minor ethnic groups (CSO Ireland, 2019). As can be seen below:

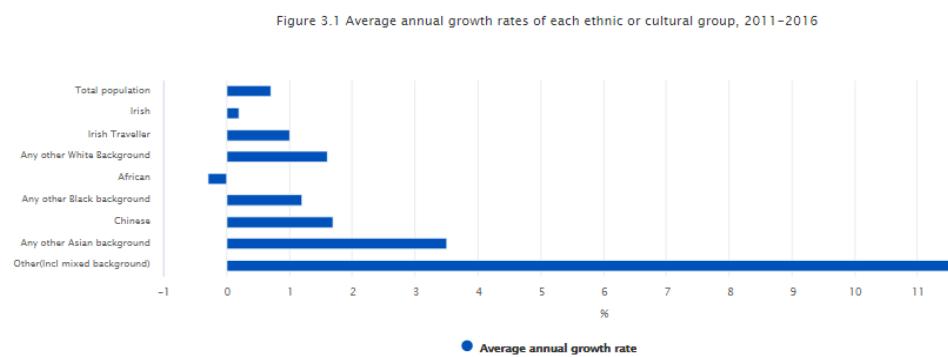


Figure 1: Average annual growth rate of various cultural groups

Source: CSO Ireland 2019

With this spike in ethnic diversity also came the struggle for employment in the labour market due to an increase in number of working adults in the country. There has also been a significant change in the demography of the labour force over the large influx and as can be seen below majority of these people are either employed or in school.

Table 3.1 Usually resident one year immigrants aged 15 years and over, economic status by nationality, 2016

	Number of Immigrants	At work	Unemployed (incl looking for first regular job)	Students	Looking after home/family	Others (incl retired)
Irish	24,768	15,227	3,799	2,584	1,198	1,960
Non-Irish <i>of which</i>	47,651	25,866	6,269	10,472	2,780	2,264
UK	4,917	2,814	662	305	356	780
Brazilian	4,499	1,423	593	2,370	86	27
Polish	3,427	2,579	436	141	202	69
Spanish	2,637	1,646	295	572	106	18
Romanian	2,534	1,875	363	69	174	53
French	2,412	1,408	136	774	65	29
Indian	2,185	1,043	306	539	252	45
Italian	2,097	1,479	234	313	47	24
German	1,386	869	41	335	53	88
Other non-Irish	21,557	10,730	3,203	5,054	1,439	1,131
Total	72,419	41,093	10,068	13,056	3,978	4,224

Figure 2: immigrants in Ireland classed according to their economic and social status.

From the 2016 census it was out of the 82,346 immigrants in the country 41,093 were at work, while the participation of Irish nationals in the labour market was 76.8% while that of the immigrants was at 67.4%, this lower percentage was partly attributed to the higher number of students within this group. It was discovered that these people formed a large majority of the accommodation, food service, information and communication, manufacturing industries and in general they formed the a large majority of the service industry (CSO Ireland, 2016), this can be seen in more detail below:

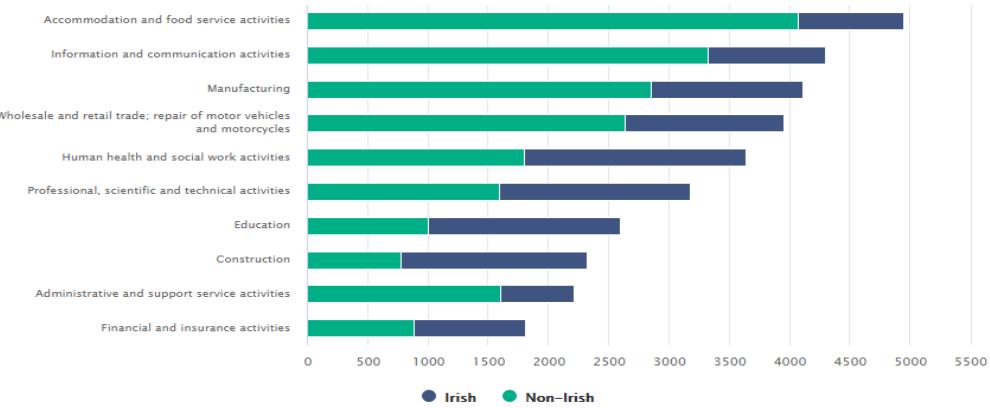


Figure 3: industries where immigrants work Source: CSO Ireland 2016

From the diagram above majority of the jobs in accommodation and food services industry are been done by foreigners, this is owing to the increase in educational migration as a vast majority of the jobs in this industry are part-time which makes it suitable for students.

In conclusion this chapter will review the impact of the increase in nationalities on the labour market looking at it from various angles including such as changes in culture, countries where qualifications were attained, public perspective of diversity, the role of the employment equality act amongst other facets.

2.2 Labour market in equalities facing minority ethnic groups

Integration of all individuals into the labour market is critical for all social, political and cultural systems and the integration of minority ethnic groups into society is very important as it gives them the freedom to participate freely in the economy which will be beneficial for the economy as a whole (Frances McGinnity, 2018). Here the author will analyse the integration of ethnic minority groups based on employment in the labour market.

As argued by Fleischmann and Dronkers after conducting their research, they presented the findings that there was substantial evidence to suggest persistent inequalities between immigrants or individuals from minority ethnic groups and Irish nationals (Frances McGinnity P. D., 2011).

Further statistical test was carried out by Heckman and Siegelman in which two fictional testers posed as job applicants and submitted their application on real

job searches, the two applications were very similar in all respect except for any features which could be actively used to discriminate against one of them. While this test was ground breaking at the point in time, there are limitations to its use, one of the major limitations was that the test was only done for jobs which needed written applications as it only represents a small section of the labour market another weakness is the time period in which this test took place, as the test took place in 1993 the results while still useful, is less reliable as the time frame could be said to be beyond its period of relevance (Heckman and Siegelman, 1993)

Riach and Rich performed a test in 2004 in which they sent out sets of two CV's to different companies, while two CV's is inconsequential to the total number of CV's this was done so as not to arouse suspicion ,the total number of applications submitted were 240 . Majority of the applications were submitted for low administrative, low accountancy and retail sales role due to the financial constraint at that period. The CV's were designed to be of the highest quality in that period and were consistent with the jobs being applied for. The results can be seen below:

Table I. Classification of responses to matched job applications

	<i>Irish/Minority</i>
1. No response/both rejected	147
2. Both invited	23
3. Irish invited, minority not	55
4. Minority invited, Irish not	15
5. Net discrimination (Row 3 - Row 4)	40
6. Discrimination rate (Row 3 - Row 4)/ (Row 2+Row 3+Row 4)	43%
7. Relative callback rates (Row 2+Row 3/ Row 2+Row 4)	2.05

Fig 4: Classification of response to matched job application(Riach, 2011)

The major critic of this test was the ethical nature of the experiment, there was a high level of deception and deceit as employers were not aware that they were involved in an experiment.

One of the major critics about a number of the literature in this field is that a lot of them are statistics driven which in turn means that the authors only get face value

information in essence the literature produced by a number of authors in this field does not reveal why this discriminatory practices happened they only state the number of candidates it happened to.

2.3 The recruitment and selection process of small and medium scale enterprises in Ireland

Recruitment and selection within an organisation is a very integral part of its strategic human resource management and its planning process as it is closely linked to other issues such as performance appraisal, reward systems and succession planning among others (Compton, 2004). Most Irish SME's are adopting the best fit model which focuses on aligning the human resource strategy to the overall strategy of the company and this has led to recruitment and selection practices been amended to fit the strategy as the best practice model while it involves less administrative work and seems intuitively attractive because of its simplicity cannot meet the strategic needs of SME's as more complex business models are been adopted (Harney & Dundon, 2006).

The traditional recruitment and selection processes in SME's in Ireland involve the basic steps as listed below.

- I. Advertisement of Job vacancy: this involves advertising job vacancies on different media such as newspapers, job websites, internal memos for internal recruitment, at this stage the employer must also consider why there is a vacancy; is it because of a dismissal, resignation or is a new role being created as this will help the employer moving to the next stage (Faulty Ireland, 2010)
- II. Job analysis: Here the employer lists out the different criteria's of the job which was done by the last employee and re-adjust it for the prospective employee based on the company's strategy, previous events that pertain to that job among others or if it is a new job the HR department will analyse all the different tasks that this job would include. Here job description and specification are also carried out in the job description the job is divided into duties and targets which are analysed to have a comprehensive idea of how achievable of feasible is it for the prospective employee(s). The next phase of

the job analysis which is one of the most crucial stages is the job specification , here the employer analysis the skills and attribute that the prospective employee(s) will need to be successful in the job ,it is at this stage that any form of bias would usually be put in as too an extent there is a subjective nature as employers can put certain things into different perspectives (Faity Ireland, 2010).

- III. Screening: upon receiving many applications the aim of the recruiter is to interview less people for a longer period. The employer or human resource department depending on the size of the organisation will go through the CV's and will compare them to the job description and job specification; here factors such as educational qualifications, job experience, accomplishments and professional qualifications among others will be looked at to narrow the candidates down.
- IV. Interview: This would usually be done face to face whether physically or digitally i.e. Skype interview, interviews are done to get a better sense of the individual attributes and personalities of the candidates vying for the job. Here the interviewer would used the job description and specification to draw up the interview questions, here it is the duty of the interviewer to ensure that all the interview questions are similar so as not to unfairly favour any candidate above another, the problem with this model is that once an element of bias has entered at any of the previous stages it tends to move through all the consecutive stages (Faity Ireland, 2010).

2.4 Discriminatory practices in the recruitment process of SME's in Ireland

For the purpose of this research discriminatory practices will be defined as any action that gives an applicant undue favour over other applicants.

The most common case of discrimination can be said to be "overt" discrimination which is defined as employment decisions based on race or sex and in most cases this is deemed as unlawful (GALLAGHER, 1979)

There are other less common types of discrimination which are less obvious are usually deemed to be “fair practices” it can be classified as discrimination in operation, one of the more common forms of this which is usually done in smaller businesses is when business owners rely on their employees on information about applicants (GALLAGHER, 1979) this is usually done to reduce cost and is not done with the intent to discriminate against any section of applicants. It involves employees recommending their friends and relatives for the job, what this does is it limits the number of people who know about the availability and have the qualifications to do it and would have applied had the position been advertised. It should be of note that the research done by Gallagher was done in 1979 and may not be completely applicable to the current market situation and further this was carried out in America and while economic situations might be somewhat similar there is still a large disparity and this should be noted.

One other form of discrimination in recruitment practices is stereotyping, this is usually done at the screening stage as there is the belief that some sects of people are not suitable for some particular or could be due to incidents that have occurred in the past which employers have used to generalize an entire ethnic group.

2.5 The role educational qualification criteria have played in the unemployment levels of minority ethnic groups

One major factor that reduces equal access to employment opportunities is the recognition of skills and qualifications as the research done by Frances McGinnity and Raffaele Grotti suggest that on average candidates from minority ethnic groups have been found to have attained higher educational qualifications than their white Irish counterparts but are still less likely to progress to managerial levels of secure professional jobs (Grotti, 2015). One of the basis for this is that education qualifications attained abroad especially the ones attained outside Europe are not usually recognised by most Irish employers (Grotti V. 2., 2015). This has led a lot of non-Irish nationals especially those from Africa, Asia and Latin America to situations under-employment and over-qualification as this is closely linked to the disproportionate number of ethnic minority individuals in managerial positions.

