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Diversity and Inclusion: The case of Swissport Cyprus

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Abstract

The current study attempts to quantify and identify the elements that affect employees' sense of inclusion, particularly at Swissport Cyprus, a company that provides ground handling services. Research's primary objectives are to identify the factors that influence employees' sense of inclusion in the workplace, to assess employees' current sense of inclusion and to determine the extent to which sense of inclusion is influenced by demographic data and diversity climate. The features that were taken into account to measure Swissport Cyprus employees' sense of inclusion were: Age, gender, sexual orientation, hierarchy level of position, disability diagnosis, religious beliefs, and perception of diversity climate.

A survey questionnaire was distributed, and data were collected from 80 Swissport Cyprus employees. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The main findings of this study revealed that an individual's sense of inclusion in Swissport Cyprus is influenced by their perception of diversity climate and one's level of hierarchical position. As a consequence, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability diagnosis, and religious beliefs have no impact on the workforce's sense of inclusion at Swissport Cyprus. The findings were discussed in relation to the implications and study's limitations.

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Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that work takes up a substantial part of people's lives. The majority of people work on average 8 hours per day. As a result of colleagues' daily collaboration and time spent together, it is critical for people to enjoy their jobs and feel included in the organization for which they work.

In recent years, extensive research has been conducted to study how sense of inclusion in workplaces is affected, and how inclusive cultures can be fostered. Özbiligin (2009) argued that the movement for equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the workplace has been driven by centuries of human rights activism and decades of political, demographic, and social changes. During this protracted period of change, significant progress has been made as previously excluded and marginalized groups have gained ground in the fields of employment (Özbiligin, 2009). In the modern world, the workforce composition is changing, and more women and minorities are entering the labor market (Pelled et al., 1999). As a result, one of the most important strategies that employers must implement in order to maintain a healthy work environment is to ensure that all employees who constitute organizational staff feel included and can perform to their full potential.

Research is now focusing on the factors that influence employees' sense of inclusion in the workplace, as well as how employers can create an inclusive environment for their employees. A climate of inclusion is one in which organizational agents act in a way that is consistent with treating all social groups fairly, paying particular attention to those who have historically had fewer opportunities and who were stigmatized in the societies in which they lived (Shore et al., 2010).

Hedman (2016) argued that there is a lack of consensus regarding the exact elements that lead to successful diversity management and the development of an inclusive workplace. Despite

the fact that a number of factors contributing to employees' sense of inclusion have been confirmed, the author believes that not all of the factors influencing feelings of inclusion have been identified yet. In the current study, the factors that were considered to test whether they contribute to the feeling of inclusion or not, are diversity climate, age, gender, sexual orientation, level of hierarchy, disability diagnosis and religious beliefs.

So far, little research has been conducted about the factors that promote discrimination in the workplace (Dipboye & Colella, 2005), and simultaneously much less attention has been given to practices that facilitate inclusion in work groups (Shore et al., 2010). Therefore, it is essential for organizations to identify the factors that can increase people's sense of inclusion.

Definition of the problem

As the diversity field has evolved, organizations have focused on ways in which diversity climate can benefit them by adapting inclusive policies and practices. Although the idea of diversity has received more attention lately, inclusive policies and procedures remain a relatively new concept for organizations and need to be introduced.

The challenges in the aviation industry have varied and influenced all organizations, and Swissport Cyprus could not be an exception. All the companies in the aviation suffered the consequences of Covid-19, the restrictions of Russian airlines after the war between Russia and Ukraine, and at the same time the competitiveness that reached its peak. Given that the labor market's composition has been changing at the same time as all of these challenges were happening, the question that arises is how the organization managed to recruit and retain its workforce and, more importantly, make them feel included, despite all of the factors that differentiate them.

Significance of the problem

While there is a significant interest in the field of diversity, there is a lack of research in the particular industry (aviation), so it is interesting for the author to explore the specific market segment. Similar research has never been conducted for Swissport Cyprus, and therefore the author aimed to measure employees' feeling of inclusiveness and perception of diversity climate. Furthermore, it is vital for employees to feel included in workplace, and the author attempted to identify ways to maximize employees' sense of inclusion.

Swissport Cyprus can review the findings and consider how, in light of the responses from their employees, they might use this research to improve their organizational inclusive policies and practices. It is a chance for the author to investigate the factors that influence inclusion, but it is also an opportunity for the management to benefit from the research and enhance the inclusiveness in the culture of their company and finally become an employer of choice.