2.6 Hofstede -How cultural diversity impacts corporate culture

Hofstede defined culture as the collective the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one group from another (Burcu Teke,s, 2019). He went on further to state the different dimensions involved of which the first was the power distance which expresses how society deals with inequality within its members as in some inequalities are more obvious, while in some they are subtle. He also postulated another dimension; the uncertainty avoidance ratio in which he stated that some cultures are more tolerant to risk than others. Hofstede went on to give another dimension which is the individualism vs collectivism ratio where he said some culture pride themselves on individual achievements and have an individualistic way of thinking while some have a more collective mindset. The created a further dimension which is the masculinity vs femininity index in which some cultures have more masculine traits like assertiveness and a competitive mindset among others while some have more feminine traits like empathy, cooperation etc. he stated that some cultures take a long-term orientation while others have a more short-term orientation (Burcu Teke,s, 2019).

Companies are influenced by the culture within the country and this is fundamental in shaping their corporate culture. It is of note that SME's in Dublin tend to have a more individualized orientation where the word "I" tends to be the norm and employees are expected to be very self-reliant which is almost in direct contrast from the culture prevalent within most minority ethnic groups where they have a more collective orientation and group achievements are prioritized over individual achievements (Hofstede Insights, 2019).

Also the one prevalent culture within Irish companies is that they have more masculine in that they are driven by competition, success and achievements where success is defined by the winner while in most minority ethnic groups people tend to have more feminine qualities where the quality of life is seen as been important and standing out of the crowd is not appreciated and where enjoying what you do matters more than being the best at what you're doing (Hofstede Insights, 2019).

Most SME's in Dublin tend to take a short-term look at business where the focus is on achieving quick results even if it doesn't necessarily translate into long term success while people from minority ethnic groups tend to take a long-term view of situations and are willing to aim for long-term success even if it means taking a loss within the short-term (Hofstede Insights, 2019).

This differences have created a situation where companies would have to accommodate for two opposing cultures which a number of SME's do not have the capacity to do so and also due to the pressure to get results in the short-term a lot of them are reluctant to change their corporate culture.

While this theory still holds a high level of significance it is worthy to note that the study was only conducted on one company and a number of minority ethnic groups have different tribe and communities within them that have different cultures and beliefs which differ from the prevailing one. One major drawback to this is cultural integration as Dublin is very multi-cultural and many cultures are being fused with others to create something new.

Dublin city has a representation of over a hundred different nationalities as the 2016 census revealed that 612,018 people speak a different language other than Irish or English (Central statistics office, 2016). Cultural diversity has been shown to be very important in the workplace as it not only brings a diversity in thinking it also increases the chances of employees and management to overcome cultural shock as the business is expanding into other countries. With this there also tends to lead to intercultural conflicts, longer decision-making process etc. Cox defined diversity management as the creation of conditions that minimize the potential for diversity to be a performance barrier while maximizing the potential to enhance organizational performance (Maryhofer, 2006). Studies in America show that there are in-groups and out-groups and that the in-groups are usually made of white American Nationals and that the in-group and out-group are viewed from the viewpoint of the majority. The management of diversity in the workplace was non-existence as there was a large sense of ethnocentrism within the workforce as majority of firms were found to have an ethnocentric culture and were reluctant to change (Amaram, 2007). It is of note

that while Irish and American culture are somewhat similar there are still varying degrees of similarities and the situation found in America might not necessarily hold in Dublin.

2.7 Edward Hall's cultural theory and how it impacts inter-cultural team in the workplace

Every organisation has its own culture which more often would contain spills from the culture of the country in general as values, beliefs and norms contained within a country's culture are bound to have an effect on companies within its borders (Boukhali, 2013).

Edward Hall's theory was based on his experience working in various parts of the world and observing others who were working in different cultural backgrounds than theirs. He spent some time working as a construction foreman in Arizona, here he worked with the Navajo Indians which he later conducted an anthropological study on. He later went on to work as a consultant for the United States government where he facilitated intercultural communication and relationship within the staffs and also the designing of language courses for Americans working overseas and for foreigners working in the US, this lead him to write his book "Beyond Culture" (Edward Hall 1976, 2016)

His theory was based on two classes of culture namely the high and low context cultures, he classified the high context culture as one where majority of the communication is in a contextual nature as it involves a lot of non-verbal communication like body language, tone of voice, movement of the eyes. Another distinguishing characteristic of members of the high context culture is that they tend to be very relational in which they tend to build close relationships for longer periods of time, sometimes these relationships would take precedence over the stated rules and regulations and due to the level of close interaction between members they develop an understanding of the rules without being needed to be written down (Edward Hall 1976 c. b., 2002). Another major trait used for identifying high context culture is that members prefer to learn in groups and group success is more significant than individual success, this is particularly among Asians and Africans. Also, members would tend to place more emphasis on how the destination is reached than the result.

Majority of the minority ethnic groups in Dublin tend to exhibit majority of the traits of the high context culture.

On the other hand, there is the low context culture is one where majority of the communication is verbal and explicitly spelt out as it does not rely on the contextual elements of communication like body language or voice tone amongst others, it also tends to be very direct and straight to the point. Another major characteristic is that members tend to have lots of relationships that last for short periods of time and are formed for specific reasons. Here rules of behaviour tend to be spelt out explicitly so that everyone knows what is expected of them, here the rules take centre stage and would be placed above relationships (Edward Hall 1976 c. b., 2016). Members tend to be more individualistic and personal success takes precedence over that of the group, also there is more emphasis on the result than the processes that it takes to get there.

Inter-cultural teams in the workplace would be made up of both high and low context culture individuals and sometimes members of the same team could be on stark opposite points of the spectrum and sometimes this could lead to a lot of messages been lost in transmission, for example the severity of a situation might not be understood by employees with high context culture due to the lack of body language and change in voice tone (Wang, 2008)

In making decisions members of the low context culture would more often base their decision on purely logic and would put more emphasis on the end result while members of the high context culture would examine factors such as “feelings” and “emotional connections” in addition to or sometimes over the overwhelming logic (Barkai, 2008)

Ireland being a multicultural country is a mix between high and low context and Dublin being a prime example of the inter-cultural interaction due to the many cultures represented at different workplaces, even with this there could still be problems if cultural interaction is not handled properly as seen in the examination carried out by Donatus I. Amaram in 1993 where 163 managers were gotten from the US, Israel and China and were put in different cultural context where it was discovered that the managers from the US found it difficult to adapt to a more collective culture and

likewise the managers from China found it difficult to adapt to a more individualistic culture (Amaram, 2007). It is of note that that due to the time frame of the study as it was done in 1993 it cannot be totally representative of the conditions that exist in my study, also it was done in the US which though somewhat culturally similar there are still a number of cultural differences which reduce the accuracy of relating this experiment with my study.

2.8 Understanding what makes up corporate culture

In order to gain an understanding of what corporate culture is and the different components that make it up, there must be a clear understanding of what the term “culture” is. Culture as defined by Edward Tylor can be said to be knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs among other capabilities and habits acquired through membership of belonging to a particular group (Price, 2004). Hofstede defined corporate culture as the mind programming present in an organization where members are expected to abide by certain set of norms, values and organizational rules to be successfully inculcated into the group (Hofstede 2000, 2016).

Peter Blau described corporate culture as the specific unwritten “rules of the social game” in an organization which enable the social life participants to understand their organization and identify with it (Peter Blau 1994, 2009). The similarity between these two definitions is the fact that they both argue that for an organization to be said to have corporate culture the culture with the organization must be unanimous. Corporate culture could be split into six other dimensions as postulated by Hofstede these are:

- I. Process oriented vs goal oriented: The process oriented culture while the goal is the final result it is not necessarily the most important as the process to reach the goal and the process after reaching the goal take centre stage as there is a continuous strive to improve both in the short and long term. The draw back to this is that if the goal is not clear there is a possibility for the process to stretch towards all directions and making it ineffective. While in the goal-oriented culture the goal is put at centre stage as employees are given particular goals to meet and the how takes secondary stage in a goal-oriented environment the

goals tend to be more short-term profit oriented. Also, under this approach due to the pressure to achieve goals employees could take significant risk or bypass regulatory rules (Hofstede 2000, 2016).

- II. Parochial vs Professional: Under the parochial culture employees feel that their identities and sometimes their societal status are intermingled with that of their workplace. There also tends to be a strong culture of employees identifying themselves to their immediate manager and there also tends to be a strong social control over the employees within the company, this culture is particularly prominent among minority ethnic groups like Latin Americans and Africans amongst others. The professional cultural dimension is in stark contrast with the parochial culture as employees identify themselves more with their profession, the content of their jobs, their educational qualifications and their specialization within the organization. Under this culture employees may feel less inclined to go any extra miles for their organizations, this kind of culture is more prominent within countries like the U.S, Germany, Ireland etc. (Jusuf Zeqiri, 2016).
- III. Open system vs Closed system: This facet represents the way employees communicate with each other in the organization, in the open system there is high encouragement of internal and external communications as new employees have high accessibility to organizational information. This system makes it easier for the organization to acquire new skills, technology, one key advantage is that the organization would be able to assimilate new cultures with ease, this also makes the search for new talent easier and faster. The logic behind this is that any new employee can fit into the organization and this is more common in the service industry and with companies that deal with customers on a day to day basis (Mheiri, 2013). The closed system is in direct opposite to this as there is a belief that only some specific kinds of individuals can fit into the organization and new employees are not allowed to form identities or groups as there's an expectation of conformality on entering the organisation. One main feature of this system is the lack of interaction between different sections or cadres, people from outside the company are considered

as outsiders and information would be restricted to senior management and certain middle management personnel (Mheiri, 2013).

- IV. Employee oriented vs Job oriented: This relates to the management style within the organization, the employee-oriented style one of the major concerns of management is employee satisfaction one of the main features is that employees feel that their personal problems and welfare are taken into account by the company, this tends to improve motivation, the drawback to this is that employees with bad culture could take advantage of the understanding showed by the organization (Hofstede 2000, 2016), many SME's in Dublin are shifting towards this style of management. The job-oriented style of management is more concerned with the task at hand as managers would maintain strong discipline, there would be strong focus on task completion and deadlines, in extreme cases this could be done at the detriment to employee satisfaction and motivation, this style of management is more common in automobile companies, banks, pharmaceutical companies among others.
- V. Tighter Control vs Loose Control: This dimension relates to the level of structure, control and discipline present within an organization, as organizations with tighter controls would stress on factors like punctuality, rules and regulations amongst others. This kind of control helps to instill a sense of responsibility and accountability amongst employees as employee roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The draw back to this is that it could demotivate employees if the regulations and responsibility placed on them is seen as excessive (Lunenburg, 2011), this is more common among companies in the manufacturing industry. In loose control companies there is less concern on following the rules and regulations employees are allowed to complete their tasks without being micromanaged and this tends to encourage employees to be creative and would also increase the motivation levels within the organization this style of control tends to be more common among advertisement agencies and tech companies (Hofstede 2000, 2016).
- VI. Normative vs Pragmatic: This dimension relates to the way the organization relates to the outside environment the pragmatic companies tend to be more open to the public as their major concern is customer satisfaction as they are

more market driven, competitive and have a result oriented mentality and there is less concern for rules and regulations, this kind of culture can be found in most advertising agencies (Hofstede 2000, 2016). On the other hand, the normative companies are more rigid and place significant importance on rules and regulations which will be clearly stated, this culture shares a lot of similarities with the tighter control culture.

2.9 Relationship between corporate culture and recruitment practice

Robbie Katanga defined organisational culture as the way an organization does things while this definition is quite simplistic it creates a foundation to build on. For the purpose of this research organizational culture will be defined as the observable patterns of behaviour within an organization as pointed out by Aristotle for any behaviour to be considered a culture it must have been done repeatedly, this is often a function of the structure, process and incentives within the organization, it could also be influenced by past events and beliefs (Watkins, 2013).

Corporate culture would be predominant at all levels within an organization and it can be said to have an impact on recruitment and selection of personnel a lot of SME's have adopted the strategy of not just going after the best or the most talented candidates but also taking a look at which candidates fit their culture. Charles Ellis in his book "What it Takes: Seven Secrets of Success from the World's Greatest Professional Firms" stated that most modern firms would have a panel of 8-20 people per candidate for each interview in order to get a feel of the person's internal culture to assess if it fits with the company's culture (Ellis, 2013).

Recruitment and selection practices are more related to corporate culture in modern times as most firms would work closely with recruitment agencies to identify the qualities and behaviours that would be a cultural fit to their own.

The corporate culture in every company would usually adopts some parts of the country's culture, this would be an involuntary process. Due to the cultural dissimilarities this could pose as a deterrent to hire candidates from minority

ethnic groups as there is a fear factor that these individuals would not be a cultural fit.

2.10 The effectiveness of the Employment Equality Act in curbing discrimination at the workplace

The employment equality act of 1998-2015 makes it illegal for employers to discriminate against employees on the bases of nine grounds which include race, gender, age, civil status, sexual orientation, religion, family status, disability and being a member of a traveller community (information, 2015). This act also includes other factors such as equal pay, equal training opportunities, harassment, especially sexual harassment. The employment equality act tackles both cases of direct and indirect discriminatory practices, direct discriminatory practices refers to cases where an individual is unfairly treated compared to others in the same situation or circumstances while indirect discriminatory practices refers to policies which might not be deemed to be discriminatory but could have discriminatory impacts.

The act requires the complainant to come forward within six months from the day of the perceived discriminatory conduct, this can be extended to twelve months if there is a reasonable cause for the delay (Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 2016). The responsibility of proofing that discriminatory practices have occurred is placed on the complainant, the problem here is that due to the subjective nature of the case the complainant would have to prove why the respondent acted in the way they did, the difficulty here is trying to prove another person's reasons or motives behind the action committed. This means that the person issuing the complaint would only be able to support their claim by establishing surrounding and primary facts about the incident, from which it would be inferred whether discrimination has occurred.

One of the main concerns about the employment equality act is that there is no real enforcement of this act especially in the area of recruitment and selection as this matters could be somewhat subjective and except claims are made by disgruntled candidates cases of discrimination in the recruitment and selection of staff will never see the light of day. Also a lot of the time the candidates don't even know that they are been discriminated against as they are not privileged to the discussions that happen

behind closed doors, the only thing they see is the rejection email or no contact at all (Frances McGinnity J. N., 2009)

Another major observation made by Michelle O'Sullivan and Juliet Macmahon in their research after conducting an interview with the equality tribunal was the amount of time it took to settle cases as there have been a high number of withdrawals due to the time taken to reach a conclusion was said by the tribunal representative “people don't realise how long cases can go” as the parties involved would need to submit a written details of the case and time must be allotted for the parties to reply to submissions. In some cases, it has taking as long as three to five years to resolve the grievances (MACMAHON, 2010).

2.11 Company policies and public perception on diversity and inclusion

Most SME's in Dublin have some sort of diversity or inclusion policy, take for example hertz their policy which says

“Our Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are voluntary, employee-led groups that serve as a resource for our team by fostering a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with Hertz Global mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives. Members of the ERGs work together to create a positive work environment at Hertz Global by actively contributing to our mission and efforts specific to inclusion, such as recruitment and retention. They provide personal and professional development through mentoring, volunteerism, and community involvement (Hertz, 2017).

Another example could be Musgrave Group which houses several household names like Supervalu and Centra, their diversity and inclusion plan in 2018 goes as follows

“In 2018, we developed our plan to build a more diverse and inclusive Musgrave, which embraces and encourages difference and creates a positive high performing environment for our people. There are three core pillars to our approach” (Musgrave Group, 2018).

From the statements published by various Irish SME's it can be implied that there is a growing support of diversity recruitment within the labour market. While there is an increasing acceptance of diversity in many Irish SME's, there are still a number of

issues that dissuade people's perception towards the subject like the time it takes to reach a consensus as argued by Sara Guzman that due to misunderstanding in cultural ideals or ways of thinking there could be misunderstandings within the group which would raise the anxiety levels of the members and this could make certain members feel less comfortable to share their opinions which would increase the time it takes to make decisions (Guzman, 2014).

Another discovery made by Susan Guzman in her interviews with The Sugar Club, The Grafton Lounge among others was that in firms where diversity is not managed well this would damage group cohesiveness as some members would find the diversity to be uncomfortable which would increase dissatisfaction often leading to an increase in employee turnover and absenteeism (Guzman, 2014).

In an article by Ben Francis published on LinkedIn, drawing from his experience working in diverse teams for over twenty years he argued that the problem is not really peoples perception of diversity but more of how it is been handled at the workplace as he suggested that if a culture of leveraging openly is created and combined with the knowledge base of each member this could greatly affect the performance of the group (Francis, 2017). He went on to say that the solution is to develop an attitude of empathy and inclusivity should be at the core of the whatever operation the team is working with.

David Rock and Heidi Grant suggested in their journal "Why Diverse Teams are Smarter" suggested that diverse teams are perceived to be smarter as different ideals and ideas help to conquer stale ways of thinking and sharpen performances. More importantly he argued that in diverse teams' members are more likely to question and correct each other as they would most likely see the facts differently as their looking through different lenses (Grant, 2016). According to the 2015 McKinsey Report it was discovered that out of 366 public companies that the study was carried out on, the ones that were in the top quartile for ethnic and racial diversity were 35% more likely to have financial returns above the industry average (Vivian Hunt, 2015).

2.12 Conceptual Framework

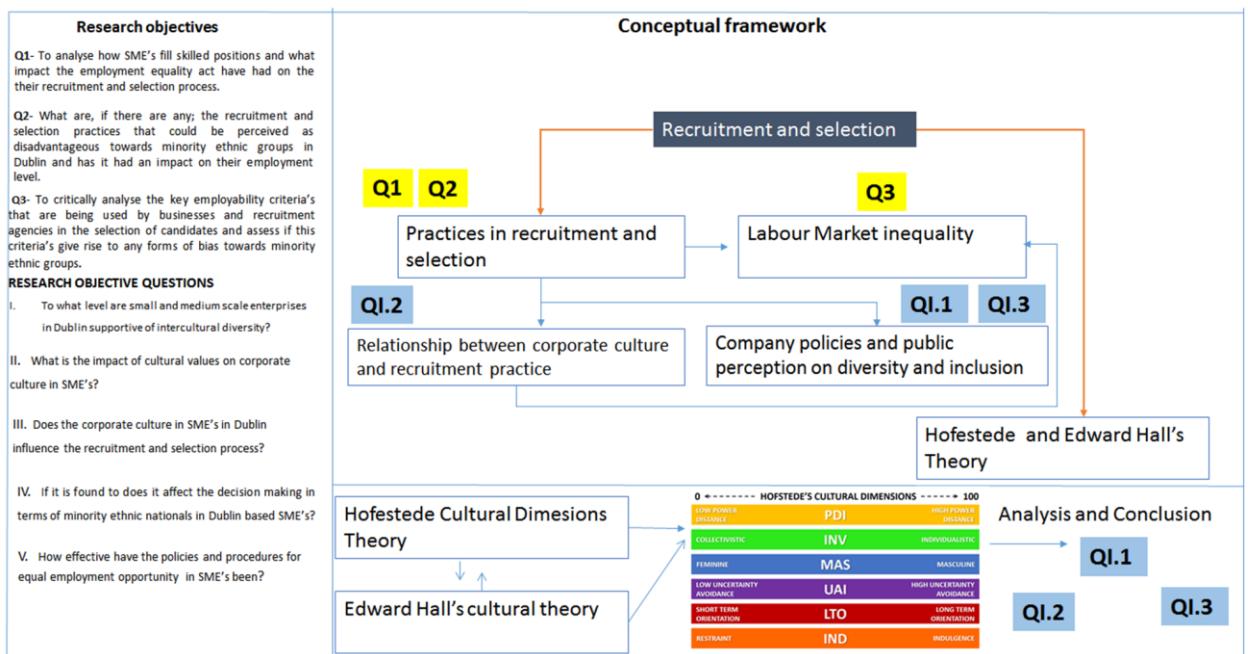


Figure 5: Conceptual Framework

Source: Assembled by the author

As shown in the diagram above this framework aims to answer the research questions fulfilling the following tasks:

- Defining the processes involved in recruitment and selection before looking at the recruitment practices which will be linked with the labour market inequality and how they are linked with company policies on diversity and equality.
- This research hopes to form a link between corporate culture and recruitment and selection
- The research will also seek to create a relationship between educational qualifications and labour market inequality and examine what role the employment equality act plays in this.
- All this will be examined through Hofstede theory of cultural dimensions and Edward Hall's cultural context, the research will examine how cultural differences affect team performances.
- How the public's policy on diversity and inclusion affects the recruitment and selection done in SME's.

2.13 Conclusion

From the literature various authors after performing different tests noticed a significant difference in the employment levels of job seekers from minority ethnic groups compared to their white Irish counterparts. While there were several tests and experiments been carried out to determine if there were discriminatory practices, there was very little qualitative research done to identify the practices. More so several of the articles were written years ago, and it is unclear of the relevance they would hold in the current labour market situation. The context which some of the previous literature were applied in were from countries that had cultural similarities to Ireland.

From taking a closer look at the literature the employment equality act while it is still very important in the combat against discrimination, there are several concerns about the implementation; in that it needs the aggrieved individuals to initiate the process and to prove the motives of another person. The time frame for reaching a consensus is also too long due to red tape and bureaucracy, stating that sometimes cases last up to three to five years.

The major purpose of this research is to analyse the relationship between bias in recruitment and selection practices and the level of employment of minority ethnic groups and identify the causative factors.

3 Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Overview

In order to understand the core relationship between employability criteria and the employment level of minority ethnic groups, the researcher has designed an interview which will be administered to experts in this field such as recruiters and managers. The interview will also be administered to non-experts to get a gauge of the public perception of the subject matter. To get a conclusive result the interview questions will have to be clear and concise and the respondents should be made to feel comfortable when answering the questions. From the interviews I will be able to get results which answer the following research questions:

- I. To what level are small and medium scale enterprises in Dublin supportive of intercultural diversity?
- II. What is the impact of cultural values on corporate culture in SME's?
- III. Does the corporate culture in SME's in Dublin influence the recruitment and selection process?
- IV. If it is found to does it affect the decision making in terms of minority ethnic nationals in Dublin based SME's?
- V. How effective have the policies and procedures for equal employment opportunity in SME's been?

As the main aim of the research is to determine the reasons behind the perceived relationship between the two variables, most qualitative research methods will be used i.e. interview method with both experts and non-experts.