Purpose of the research

The research aims to measure the feeling of inclusiveness of Swissport Cyprus employees. The research objectives are:

- To determine the demographics of Swissport Cyprus' workforce.
- To distinguish the factors that affect employees' feeling of inclusion.
- To identify how the organization can build an inclusive culture.
- The identification of key HR practices that the organization can initiate to become more inclusive.

The current dissertation measures the sense of inclusion of Swissport Cyprus workforce and explores the factors that affect it. In particular it examines the relationship between 7 constructs (diversity climate, age, gender, level of hierarchy, sexual orientation, disability diagnosis, religious beliefs), and employees' feeling of inclusion.

Structure of the research

The literature review is presented in Chapter 1. It discusses diversity, equality, and inclusion and focuses on the factors that influence employees' feelings of inclusion. It also presents some examples of earlier organizational HR policies that assisted other organizations to promote inclusive culture and offers prior evidence on how to create an inclusive culture. Chapter 2 describes the research design and the methodological approach, then refers to the questionnaire structure, the procedure for data collection, sampling, data analysis, internal reliability of measurements and the ethical considerations. Chapter 3 discusses the results, providing the relevant tables. Then Chapter 4 discusses the main findings linking them to existing literature and then the author draws conclusions. The study's conclusions and recommendations are summarized in Chapter 5, and the study's limitations and suggestions for further research are presented in Chapter 6. Finally, the dissertation references are listed, and the questionnaire used in the research is outlined as an appendix.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Overview

The current research focuses on workplace diversity and inclusion. In order to discuss those two concepts, this chapter provides a definition of equality, diversity, and inclusion. Following that, the author indicates what distinguishes equality and diversity. Next, a theoretical framework for inclusion is presented. The author then provides a conceptual perspective on the topic and explains how various researchers approached and measured inclusion.

Furthermore, the author discusses the factors that influence employees' feelings of inclusion, as well as the human resource practices and characteristics of inclusive organizations. Finally, based on the prior literature, the author provides some evidence on how organizations can create an inclusive culture and mentions how other organizations were able to cultivate a culture that made all employees feel included.

1.2 Defining the terms: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

According to Burchardt & Vizard (2007), equality should be perceived based on the capabilities of an individual. As per Woods et al. (2021), equality is determined when a person has the flexibility to reach capabilities, which are meaningful and valuable opportunities for the individual to do and be. An equal society aims to defend and foster the equality of valuable capabilities, which consist of the essential and important things that people can do and be (Burchardt & Vizard, 2007).

As Capaldi (2002) stated, equality refers to the idea that all people are, in fact, equal but this actual equality necessitates that we treat them differently. An equitable society respects people's diverse needs, conditions, and ambitions, and attempts to maximize their opportunities by

eliminating discrimination and biases, in order to provide everyone's actual freedom to live in ways they value and choose (Burchardt & Vizard, 2007).

Providing special treatment could entail treating everyone equally, or it could mean treating people differently to help them return to or realize a particular factual state (Capaldi, 2002). Equality, as per Tan (2019), is a way of making sure that everyone has equal access to the same opportunities. It acknowledges the existence of advantages and barriers, and as a consequence, no one starts from the same point (Tan, 2019).

The existence of differences within a certain group of individuals is defined as diversity (Tan, 2019). Diverse people are categorized into social groups reflecting any objective or subjective differences that differentiate them among others (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). All employee differences are perceived as a part of a holistic strategy and approach that emphasizes diversity, and these differences actually are seen as possibilities for both personal and organizational learning (Chrobot-Mason & Thomas, 2002).

Tan (2019) claimed that these differences include ones related to a person's gender, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, and area of expertise. According to van Knippenberg et al. (2004), diversity covers a wide range of characteristics, including age, nationality, religion, organizational background, task skills, interpersonal skills, political preferences, and sexual orientation. Meanwhile, when it comes to reality, gender, age, race/ethnicity, career, academic background, and educational qualifications have been the primary focus of diversity research (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Hence, according to this theory it is expected that:

Hypothesis 1: Employees' feeling of inclusion is correlated with individual's diagnosis of disability.

Hypothesis 2: Employee's feeling of inclusion is higher for individuals belonging to the dominant religious group.

Hypothesis 3: Swissport Cyprus employees' feeling of inclusion is higher for individuals belonging to the dominant age group.