3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

To explain the philosophy of this study the author will be using a research paradigm to show the various dimensions of the research, the research paradigm is shown below:

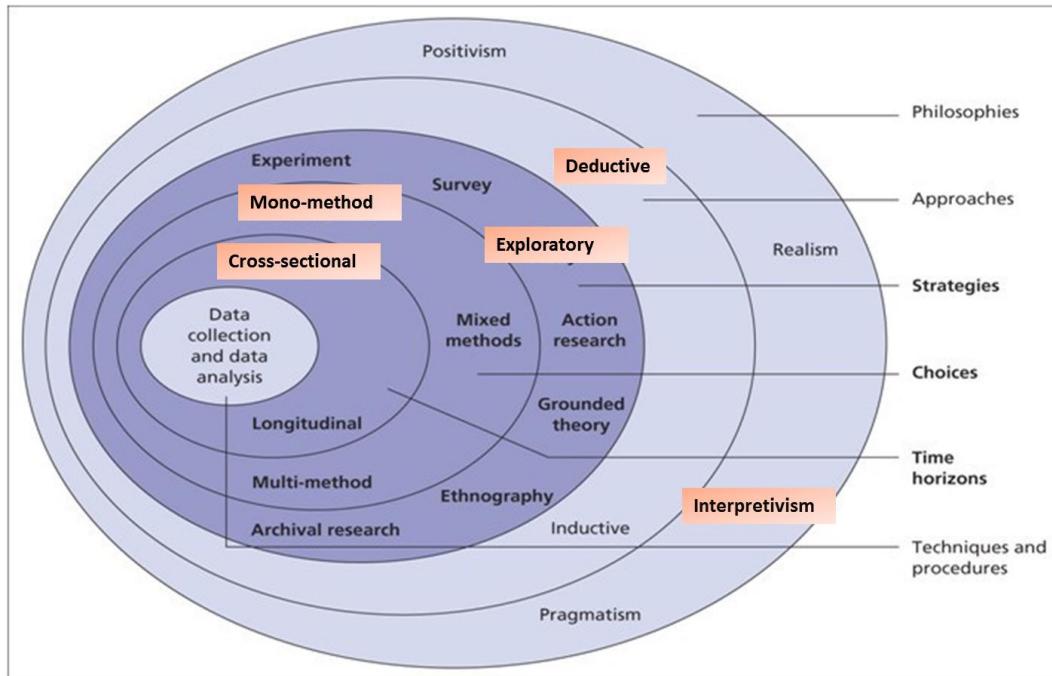


Figure 6: Research Onion

Source: <https://www.allassignmenthelp.co.uk/blog/research-onion-made-easy-to-understand-and-follow/>

This research focuses on human behaviour and how it could change when relating with people of different ethnic backgrounds, identifying the factors which may affect decision making during recruitment and selection in SME's in Dublin.

As recruitment and selection is a complex and iterative process because each encounter between an employer and a candidate is different this has led to the author to employ a more interpretivist approach to the research as this is more suitable to understanding human behaviour and it takes into consideration that research work in the human sciences is not the same as those in the natural sciences as human beings tend to interpret the world differently and act according to that interpretation while the world does not (Pham, 2018). Interpretivism is characterised by research methods designed to collect and analyse qualitative data of a subjective nature, this fits

seamlessly into my research as one of the main reasons for this research is to identify the cause of perceived discrimination against minority ethnic group individuals. The drawback to this is that it could be difficult to estimate at what point I have gathered enough data to make a conclusion as unlike positivist research where it is easier for the researcher to conclude once all statistical data has been collected.

As qualitative research is always embedded in the situation or the context in which it is done, to carry out this exploratory research which hopes to explore the relationship employers, candidates and the employment act from different angles, the deductive approach to research would be the most suitable as this deals with the establishment of patterns of behaviour between variables, it would involve me taking insights from Hofstede theory of cultural dimensions, Edward Hall's cultural theory and Francis Mgninity, here I will be trying to establish a pattern of behaviour between employers (or recruitment agencies) and candidates. As the research is within a limited context this would reduce the level of generalizability of the results as the same conditions may not hold in a similar situation in a different country (Jebreen, 2012).

As the nature of the research deals with making an empirical enquiry into recruitment practices within a real-life context, this research can be deemed to be a case study as it will be based on in-depth investigation through qualitative data collection methods in several SME's in Dublin. The drawback to this strategy is the result are viewed through the eye of the researcher and this creates the opportunity for the researcher's personal bias to influence the interpretation of the result (Rugrok, 2010).

In this research I would use a mono-method approach in which qualitative research methods will be used as there is need to establish the causative effect of bias practices in recruitment and selection but some quantitative methods will also be used as there will be a need to establish the current employment levels of minority ethnic groups.

I would characterise this research as a cross-sectional paper as data will be collected within a few weeks which will represent only a snap short of the full situation, data will be collected from people who are similar in almost all variables except for the particular variable (recruitment practices) under study (Setia, 2016).

3.3 Research Strategy

From the earlier sectors, there is an appreciation for the perceived social reality which was pervade by previous researchers such as Frances McGinnity and Raffaele Grotti amongst others in order to investigate and find the reason behind the decision making done at the point of recruitment and selection made by employers in Dublin there is a need to apply a qualitative approach to the research (Rahman, 2017), to be more specific the interview approach will be used as well as examining secondary data statistics on the subject matter in order to get insight into the perception of individuals being tasked with the duty of recruiting candidates.

As this is an exploratory study this research intends to gain insight into the relationship between the variables as it expects to illuminate the connections between cultural diversity, recruitment practices, corporate culture and explain how they impact the employment level of people from minority ethnic groups and assess the effectiveness of the employment equality act as this is an area that has not being defined enough to make any conclusions (Stebbins, 2001)

As this research will be looking at recruitment practices and how culture influences it in a real-life context, it would adopt an exploratory approach which would involve an intensive, systematic investigation of the variables being studied to give the researcher an in-depth understanding of the phenomena and a very little level of generalizability that can be applied to similar study as it aims to get an in-depth understanding into some particular phenomena in within the containment of a specific environment (Helena Harrison, 2017).

Finally, this research will explore external factors in recruitment and selection in Dublin such as the visa requirements to work in various industries. This study aims to answer questions on how the variables relates and causative effect behind the variables. I will use multiple case studies to examine how culture influences the recruitment practices of SME's in Dublin. I will examine multiple case studies in various enterprises in order to form patterns of behaviour between the variables within my research which can be applied to similar studies. It is of note that this research is not intending to provide

conclusive answers to stance could be changed based on my findings (Helena Harrison, 2017).

3.4 Collection Primary Data

As mentioned in the previous section method, the research is based on one primary data collection method which is the face to face interview method with appropriate questions for the particular target respondent which the data will be collected from in qualitative data approach will be explained by the deductive approach below:

Method	Selection benchmark
Interview	<p>The target respondents will be HR representatives, recruiters and employees in various SME's in Dublin. A standard or open-ended interview would be the best suited for this approach as it would enable me to ask the same open-ended questions to all respondents in a bid to achieve the objective probing questions may be asked, this approach will facilitate the speed of the process and it would also ensure fairness and reduces the chances of any personal bias influencing the process or the findings (D Valenzuela, 2002).</p> <p>Advantage: Personal interviews have been known to be a very reliable way of collecting qualitative data as it takes account of factors like facial expressions, voice variations, body language which are very important for quality interpretation and transcription of data (D Valenzuela, 2002).</p> <p>Disadvantage: It may take a longer time due to the need to find the interviewees first and the codifying of the data gotten from the interview. Due to the subjective nature of this method there is a significant chance that the elements of bias might occur either from the interviewer or the interviewee (Charlie, 2016).</p>

3.4.1 Sources

In order to complete this research and answer the questions which were mentioned in the first chapter, the researcher used a mix of both primary and secondary data sources. The secondary data sources will primarily be official statistics from the CSO website, peer reviewed articles, company statements and books all of which are from verified sources. The primary data is gotten through interviews with the questions being formed constructed from the conceptual framework. The interviews are administered to experts and non-experts to get in-depth knowledge of the working of recruitment and selection in SME's and get a rough measurement of the public's perception on the subject matter. Both sources are linked to each other in order to help develop the relationship between the two research variables.

3.4.2 Access and Ethical Issues

Gaining access to the write sources of data was highly crucial for the success of the research as the data source has a significant influence on the findings and the overall result. Respondents were found through exploiting my various relationship with colleagues at school and on LinkedIn in order to gain access to HR representatives and recruiters.

While conducting interviews interviewees will not be required to give their names and any information given will only be used for the purpose of the research. Also, during the interviews personal questions that could be considered as a breach of privacy will be avoided and data will only remain intact till after the dissertations are marked (Jessop, 2012).

Also, before final transcription all interviewees will be given a chance to remove any information they would desire not to be disclosed. The interviewees will be free to leave the process at any point which they feel they do not desire to carry-on (Jessop, 2012).

3.5 Approach to Data Analysis

Here, verbal data was analysed and categorised to form a pattern of behaviour then narrative analysis was carried out where stories presented by interviewees were reformulated and put into the different context prevalent that were observed by previous researchers in a comparative structure (Dey, 1993).

The data was codified into segments of different themes which were characterized by various aspects of the research this is going to be back and forth process as I was moving back and forth between different data and concepts and between different descriptions and interpretations of variables observed during the interview in which deductive reasoning will be used. I had a look at past research papers on this subject matter and deduced if there are any similarities with the data collected and measure against the employment levels in minority ethnic groups (Dey, 1993).

Here mainly the deductive coding approach was used with conjunction with some elements of inductive approach, in which a more narrow-minded process of analyses was applied in that a pre-determined list of themes and codes were formulated based on the research framework before the collection of data began while still leaving room for new codes that may arise from the data, (Linneberg, 2019) with the aim of keeping the research focused and concised as the major disadvantage of the grounded theory and inductive approach is that there is a tendency for the process to become too complicated and lose focus as the codes are more dependent on the participants response rather than the research framework (Saldaña, 2013).

The following are the provisional themes and codes which were used:

	Themes (research Framework)	Codes	Brief Description
1	Support for inter-cultural diversity	Diversity policies	Policies in place to promote diversity and inclusion
		Attitudes	Perception towards inter-

			cultural diversity
		Cultural clash	Disagreement in perceptions
		Diversity contribution	advantages of different perceptions
2	cultural values and corporate culture	Work-place interaction	employee to employee, employee to employer interaction
		professionalism	Dress codes and manner of speech
3	corporate culture and recruitment	work structure	The way employees would like to perform their tasks
		Corporate values	Values companies expect their employees to possess.
4	Equal employment opportunity	Visa sponsorship	Obtaining legal right to work
		Diversity vs competence	The trade-off between hiring the best and diversity and inclusion
		employment equality practices	Rules in place to ensure equal opportunities
		Rating of educational qualifications	To what level would it be considered and Factors that go into evaluating educational qualifications

3.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to determine the relationship between employability criteria and the employment level of minority ethnic groups in SME's in Dublin and evaluate if the conditions that were argued to exist by previous researchers such as Frances McGinnity, Fleischmann, amongst others still do in this current age. This research uses telephone interviews with experts and non-experts in order to determine the objectivity of the recruitment and selection process and get the publics opinion on the subject matter. The research took an interpretivism approach due to the subjective nature of the data. The data has been broken down into codes and analysed through the use of flow charts in the next chapter where provisional theories are formed.

4 Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

4.1 Overview

The aim of my research is to study how employability criteria has impacted the employment level of minority ethnic groups in Ireland, the methodology and the approach to the research was explicitly explained in the previous chapter where I explained that due to the nature of the research a qualitative approach was used, and been an exploratory research I decided to use the semi-structured interview method to collect data. The qualitative data was then transcribed and analysed manually. Having reviewed the previous literature around the topic of minority ethnic groups in the Irish labour market and developing a conceptual framework, I'll discuss my findings and how they are linked to the literature review, conceptual framework and the research objective questions from chapters two and one respectively. In this chapter I will discuss if the conditions that were postulated by previous researchers still holds in this day and age and review the employability criteria to see if they are discriminatory or just a by-product of trying to attract the best candidates and how cultural differences could play into that.

4.2 Findings

There is substantial literature about minority ethnic groups in the Irish labour market but very little practical literature on why the perceived injustice towards these group of people actually exists. There have been significant changes in terms of the perception towards minority ethnic groups since the previous researches were carried out. The changes have resulted in a greater need to understand the thought process that goes on behind the decision making during the process of recruitment and selection.

The selected research methodology, data collection method and the actual qualitative data collected have provided findings from which I can draw conclusions which will answer the research objective questions. A large amount of data was collected from

the semi-structured interviews held with various recruiters and HR representatives.

The following are the themes I will use to analyse the data:

1. Support for inter-cultural diversity (given context by their understanding of the Irish work environment).
2. cultural diversity and corporate culture
3. corporate culture and recruitment
4. Equal employment opportunity

I used the conceptual framework developed from the literature review to explain and present my findings. The construction of the framework allows me to focus my findings on the decision making that occurs in the process of recruitment and selection in SME's in Dublin.

Understanding of the Irish Work Environment

After asking each of the participants how the Irish work environment differentiates from that of their home countries I got a similar answer from the first two (Caroline who works as a recruiter for bank of Ireland, IT firms and Amanda HR Operation Specialist at Davy) with the overriding factor being empathic nature of the Irish workers which was in contrast with their home countries, the following contrasts were given respectively by both of them:

"It's because in Mexico there are too many people fighting for jobs, for one position you have more than a thousand applications as there are too many qualified people and there nobody cares about equality or rights." (Caroline, 2020) and "There's more appreciation for the employees in Ireland, in Poland the attitude is like "if you're not happy with the job there's the door" whereas here its more empathic." (Amanda, 2020).

From the personal experiences provided it can be insinuated that most of the participants are aware of how the Irish labour market and working environment differs from that of some of the lesser developed labour markets, as there is an obvious under-appreciation for labour in most of the countries where nationals

from minority ethnic groups come from, as similar conditions were reported by Drusilla Brown et al stating that 61% of workers in these countries basic employee rights which is due to lack of strict governance and the need to cut cost (Drusilla Brown, 2016) . While all participants were aware of the nature of the Irish labour market in terms of employment equality laws, rights and the appreciation of labour not all shared the same view of the differences between the labour markets as the last participant stated that she hasn't noticed any significant differences between the Irish labour market and that of her home country Venezuela.

4.2.1 *Support for inter-cultural diversity*

Diversity Policies

Diversity is a very important intangible resource that many companies fail to fully utilize as anything more than a public relations tool. The diversity and equality policies of many companies are explicitly stated as has been mentioned in the literature review. All participants agreed that their company had some sort of diversity and inclusion policies, though none were able to outline any of them.

I have coded the data collected to analyse the situations in which the participants have found in their workplace to serve as a gauge for the presence and effectiveness of diversity policies. Most of the participants expressed a feeling of inclusion and tolerance in their various working environments.

Attitude

All three participants gave positive answers when describing the attitudes towards minority ethnic individuals at their workplace and the acceptance of diversity and inclusion. The HR specialist at Davy stated: "*It's becoming more and more positive probably because of the shortage of skill set, a lot of companies nowadays pride themselves on being ethnically diverse and it is usually one of their selling points as most companies will put pictures of people from different countries just to advertise how diverse they are.*" (Amanda, 2020). While the first participant stated that in her experience she has only seen a positive attitude towards diversity and inclusion, and went on to say that she believes it is one of the main factors in staff retention stating:

"In my experience I've only seen positive views towards diversity and inclusion, sometimes people want to work in companies for a long time because of they feel comfortable being who they are and being proud of where their from, to be honest I haven't seen any negative perceptions towards diversity" (Caroline, 2020). While she stated she had only experienced a positive perception towards the subject matter there were contradictory statements within her responses in which she highlighted that within the more formal settings the culture tends to be more closed ended stating: *"within the more formal settings like banks the Irish workers are usually not so friendly and have a close-ended relationship within themselves."* (Caroline, 2020). From the literature there is an argument made by Mheiri and Hanan on closed system cultures and this is one of the major defining cultural attributes of corporate settings in Dublin (Mheiri, 2013). The other participant stated that at her work place: *"Its more positive, like people are more open to other cultures and adapt to be more flexible because everyone is from different countries and are more open minded."* (Gabriella, 2020)

The question(s) relating towards attitude were used to gauge how people feel about working in an ethnically diverse environment and though they were approached differently by each participant the responses were generally positive as the perspective given was that of harmony and a feeling of togetherness in the face of significant differences. The interview method used here provided here; semi-structured interview provided a platform to get a feel of how the diversity is received in the work environment.

Cultural clash

Cultural clash has been cited as one of the major hindrances to achieving harmony in diverse groups by many authors, Gillian Coote Martin et al stated in their journal "The Effects Of Cultural Diversity In The Workplace" that when people from different cultural backgrounds are brought together to work to a common goal, disharmony is bound to occur based on aspects of culture like religion, politics, history and this often leads to a stifling in creativity which is the opposite effect from what is desired (Gillian Coote Martin, 2014). Here the question(s) were administered as a way to find

out the participants view on cultural tensions in the workplace and how important they feel it is as an obstacle to attaining harmony.

The first participant stated that from her experience there have been instances where minority ethnic nationals have failed to adjust or adapt to the culture predominant in Dublin and narrated a very vivid experience which she had stating:

"I remember there was this team where all of them were from Arabic countries and we had a lot of difficult moments with them because they were not used to women being above them because in their countries women are not usually in positions above the men" (Caroline, 2020).

She further stated how she felt it has impacted her work in her workplace stating who it tends to take a while to make decisions saying *"sometimes when you have ten people with different ideas it could be a challenge trying pick the best one because everyone believes that their solution is the right one and this would usually waste a lot of time and energy."* (Caroline, 2020).

Amanda commented on the fact that cultural clashes tend to disrupt the cohesion within the team and create a tensed environment saying *"people can get offended very easily as people all have their different cultures and what is normal in one persons culture may be rude in some else's."* (Amanda, 2020). She further commented on the struggles of minority ethnic nationals during the interview stage saying that a number of them tend to be timid and associated it to their culture stating:

"Some of the candidates from outside the EU tend to be timid or shy, they do not know how to present themselves well, I think it is because in their culture you're not meant to talk about how wonderful you are because it could mean be seen as been proud whereas here in the interview you're meant to sell yourself and talk about all your achievements and talk about how wonderful you are." (Amanda, 2020).

The last participant had similar comments to Amanda's on how sometimes cultural clash could affect the cohesion within the office environment stating that particular races tend to not deal verywell with disagreement in views saying in her experience

Indians “*don’t take disagreement very well and sometimes could seem to be rude*” (Gabriella, 2020).

The overall consensus from the interviews was that cultural clashes has a significant effect on harmony due to derogatory views and difficulties of minority ethnic nationals adapting to a new way of viewing society and that cultural differences have had an effect on the employment level of minority ethnic nationals as it has constituted to a hinderance at the interview stage of recruitment, where majority of the candidates from outside the EU are from high context cultures where respect is viewed to take a more relational tone where respect could involve avoiding a direct style of communication and taking a humble tone when talking to people that are perceived as superior, which could be viewed as a lack of confidence in cultures with a lower context (Hege Høivik Bye, 2014).

Diversity Contribution

Various authors have argued that diversity within the workplace helps to spark creativity and dynamism, here the participants referenced how working in diverse teams has contributed to the success of teams in their workplaces with Caroline stating how due to the diversity at her workplace teams are able to come up with multiple solutions to each problem they face saying “*that for every problem we always had a lot of solutions.*” (Caroline, 2020). She went on to explain how working in diverse teams has fueled the creative process in her company stating:

“*What I’ve noticed is that there are usually lots of different ideas because they all think differently and they all of different cultures and experiences, also people tend to be more empathetic to each other which usually makes it easier to work and everyone feels free to share their ideas and are proud of their ideas.*” (Caroline, 2020).

Amanda had a similar view on how working in diverse teams can be very helpful in the creative process but cited that at her workplace she is the only member of her team that is not Irish and stated the adverse effect it has on creativity saying “*I work in a team where everyone is Irish and I’m the only one from a different country, so basically most of the time they all think in a similar way whereas I try to bring a different view*

point.” (Amanda, 2020) Caroline also shared a similar view saying that when working in teams without diversity there tends to be a theme of re-occurring ideas in which everyone basically come up with the same ideas. Gabriella pointed out the working in diverse teams has been able to give her new insight when solving various problems .

There are arguments within the literature that working in diverse teams tends to spark creativity and could greatly improve the performance of a group (Francis, 2017). The results advocate that working in an ethnically diverse team helps to improve performance within companies but with this been said, as seen in the earlier segment it can also reduce performances within groups if values clash and could reduce effectiveness as a result of inability to reach decisions, as stated by Ben Francis there is a need to manage diversity or what was expected to spark productivity could become detrimental to the success within a group.

4.2.2 *cultural values and corporate culture*

Work-place interaction

Work-place interaction in essence the way employees relate with themselves, managers, and other members of staff within the organization is an integral part of any companies corporate-culture and in instances can even be used to measure a persons level of integration into the organization.

Amanda stated that workplace interaction within many Dublin based SME's citing her company as an example tends to take place in a more informal setting where she highlighted her struggles adapting saying she was regarded as rude when she first began working due to her more direct pattern of speech when communicating with her colleagues as the use of small talk in Irish culture is very predominant as statements such as “how is your day going” are expected to be used before making demands (Amanda, 2020). Gabriella made similar suggestions that individuals from minority ethnic groups tend to be more direct when communicating in the workplace while the Irish workers are more indirect.

Here the findings suggests that cultural values have an impact on corporate culture especially in the area of communication within the workplace, which in instances has been shown to contradict the workplace culture of minority ethnic nationals.

Professionalism

Caroline refers to proffesionalism as the way employees communicate within the work place and the way they dress while stating that in her experience minority ethnic nationals tend to behave and dress more professionally than their Irish counterparts. Amanda was somewhat in contrast stating that a number of the candidates from minority ethnic nations she's interviewed tend to use inappropriate language which might be deemed acceptable in their countries.

While the findings suggest that peoples culture defines what behaviour as professional as Irish culture tends to be predominantly informal in the both communication and dressing, the responses were not sufficiently detailed to answer the question of how the level of proffesionalism is affected by the corporate culture within the workplace.

4.2.3 *corporate culture and recruitment*

Work structure

Here the prevailing theme is on how the way individuals like to structure their work could impact the decision making behind recruitment and selection, as implied from the literature that individuals from minority ethnic groups tend to want to perform many tasks at a time which could be said to be in contrast with what is expected in Dublin. When asked how a candidate's work structure work would affect her decision Caroline suggested that yes it would as it is based on the job that is to be done but stating that it is not an important factor in her decision making as factors such as soft skills and qualifications are prioritized (Caroline, 2020).

From the findings advocate that there is very little relationship between work structure of minority ethnic individuals and the decisions been made during the screening process.

Corporate values

Cultural fit has been a huge topic on its use to access candidates that come from countries with different cultures with Hege Høivik Bye et al arguing that there tends to be a misconception among many managers where similarity equates to being cultural fit and candidates with low level similarities tend to be overlooked (Hege Høivik Bye, 2014).

The topic of candidates being culturally fit was touched by most of the participants as they acknowledged the importance of candidates having similar values to that of the company and how they would assess that factor. Amanda stated that ideally she would like candidates to share similar values with the company and would look at factors like motivators in a bid to assess if they are culturally fit saying "*we would like to know what motivates people if its money, career progression but to be honest a lot the recruitment process hinges on their level of experience and educational qualification and other factors like your cost of getting to work*" (Amanda, 2020). Gabriella had a similar view stating that she doesn't consider factors such as corporate values when posting workers to various projects with clients (Gabriella, 2020). The exact questions that would be administered were not given due to their confidential nature.