According to Tan (2019), inclusion refers to the focused, intentional, and persistent effort to ensure that individuals from diverse backgrounds and with various identities will be allowed to join and participate in all areas of an organization, regardless of the significance of the role. Tan (2019) relates inclusion to the way diverse people are seen as respected members and accepted in a workplace or community. As Varna Myers stated "Diversity is being asked to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance!" (Tan, 2019).

Shore et al. (2010) and Pelled et al., (1999) defined inclusion as the degree to which an employee feels himself or herself to be an insider, valued member of the work group as a result of receiving treatment that meets his or her needs for acceptance and belonging. The concept of inclusion focuses on the features that make up a company's organizational environment and organizational culture, which ensure that employees from various backgrounds are completely embraced and fairly rewarded by the organization (Garg & Sangwan, 2020).

Inclusion has been described as fluctuating along a continuum of exclusion-inclusion and referring to how much a person feels that they are a part of important organizational operations. Inclusion occurs when people have a sense of belonging to a group while simultaneously seeing themselves as a distinct and special person (Jansen et al., 2014).

After defining the fundamental terms, the next section aims to explain the differences of equality, diversity, and inclusion. It is further stated how the three of the study's basic terms are combined and result in increased sense of inclusion in workplace.

On the one hand, inclusion is defined as removing barriers to employees' full participation and contribution in the organization (Nair, 2015, as cited Roberson, 2006). On the other hand, diversity without the prospect for equal participation, according to Klarsfeld et al. (2016), can result in a kind of separation, and equality without diversity can result in a kind of assimilation, while the absence of both may lead in marginalization, and the presence of both can lead in full integration.

In contrast to equality in employment opportunities, managing diversity is an attempt to embrace additional qualities that may allow individuals to differentiate, such as experience, educational background, and perspectives (Thomas, 1990; Thomas and Ely, 1996 as cited Klarsfeld et al., 2016). Equality stands for the legal protection that has traditionally been provided to people with different backgrounds in terms of age, gender, origin, and disability. However, diversity management is the effective management of all those individuals working together to achieve and support an organization's goals (Thomas, 1990; Thomas and Ely, 1996 as cited Klarsfeld et al., 2016).

According to Kukathas (2002), establishing equality will only lead to the elimination of diversity. Kukathas (2002) further claimed that when people strive for equality, they are suppressing diversity, and therefore they create an entirely new situation that results in a different type of inequality. Equality becomes complex in a culture where diversity is implied, whether it involves prestige, income, or fortune. Kukathas (2002) explained the reasoning behind his statement, claiming that some groups within diversity may simply be uninterested in equality; or

may be uninterested in the inequities that exist in the society in which they live and interact (Kukathas, 2002).

According to Özbilgin (2009), equality is the availability for a comparative knowledge of power and relations at work, while diversity is the topic that pays attention to the various factors that contribute to people's differences. Özbilgin (2009) concluded by saying that inclusion provides a strategic and purposeful perspective to the analysis of interventions in power relations at work. Leaving all the characteristics that differentiate the terms equality, diversity, and inclusion, it is important to note that they are frequently used in combination with one another, demonstrating their theoretical and practical interdependence (Özbilgin, 2009).

Since the definitions of the basic terms are listed and what differentiates them is presented, the next section goes into more detail about the concept of inclusion theories and how other researchers approached it.

1.4 Theoretical framework of inclusion

According to Jansen et al. (2014), the definitions presented in terms of inclusion reveal three important points. First, inclusion is focused on meeting individual needs within a group. Second, belongingness and uniqueness are two components of inclusion. Third, rather than the individual trying to connect to the group, it is the group that encompasses the individual (Jansen et al., 2014).

Raffo & Gunter (2008), tried to take seriously the need to design an appropriate conceptual framework that will assist in expressing, classifying, and integrating various inclusion-related approaches and policies, with leadership practices. Regardless of how eager people are to accept and include individuals in society, there are instances when people are excluded due to cultural

biases and stereotypes that prevent them from participating in mainstream social life (Raffo and Gunter, 2008).

Özbilgin (2009) claimed that transformational progress was made on the historically excluded groups of people in the fields of education and employment (Özbilgin, 2009). These encouraging changes in access to education and employment in many industrialized countries have encouraged recent generations of young women and men to believe that equality of opportunity has been mainly succeeded (Özbilgin, 2009).

Following a discussion of the theoretical framework of inclusion, the following section analyzes the study's main goal, which is to identify the factors that affect and contribute to the feeling of inclusion of employees.