Caroline also shared a similar view on the importance of corporate value to her decision-making stating that while it is important, she had not devised any specific ways to test for this other than the standard recruitment process (Caroline, 2020).

Here the participants hinted that while they would ideally want candidates to have similar values that of their companies, it is not a factor that holds any significant bearing in their decision making at this stage.

4.2.4 Equal employment opportunity

Employment equality practices and Visa sponsorship

The impact of the employment equality act has been described as subjective in nature by previous researcher due to unclear definitions of its execution (Frances McGinnity P. D., 2011). The participants cited guidelines which were applied to ensure the objectivity of their decision making during the recruitment process, Caroline stated in a bid to ensure equality her company maintains a one size fits all recruitment policy in which there are a set of ready made criteria which are used and the same background checks are applied to all applicants claiming "*if the person has all the qualifications, does a great interview and has the legal right to work we are going to hire that person*" (Caroline, 2020). Amanda stated that while her company prides themselves on equality in diversity there is a preference towards applicants from the EU stating that her company would only hire applicants from outside the EU if the skill sought after cannot be found within the EU (Amanda, 2020).

Caroline made a similar remark stating that companies would not take any applicant without a stamp 4 Visa meaning minority ethnic individuals who migrated to further their education would be illegible to work and this view was somewhat shared by Gabriella who stated that on occasion her company passes over qualified individuals because of the documentation needed to hire them stating "*so sometimes we are not ready because hiring people from India or Philippines, South Africa takes a good while to get the paper work to be able to work in Ireland.*" (Gabriella, 2020).

The findings advocate that there is an inequality in the recruitment process this is not due to any prejudice against minority ethnic groups but rather it's due to the rigorous and expensive process involved in the sponsorship of visas which a number of SME's in Dublin are not willing to take due to the financial implications and the long periods needed to file documentations.

Diversity vs competence

Caroline referenced that while she tries her best to ensure that her final crop of candidates is as diverse as possible, in a bid to be objective she has to overlook

diversity in favour of competence stating that for some roles majority of applications come from particular countries and the few from a number of ethnic minority groups lack the adequate experience to perform those roles (Caroline, 2020).

Here it can be argued that there is a necessary trade-off between diversity and competence which was one of the factors that past researchers like Francis McGinnity and Dronkers failed to account for while formulating their theories on inequality.

Rating of educational qualification

Previous researchers such as Raffaele Grotti argued that there was a taste based discrimination based on the location where educational attainments were attained stating that while minority ethnic nationals had attained higher educational qualifications than their Irish counterparts, they were still more likely to be overlooked due to a preference for educational qualifications attained in Europe (Grotti F. M., 2015).

When asked about this the participants were very varying in their response with Carline stating “*No, there’s no difference between the qualifications for example once you have a bachelors degree you have a bachelors degree it doesn’t matter the country you obtained it from a bachelors degree from Mexico is the same as one from the UK, we don’t do anything like that*” (Caroline, 2020). The second participant stated that while she would have a preference for educational attainments aquired in places like the UK or Ireland it is not a major consideration in her screening process and it is due to the ease in assessing how difficult it is to graduate from those colleges and the lack of information on many universities outside Europe, using her personal experience as an example stating “*I did my masters in Ireland even though I had my qualifications from Poland and also did all HR certifications in Ireland just to make sure that I would be in consideration because I know they might not no the college I finished from.*” (Amanda, 2020).

The findings suggest that while some of the concerns expressed by Raffaele Grotti still exist, in this current times the degree to which it exists has been greatly diminished and rather than it been due to sort of taste based discrimination it can be associated

simply with the lack of sufficient information to adequately assess the credibility of the educational standards within these colleges.

4.3 Discussion

The research conducted was aimed to study the impact of various employment criteria on the decision making in recruitment and selection in SME's located in Dublin. The research objective questions set out based on my overall research aim, provided the pathway from which I researched the literature on labour market inequalities, perception of diversity, recruitment and selection practices in Dublin based SME's.

I developed a conceptual framework and set out my research strategy and design. I will now analyse my findings from the qualitative data collected and the literature reviewed in relation to the research objective questions.

Research Objective Question One

To what level are small and medium scale enterprises in Dublin supportive of inter-cultural diversity?

All the respondents who participated in the interview all shared similar views that there is significant support for inter-cultural diversity within their work environments based on their experiences. There was a consensus that having cultural diversity within the teams helps to improve productivity and that its absence leads to stale mindsets and a lack of creativity when solving problems.

While there was an overall view of support, Caroline felt that there is a lack of inter-cultural interaction within the more formal structures due to the closed-ended relationship within the Irish nationals. This closed ended system is useful in encouraging conformality (Mheiri, 2013) however I would argue it is more likely to alienate sections within staff and reduces team spirit within the organization overall.

While there is an appreciation for cultural diversity there is an expectation of cultural conformation at the interview stage in which candidates are expected to conform to the prevalent culture of answering questions, this highlights the difficulties of minority ethnic nationals in adapting to the prevalent culture in Dublin based SME's.

Research Objective Question Two

What is the impact of cultural values on corporate culture in SME's?

The data collected from the interview suggests that there is a strong correlation between the typical Irish cultural values and corporate culture present in SME's especially in the area of what is considered as professional behaviour in terms of communication (use of small talk) and dressing.

The effects of cultural perception can be seen in the findings as there is a significant disagreement between respondents on the subject of professionalism due to their differences in perception in which Caroline who comes from Mexico haven spent significantly less time in Dublin than the other respondents views professionalism as been more formal in terms of communication and dressing which is directly contrasting with the cultural values prevalent within SME's in Dublin.

Research Objective Questions Three and Four

Does the corporate culture in SME's in Dublin influence the recruitment and selection process and its effect on the employment of minority ethnic groups?

From the qualitative data collected it is evident that there is very little correlation between corporate culture and recruitment and selection in SME's as while participants acknowledged that would typically want candidates that can fit seamlessly into the culture within their companies and would test for that at the interview stage it is not a factor that holds any significant effect on their decision making and has little impact on the employment level of minority ethnic groups as factors such as experience, educational qualifications amongst others are considered more important.

The data makes a strong argument that in the area of recruitment and selection in terms of cultural expectations, SME's in Dublin operate a best practice model in which there's an expectation for candidates to fit into the culture regardless of where they come from, hence there is little effort to ensure culture fit in recruitment.

Research Objective Question Five

How effective have the policies and procedures for equal employment opportunity in SME's been?

There was a general consensus from all participants that there is a sense of objectivity in the recruitment and selection process within their companies due to practices generally based on the employment equality act with polices such as having a constant sequential recruitment process for all candidates, applying the same background checks for everyone and strictly using a merit system to assign promotions .

However, upon reviewing the statements made by the respondents it can be argued that there are some deficiencies that would obstruct the objectivity of the process. The need to possess a stamp 4 visa to work in most SME's as highlighted by all respondents poses a limitation to the policies as most graduates from minority ethnic groups do not possess this, with companies unwilling to engage in sponsorship due to the rigorous process needed for documentation and the financial implications, while this can be said to limit objectivity it is of note that it is out of the scope of the employment equality act.

The participants provided their views on the use of educational qualifications to rate candidates, bringing into focus the location where these qualifications were obtained. While it was not unanimous that where educational qualifications were obtained has any bearing on the rating of applications there is an argument to be made on if this limits the objectivity of the decision making as made by Raffaele Grotti.

I would argue that the use of location of educational qualifications constitutes a partial limitation to the objectivity of the policies as while it influences the decision making in some companies, it is not the most significant consideration during the recruitment process. While it is evident that there are some clear limitations to the policies and

procedures for equal employment opportunity, taking a wholistic view of the data collected the findings suggests that these policies and procedures have been largely effective.

4.4 Conclusion

The findings of the research were discussed in relation to the literature, conceptual framework and the research objectives. There are suggestions in the literature that indicate labour market inequality towards minority ethnic individuals particularly the tests carried out by Riach and Rich where identical CV's of both Irish and minority ethnic nationals were sent out to different companies (Riach, 2011). Despite the wealth of research available on the labour market inequality which was perceived by previous researchers there is a clear gap in the study as there was very little research done on why this perceived inequality existed.

The data collected from the interviews was designed to find out the reasons behind this perceived bias in recruitment and to test if the conditions argued by previous researchers still exists in these current times. The data collected provides an argument that the major reason behind the perceived inequality is due to cultural differences specifically in the way minority ethnic individuals advertise themselves during interviews as what is considered as respect in their various cultures is considered as a show of lack of confidence in the Irish culture, visa requirements to work in most SME's and location of educational qualifications.

In contrast with previous researchers in this field who argued that the perceived inequality was a result of taste-based discrimination and prejudice against minority ethnic groups in the Irish labour market (Gallagher, 1979) the data collected suggests that it is simply due to factors such as cultural differences in values, rigorous process needed for documentation for visa sponsorship and the lack of adequate information needed to assess colleges outside Europe.

While the findings show that there is still evident labour market disparity, there is a clear contrast in the levels that were argued to exist by previous researchers such as Fleischmann, Dronkers amongst others as there is now a greater appreciation of the usefulness of ethnic diversity within the SME's in Dublin and the ownness now rests on

how it can be managed properly in other to further improve peoples perception of the subject matter.

5 Concluding Thoughts on the Contribution of this Research, its Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

5.1 Implications of Findings for the Research Questions

In the previous chapter I examined the findings that resulted from the interviews and how they related to the conceptual framework which was developed in the second chapter where they were also discussed in the context of the five research objective questions and compared with suggestions put forward by previous researchers. In this chapter I will discuss the implications of the findings in line with the research questions.

There is sufficient research on the subject matter of labour market inequality and discrimination but there is little research on the factors that affect decision making that influence the employability of minority ethnic nationals. The available literature that deals with the relationship were only focused on the prejudicial side of the relationship and only looked at it from the point of the employers. This research looks at the relationship from both job seekers and employers and explores external factors that affect the employability of minority ethnic groups.

While there is relatively huge support for inter-cultural diversity among many SME's in Dublin as demonstrated by the appreciation for diverse teams, some of the conditions that created an inequality within the labour market as argued by previous authors still exist in terms of recruitment practices that were deemed disadvantageous to minority ethnic groups such as assessing candidates by the countries where they attained their qualifications irrespective of how qualified they are, though it is of note that it is not a significant criterion. The research reveals that while factors such as corporate culture and values are not a huge factor in determining the employability of minority ethnic nationals due to the use of best practice model within most SME's societal culture has significant influence on the employability in particular the way applicants are expected to present themselves.

The research implies that the employment equality policies (which is based on the employment equality act) within SME's has been largely effective in curbing any biases

that may arise in the recruitment process. The major factors that cause the labour market disparity such as visa requirements to work in most SME's are caused by external factors such as the length of time taken to for documentation which would result in loss of productivity while trying to file the paper work making visa sponsorship as a last resort used on when the required skill needed to fill a role cannot be readily found within the EU.

5.2 Contributions and Limitations of the Research

The extensive research on labour market inequality, societal and corporate culture, diversity and factors that influence employability provided a structured base from which the conceptual framework was developed. The qualitative method used for data collection allowed for additional codes to be developed which were based on the themes gotten from the conceptual framework. The responses gotten from the participants was of a high standard and their experience in recruitment and selection contributed immensely to the research.

The limitations of the research were a lack of peer reviewed articles on the factors that influence decision making during recruitment and selection in a diversity context and the lack of specific employment equality policies and procedures in companies due to its confidential nature. I recognize my inexperience as a researcher impacted the way I approached this research and the wide scope of my research objectives as it limited level of focus in which I answered the research questions. Finally, due to the unexpected covid-19 pandemic which brought about a societal shutdown the sample size from which I could draw participants within the time frame was impacted which has reduced the overall generalisability of the findings.

5.3 Recommendations for Practice

Diversity and inclusion is a widely preached message across many business fronts and there has been a steady increase in the support for inter-cultural diversity in the workplace over the years. This increase in support is reflected in the findings of the research and by many new aged cultural reports (Vivian Hunt, 2015).

Due to the limitations of the research, the generalizability of the recommendations with regard to employability criteria and its relationship with the employment level of minority ethnic groups cannot be ascertained with any level of certainty. However, I recommend that SME's in Dublin should increase their information range on colleges outside the EU given the nature of Dublin been a very multi-cultural city. As the famous saying goes "when in Rome you behave like a Roman" there is a need for minority ethnic individuals to greater embrace the societal culture which in Dublin in order to better integrate and perform better during interviews.

The final recommendation is that due to the reluctance of firms to sponsor visas unless it is for a critical skill there is need for persons for candidates to gain an understanding of what constitutes the critical skills needed in order to place themselves in the right conditions for employability.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Given the increased support for ethnical diversity in many SME's in Dublin the research focused on examining the factors that influence the decision making of recruiters towards persons from minority ethnic groups. From the findings of the research it was evident that the prejudice that was argued towards minority ethnic groups in the labour market has greatly diminished, I recommend the following:

Firstly, while the research was intended to be approach the subject matter from both the perspective of both employers and job seekers, due to limitations such as time constraint the data collection focused on solely the perspective of employers. I would recommend that for research job seekers of both Irish and minority ethnicity should be interviewed and the use of focused groups should be considered in order to get detailed insight into their perception of the objectivity of the recruitment process.

For the purpose of simplification and time constraint I made the assumption of characterizing all minority ethnic groups as one, in which I used the same characteristics to describe their personalities. In reality this is not the case as there are varying cultures between different minority ethnic groups, also the demography of minority ethnic groups in the Ireland is constantly changing year by year with an annual growth rate of 14.7% which is split unevenly between various nationalities

(CSO Ireland, 2016), for further research there is a need to examine minority ethnic groups as individual groups based on nationality in order to get a through reflection of the situation.

The results of my research suggest that the employment equality policies and procedures which were derived from the employment equality act and are been applied by SME's in Dublin have been largely successful. For future research there is a need to review past records of employment disputes that relate to discrimination based on ethnicity in order to truly ascertain the effectiveness of these policies.

5.5 Final Conclusion and Reflections

The research study found out that the two most important employability criteria that influence the employment level of minority ethnic nationals are societal culture in terms of the proper way to sell yourself in an interview and external factors that factors such as the visa requirements needed to work in most Dublin based SME's due to the rigorous process involved in getting documentations.

The study also showed that there is a need for minority ethnic individuals to better try to assimilate themselves within the Irish culture to better integrate into the labour market. While there has been significant increase in the support for inter-cultural diversity in the Dublin based SME's over the years the study reveals that there is still a labour market inequality but in contrast with arguments made by previous researchers this inequality is not based on prejudicial preference but rather a lack of information and external factors which are out of the scope of the employment equality policies and procedures within SME's. Based on all these I have made recommendations for practice and for further research.

In retrospect, the scope of my research was too broad, and this is a clear reflection of my naivety as a researcher. Still, the process of this dissertation has given me the necessary experience and confidence to undertake further research projects in the future and I look forward to sharing this experience with future researchers in this field.

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Appendices

Appendix A –

Interview questions

1. How long have you been working as a recruiter?
2. Have you worked as a recruiter in any other country other than Ireland?
 - What is the main difference you've noticed between the labour market in Ireland and other markets you've worked in involving minority recruitment?
3. What changes have you noticed within the last decade concerning minority employment? Laws/trends
 - Can you give me a vivid example of a major experience you've had with this?
4. From your experience working with candidates can you outline cultural differences you've noticed between Irish nationals and different non-EU nationals?
 - If possible, could you give me an example of any specific cases?
5. From experience what advantages have you noticed when working with ethnically \diverse teams?
 - Can you give me a vivid example?
6. From your experience what disadvantages have you noticed when working with ethnically diverse teams?
 - Can you give me a vivid example?
7. What factors go in rating candidate applications in respect to educational qualifications?
 - Are there instances where certain qualifications obtained in some countries have been rated to others?
8. How do you fill critical skill positions for your clients?
9. Can you outline any employment equality policies that your client has?
 - From your experience working with your client what can you say their perception of diversity and inclusion is in respect the minority ethnic nationals?
10. How has the corporate culture of your clients influenced your selection of candidates?
 - In your opinion do SME's prefer candidates with the same culture or the same values?
 - In your opinion how would SME's benefit from having minority cultures in their teams?

11. What are the problems you've noticed involving minority recruitment in terms of immigration and cultural differences? Visa/cultural dissimilarities

Appendix B –

Interviewee: Caroline (Recruiter for banks and IT firms)

Interviewer: Tekena-Lawson Sopiriala

Date of interview: 02/04/2020

[Begin Transcript 00:00:29]

Me: Before we start, I'll go over some of the guidelines, you're not obligated to give your name as your statement can be anonymous if you choose so.

[00:01:02}

IN: I would like my statement to be anonymous

Me: Okay

[00:01:16]

IN: I can give you my age and my job

[00:01:31]

Me: Okay

[00:01:41]

IN: I'm 32 years old and I previously worked as a recruiter for the US bank in Ireland till my contract finished.

[00:02:03]

Me: Okay I'll run through a few other guidelines before I begin asking my questions, there's no obligation to answer any of the questions and before I submit my work I'll give you a chance to go over your statement to see if there's anything you would like to change, or if there's anything you would like to add or subtract.

[00:03:55]

IN: Okay

[00:03:58]

Me: Are you ready to start with the questions

[00:04:04]

IN: Yeah

[00:04:07]

Me: How long have you been working as a recruiter?

[00:04:15]

IN: Do you mean in Ireland or in General?

[00:04:19]

Me: In general, and in Ireland

[00:04:23]

IN: 5 years and 2 years in Ireland

[00:04:28]

Me: Have you worked as a recruiter in any other country apart from Ireland

[00:04:40]

IN: I previously worked as a recruiter in Mexico City before I came to Dublin

[00:04:51]

Me: Okay

[00:04: 55]

Me: During that time and now what are the differences you've noticed between the labour market in Ireland and the labour market in Mexico

[00:05:13]

IN: Well I've noticed a number of differences the main one is when advertising for a position in Dublin you are not allowed to put criteria such as age, gender, sexual orientation, religion in the requirement for the job because of the employment equality act, if you put these criteria you can be sued while in Mexico nobody cares you can put all those requirements

[00:05:45]

Me: Okay

[00:05:47]

IN: It's because in Mexico there are too many people fighting for jobs, for one position you have more than a thousand applications as there are too many qualified people and there nobody cares about equality or rights, it's very different from Ireland I think that in Ireland there are more jobs than people especially in the IT industry. Those are basically the main differences, is that okay.

[00:06:45]

Me: Yeah, that's ok so concerning the minority ethnic groups in Ireland, basically these are people from outside the EU, what changes have you noticed since you've been working in Dublin in terms of laws or trends.

[00:06:59]

IN: There are a lot more people from outside the EU working in Dublin, especially in the tech companies there are a lot of people from South America, from Asia, From Africa and as I said before the employment equality act has also made it so that everybody has an equal opportunity to get a job. The only issue is that some companies don't give sponsorship for example in my company we don't give sponsorship so to get a job you have to have a stamp 4 visa, we don't take 1G or any other type so there are a lot of people who have finished school but we consider their application because they don't have a stamp 4 visa, we give everybody opportunity but we don't do sponsorship, I think this is the only issue.

[00:08:55]

Me: Okay from your experience working with candidates can you outline cultural differences you've noticed between the Irish workers and the non-EU workers.

[00:09:20]

IN: The candidates from non-EU countries usually have very close relationships with each other as they are very open in within the workplace, within the more formal settings like banks the Irish workers are usually not so friendly and have a close-ended relationship within themselves. People from non-EU countries are usually more professional in the way they dress and the way they speak and most of the time are overqualified as most of them usually have either a bachelor's degree or a masters while some Irish nationals have not finished their bachelors degree but are managers, a lot of the time it is usually based on experience, is that okay?

[00:11:45]

Me: Yeah, its okay, from your past experiences what are the advantages that you've noticed when working in ethnically diverse teams.

[00:12:05]

IN: What I've noticed is that there are usually lots of different ideas because they all think differently and they all of different cultures and experiences, also people tend to be more empathetic to each other which usually makes it easier to work and everyone feels free to share their ideas and are proud of their ideas.

[00:13:15]

Me: Do you have any positive personal experiences that you've had working in diverse teams?

IN: There was this one time where I was working in a team of six and we were all from different countries, and whenever there was any issue we would always come together and share ideas and everyone would always have a different opinion and we would come together to have discussions. It was a good experience one of the things I liked was that for every problem we always had a lot of solutions and everyone respected each other. What I've noticed is that if you don't have diversity in your company you would keep on having one solution for every problem

[00:15:29]

Me: From your past experiences what are the disadvantages you've noticed when working with ethically diverse teams?

[00:15:41]

IN: From my experience sometimes there is conflict trying to choose between different solutions, like sometimes when you have ten people with different ideas it could be a challenge trying pick the best one because everyone believes that their solution is the right one and this would usually waste a lot of time and energy.

[00:17:15]

Me: Can you recall any personal experiences of any disadvantage you've had working in an ethnically diverse team?

[00:17:40]

IN: Yeah there have been some instances where people have different issues because of the kind of culture or behaviours that they have in their countries, sometimes it could be as a result of people from these countries coming to Dublin and failing to adjust to the culture or rules that they've found here.

[00:18:42]

Me: What kind of rules do you mean?

[00:18:45]

IN: It could be the rules on how you talk and relate with people at work, I remember there was this team where all of them were from Arabic countries and we had a lot of difficult moments with them because they were not used to women being above them because in their countries women are not usually in positions above the men, there have also being a lot of cultural clashes because since everyone is from different what is ok in someone's culture might not be ok in another persons culture.

[00:20:46]

Me: What factors go into rating candidates' applications in respect to educational qualifications?

[00:20:52]

IN: In what sense?

[00:20:54]

Me: How do you rate candidates' applications to see if they fit the position they are applying for?

[00:21:03]

IN: We have a ready made sequence of criteria, they need to have a bachelors degree usually in a commerce field like economics or accounting, we look at each qualification through those criteria to see if they are qualified for the position that they are applying for.

[00:22:18]

Me: Are there instances where certain qualifications that are obtained in particular countries are rated higher than qualifications obtained in other countries?

[00:22:30]

IN: I don't understand can you come again?

[00:22:33]

Me: What I'm trying to get if for example assuming someone has a bachelor's degree from Mexico and someone else has a bachelors from the UK are there instances where one is rated higher than the other?

[00:24:36]

IN: No, there's no difference between the qualifications for example once you have a bachelors degree you have a bachelors degree it doesn't matter the country you obtained it from a bachelors degree from Mexico is the same as one from the UK, we don't do anything like that.

[00:25:40]

Me: How do you fill critical skill positions with candidates from ethnic minorities and how are you being supported by the employment equality act?

[00:26:02]

IN: Can you explain what you mean by critical skill positions?