As per Mor Barak (2017), prejudice and discrimination, whether observable or hidden, are specifically at the heart of the challenges to implementing inclusive workplace policies. Workplace inclusion reflects the extent to which employees perceive that they are part of the communication systems, informal networks, and decision-making processes in the organization. Therefore, inclusion tends to suffer from people's reluctance to learn about other cultures in today's "politically correct" environment, their unwillingness to put forth the time and effort to do so, or their perception of diversity initiatives as a threat to their job security. Following the previous reasoning:

Hypothesis 4: Swissport Cyprus employees' feeling of inclusion has a positive correlation with perception of diversity climate.

Access to knowledge and resources, relationships with coworkers and managers, and the ability to be involved in and have an impact on the decision-making process are some of the

operations that affect the feeling of inclusion (Nair, 2015, as cited Barak, M. E. M., 1999). According to Huong et al. (2016), if employees perceive their organization's procedures, their perspectives, and the treatment they receive respectful, they will feel included as part of the workgroup, which will lead to increased employee job satisfaction, a sense of togetherness, and well-being.

Daya and April (2014) investigated whether an employee's demographic characteristics, such as race, gender, position in the company, sexual orientation, religion, geographic location, department, age, and disability, influence worker's sense of inclusion in an organization. The research of Daya and April (2014), found no relationship between employee's feeling of inclusion and gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, and disability. However, it is evident that there is a positive correlation between race, position in the company, geographic location, department of employee and their perception of inclusion in Daya and April (2014)'s findings. The abovementioned evidence led to the below hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5: Employee's feeling of inclusion is correlated with individual's position in the company.

Hypothesis 6: Employee's feeling of inclusion is not higher for individuals belonging to the dominant sexual orientation category.

Hypothesis 7: Employee's feeling of inclusion is not higher for individuals belonging to the dominant gender.

Mor Barak (2017)'s research also discussed, that even though diversity distinction categories differ from one culture or country to another, one factor that appears to overcome national boundaries is the experience of exclusion, particularly in the workplace. Individuals and

groups are either implicitly or explicitly excluded from employment opportunities, information networks, team membership, human resource (HR) investment opportunities, and decision-making processes, due to their actual or perceived membership in a minority or disfavored identity group (Mor Barak, 2017).

Knut et al. (2011) investigated inclusion from the perspective of exclusive behaviors in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). According to Knut et al. (2011), gendered stereotypes appear to be strong and difficult to change, whereas practices change more easily. The numerical dominance of one gender reinforces the symbolic relationship between the gender and ICT, whilst the addition of those previously excluded may modify the symbolic meaning of ICT (Knut et al., 2011).

The authors conclude that ICT does work as an inclusion technology, but mostly in terms of ICT use. New methods of practicing gender became possible with the use of ICT, both in practices catered to by stereotypical images of men and women and in inclusiveness aimed at a general audience (Knut et al., 2011). Therefore, Knut et al. (2011), concluded that domestication became a strategy for gender inclusion in ICT.

Since the theoretical framework of inclusion is provided and the factors that influence the sense of inclusion of employees are listed, the next chapter aims to advise employers in regard to how they can build an inclusive culture in an organization.

According to Fullerton's (2013) research, a culture in which people can bring their true self to work without the stress of pretending to be somebody they are not, fosters individual productivity and builds unified teams that perform well together. In order to effectively manage diversity, Sarkar (2015) advises HR departments of organizations to cultivate an inclusive culture

where all employees, regardless of their differences, are valued for their talent. To do so, Sakar (2015) suggests for the HR department to promote understanding for a diverse workforce through training and development exercises (role plays, group discussion).

As per Tapia & Polonskaia (2020), building inclusive organizations requires leaders who genuinely care about their employees' feelings of respect, values, and safety in the context of conflict, in all industry sectors. Inclusive leaders strive to create organizations that are equitable at all levels, such as access, opportunity, support, and reward. Moreover, organizations that build inclusive culture and want their workforce to feel included strive to keep their promise of equality by ensuring that no one is preferred or overlooked based on who they are (Tapia & Polonskaia, 2020).

Vranken et al. (2003) stated that inclusion in cultures with various levels of cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity will have quite diverse effects. To illustrate, inclusion in one social area (such as employment) does not automatically indicate inclusion in related areas (e.g., social networks, political partaking, or cultural integration) (Vranken et al., 2003). In a heterogeneous society, exclusion from one sub-society could be countered with inclusion in another, whereas in a homogenous society, this is by definition impossible (Vranken et al., 2003).