[00:26:06]

Me: These are positions that need people with a high level of expertise

[00:26:15]

IN: We would use the normal sequential process but would pay more attention to the interview, but what I've noticed is that a lot of the time a lot of these people are very qualified and experienced based on their CV's but in the interviews sometimes what I see is that a lot of the times they can't answer the questions maybe because they didn't go to good colleges or they have no confidence in their work, I believe it's usually lack of confidence or language barrier so sometimes they fail the interviews even when they have great CV's and a lot of experience. Is that ok?

[00:29:05]

Me: Yes, you answered the first half of the question, the second half is how are you being supported by the employment equality act?

[00:29:34]

IN: The employment equality act is the guideline that we follow, so basically it's really objective if the person has all the qualifications, does a great interview and has the legal right to work we are going to hire that person, so in my experience I've never seen a situation where they said "we don't want to hire that person because he's from here or there" it's part of my job to address that and to be honest it's really rare, I've never seen where they said we only want to hire Irish people.

[00:33:23]

Me: Can you outline any employment equality policies that your clients have, it could be based on recruitment, promotion or holidays?

[00:33:55]

IN: So basically we just follow the employment law in Ireland, basically to get a promotion you need to have spent a year in your current position to apply for another role for holidays I'm not too sure but my job needs me to work three months before I can have any holidays, we always have this disclaimer and we don't higher on your race, ethnic group, religion or any of the other criteria and this disclaimer in the bottom always outlines this so everyone understands that we are following the employment laws, is that ok?

[00:36:14]

Me: Do any of these policies have any influence on your selection process?

[00:36:20]

IN: Yes, for example there is another policy which is that they must have completed their degree and if they haven't, we cannot continue with their application.

[00:36:58]

Me: Concerning this there was something you said earlier on about some of the managers in the banks who haven't finished their degrees.

[00:37:05]

IN: Yes that correct, for entry level role they must have completed their degree, for more senior role it is not necessary if they have experience as supervisors or managers in other companies we can higher them based on experience but for a graduate role they must have completed their degree. What happens is sometimes they come with a school leaving certificate to work in a bank and they gather experience over many years, and it is very common in Dublin if I compare it to Mexico city it's very different because you must have a degree to work in a bank.

[00:39:05]

Me: Okay, would the same conditions be granted to someone coming from outside the EU

[00:39:10]

IN: Yes, it would

[00:39:15]

Me: From your experience with clients what is their perception of diversity and inclusion, not the laws more on how people feel about it.

[00:39:24]

IN: Yes it's usually a big topic because of its importance to companies, as a recruiter what I've seen is that for certain roles like accounting most of the applications are male and for some roles majority of the applications might come from only a few countries so even if you want to include diversity in your selection and you have a few applications from minority ethnic groups but they don't have the necessary experience I can't just include them for diversity sake. Like a lot of time in IT majority of the people studying it in college are male so as much as you want diversity you have to work with what you have. I think the only way you can have that total equality is if you have the same number of applications from each ethnic group like twenty applications from each country but when you have more applications from certain countries it could be a challenge to get that equality.

[00:44:38]

Me: What I'm really trying to gauge is how people feel about working in diverse teams, from your experience has it been more positive or negative?

[00:44:54]

IN: I think it is really good to have equality and diversity because it tends to improve the work environment. In my experience I've only seen positive views towards diversity and inclusion, sometimes people want to work in companies for a long time because of they feel comfortable being who they are and being proud of where they're from, to be honest I haven't seen any negative perceptions towards diversity.

[00:46:50]

Me: How has the corporate culture of your clients influenced your selection process; do you take into consideration the culture of your clients when selecting applicants

[00:47:03]

IN: We have a standard process and would ask them the same questions to everyone so that we can have a fair process, I'm not sure if I understand the question

[00:47:15]

Me: What I trying to say is that in the companies that you recruit for they have a culture that is predominant, like a kind of work culture that would be very common in the office. For example, in the way employees would relate to one another or the way work is expected to be done.

[00:48:20]

IN: During the interview I try to determine if they are culturally suitable to work with a client and if they have the right people skills.

[00:48:33]

Me: You said people skills what kind of people skills are you referring to.

[00:48:54]

IN: Communication, if they are able to work in a team, problem solving and how they prioritise work.

[00:49:01]

Me: Based on prioritising work some particular cultures like people from Latin American countries like Mexico, Brazil and people from African countries tend to want to do more than one task at a particular time while people from European countries would rather do one task at a time before moving on to the next task so how does that play a role in the way you would select candidates.

[00:51:21]

IN: Yes, it's based on the job that that the person would be doing for the client, if the job is the kind that needs someone to do many things at a particular time, basically it depends on the job description, for example some jobs might need someone to pay attention to details or to be focused on one thing, we ask all these during the interview, some people are versatile and others are not so it all depends on the role. Most of the time the basis of selecting candidates is their skills (especially soft skills) and knowledge.

[00:53:45]

Me: In your opinion do companies prefer candidates to have similar culture or similar values?

[00:53:51]

IN: Similar values because a lot of companies want people for the future, their looking for people who are creative, innovative, open minded and reflective so candidates have to have those values to be selected. It's a broad question because different

companies need workers to have different values, in my company we need workers to have these values and show it on a daily basis.

[00:55:08]

Me: In your opinion how do the SME's that you recruit for benefit from having ethnic minority ethnic nationals within their teams?

[00:55:19]

IN: Sorry can you go over the question again?

[00:55:25]

Me: What are the benefits of having ethnic diversity in SME's?

[00:55:30]

IN: You have different points of views and solutions, it creates an open minded environment, since not everyone is Irish, they generate new ideas easier, its better to work in multinational teams and since Dublin is a multi-national city it's easier to have more diversity, if I compare Dublin with Mexico City it would never happen because 99% of the population are Mexicans so it's very difficult to have diversity. Unfortunately, most of the time the problem is with the legalities where some people don't have the right to work yet.

[00:58:07]

Me: We've gone over some parts of the last question already it's the problems you've noticed in terms of recruiting people from minority ethnic groups, we have gone over the stamp 4 Visa requirement, basically are there any other problems that you've had when recruiting minority ethnic nationals apart from the Visa?

[00:58:40]

IN: No to be honest there aren't really any other problems as the recruitment process is the same for everyone as everybody has to fill the same form and the same background checks are applied, in my company we only one process and it doesn't matter what your nationality is, so basically the only challenge is the visa.

[00:59:41]

Me: That concludes it, thank you for participating in this interview

[00:59:45]

IN: You're welcome, if you need anything else just let me know, I hope this information is useful for your thesis.

[00:59:53]

Me: I would be calling you before I submit the final work to check if you want to add or remove anything from your statement.

[01:00:02]

IN: Okay great.

[01:00:04]

Appendix C –

Manual qualitative analysis using Microsoft word

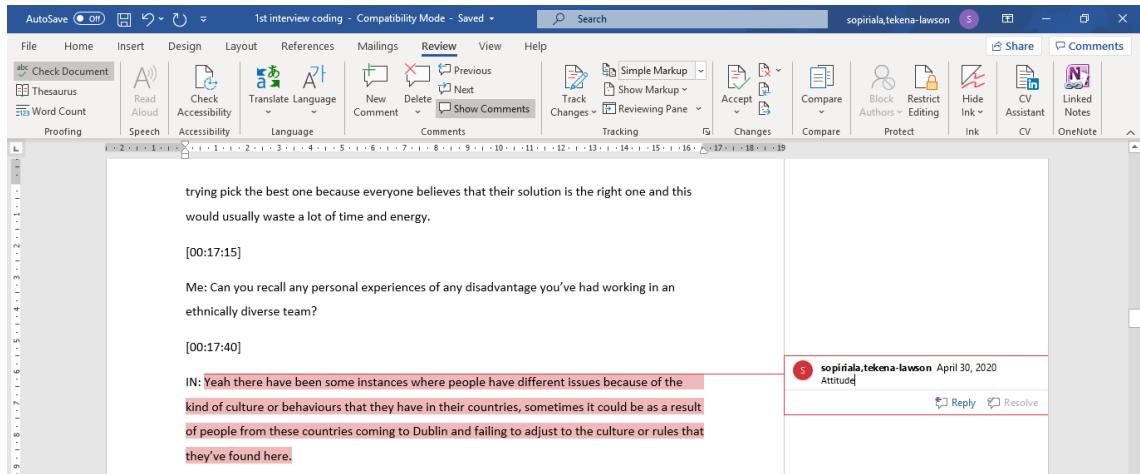
[00:04:40]
IN: I previously worked as a recruiter in Mexico City before I came to Dublin
Me: Okay
[00:04:55]
Me: During that time and now what are the differences you've noticed between the labour market in Ireland and the labour market in Mexico
[00:05:13]
IN: Well I've noticed a number of differences the main one is when advertising for a position in Dublin you are not allowed to put criteria such as age, gender, sexual orientation, religion in the requirement for the job because of the employment equality act, if you put these criteria you can be sued while in Mexico nobody cares you can put all those requirements

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employment equality practices
Reply Resolve

[00:04:40]
IN: I previously worked as a recruiter in Mexico City before I came to Dublin you are not allowed to put criteria such as age, gender, sexual orientation, religion in the requirement for the job because of the employment equality act, if you put these criteria you can be sued while in Mexico nobody cares you can put all those requirements

bachelor's degree or a masters while some Irish nationals have not finished their bachelors degree but are managers, a lot of the time it is usually based on experience, is that okay?
[00:04:55]
Me: Yeah, its okay, from your past experiences what are the advantages that you've noticed when working in ethnically diverse teams.
[00:05:13]
IN: What I've noticed is that there are usually lots of different ideas because they all think differently and they all of different cultures and experiences, also people tend to be more empathetic to each other which usually makes it easier to work and everyone feels free to share their ideas and are proud of their ideas.

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Attitude
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0

Appendix D –

**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYABILITY CRITERIA
ON THE EMPLOYMENT LEVEL OF MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS IN SMALL
AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISES IN DUBLIN**

Consent to take part in research

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves answer questions and discuss remote work with researcher.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in Research dissertation presented at Griffith College Dublin.

- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in Griffith College Dublin until end of June 2020 or until the exam board confirms the results of the dissertation.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date of the exam board.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Dissertation Researcher: Sopiriala Tekena-Lawson

Dissertation Supervisor: Mark Campbell

Signature of research participant

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher

Date

Appendix E



Griffith College GBS

Sample Template – Plain Language Statement

A Plain Language Statement should use language that reflects the participant age group and corresponding comprehension level. It should generally contain the following information. The headings are there for guidance and do not need to be included in your form.

I. Introduction to the Research (Exploratory) Study

Identify the Research Study Title, the university department involved, the principal investigator (including his/her contact details) and any other investigators

II. Details of what involvement in the Research (Exploratory) Study will require

E.g., involvement in interviews, completion of questionnaire, audio/video-taping of events, estimated time commitment

III. Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research (Exploratory) Study (if greater than that encountered in everyday life)

IV. Benefits (direct or indirect) to participants from involvement in the Research (Exploratory) Study

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations

VI. Advice as to whether or not data is to be destroyed after a minimum period

VII. Statement that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

State that participants may withdraw from the Research (Exploratory) Study at any point.

VIII. Any other relevant information

For example:

if the sample size is small, advice to participants that this may have implications for privacy/anonymity

if participants are in a dependent relationship with any of the researchers, a clear statement that their involvement/non-involvement in the project will not affect their ongoing assessment/grades/management

A Plain Language Statement should end with the following statement:

If participants have concerns about this exploratory study and wish to contact an independent person.

Please contact:

Mark Campbell

Griffith College Research Ethics Committee

South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland

Mail: mark.campbell@griffith.ie