Indeed, it is crucial to consider the cultural aspect while thinking about inclusiveness (Vranken et al., 2003). Fullerton (2013) argues that just announcing an inclusive company policy is inadequate to carry out actual change because this can only be achieved by adopting a fundamental cultural shift among employees.

According to Tapia & Polonskaia (2020), an inclusive leader is vital for an organization to be driven softly through cultural change that Fullerton's (2013) research suggests. If that leader

possesses certain key traits, Tapia & Polonskaia (2020) claim that the organization will survive the change and embrace diverse workforce and inclusive behaviors. Those characteristics are composed of (a) who someone is, (b) what one does, and (c) their developmental experiences (Tapia & Polonskaia, 2020).

Starting with who someone is, Tapia & Polonskaia (2020), referred to a person's character, sense of direction, and values. When considered collectively, those characteristics reveal the leader's attitude toward differences and serve as the inner enablers that make inclusive leadership possible for inclusive organizations. The primary clusters of enabling traits of an inclusive leader to make an impact for inclusive culture are authenticity, emotional resilience, self-assurance, inquisitiveness, and flexibility (Tapia & Polonskaia, 2020).

Additionally, Tapia & Polonskaia (2020) discussed the competencies of inclusive leaders. The organization's leader needs to build interpersonal trust, integrate different viewpoints, boost talent, utilize flexible mindset, and finally achieve transformation while involving people from all backgrounds to achieve results.

Finally, the personal and professional experiences of a leader can help an organization create an inclusive culture. Tapia & Polonskaia (2020) mentioned that these experiences can include growing up in a different country or region than the one in which they currently live and work, being a minority, or growing up in a racially or ethnically mixed environment. If the person driving the change and attempting to make the workplace inclusive has gone through the experiences listed above, it will be easier for them to understand minorities and foreigners and to stand up for them (Tapia & Polonskaia, 2020).

1.7 HR practices of inclusive organizations

Based on Wolfgruber et al. (2021), there are key HR practices that influence an organization's culture of inclusion: recruitment, promotion, trainings and workshops, physical barriers, organizational structure, and appreciation (Wolfgruber et al., 2021).

Inclusion is not an impulsive process, but rather a well-structured framework consisting of inclusion policies (Vranken et al., 2003). According to Vranken et al. (2003), when an issue arises, the type of inclusion that must be fostered depends on the society and the particular circumstance. The research by Wolfgruber et al. (2021) revealed that organizational communications and HR policies affect how inclusive an organization is. In essence, Wolfgruber et al. (2021) examined formal and informal communication and concluded that it is significantly important for an organization's acceptance of a diverse workforce.

Furthermore, commitment and strategy are required for inclusive organizations (Tapia & Polonskaia, 2020). To foster inclusive culture at the top of the organization, a detailed plan based on the assessment and development of key inclusive leading traits and competencies is required. This, in turn, can inspire an inclusive viewpoint transition and capability development across the organization, allowing it to achieve a more diverse workforce and realize its full potential (Tapia & Polonskaia, 2020).

Aside from the organizational communication that Wolfgruber et al. (2021) discussed, a lot of organizations choose to establish formal diversity councils whose purpose is to communicate, advance, assess, and keep track of diversity management progress, which strengthens inclusive culture at work (Sakar, 2015).

Mor Barak (2017) advises employers that they will lose their competitive advantage if they do not take advantage of the diverse skills and talents provided by women, members of minority groups, older adults, sexual minorities, and people with disabilities. To illustrate, if employers continue to discriminate against these groups, their productivity will suffer, resulting in lower earnings for organizations. Based on this logic, Mor Barak (2017) believes that there is no need for any HR policies encouraging employers to provide equal opportunities to all because it is in their best economic interests to attract people from different backgrounds.

On the other hand, Fullerton's (2013) research suggests that the organizations should make an effort for a diverse workforce because "Diversity means business". According to Fullerton (2013), the Bank of America Merrill Lynch values its employees' uniqueness, knowing that diversity and inclusion are good for business, and result in a stronger company. The US organization claimed that equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people is only one component of their diversity and inclusion approach. This inclusive culture is led from the top, but in order to be effective, it must penetrate all levels of the organization (Fullerton, 2013).

Another statement by Mor Barak (2017), is that an inclusive workplace needs to use ongoing, two-way communication techniques, like open management-employee meetings and open e-mail communications, to find out about its employees' worries and expectations. According to Mor Barak (2017), the organization should make an ongoing effort to adjust its standards and values to better reflect the diversity of its workforce.

All the above knowledge clarifies the fact that there are some HR procedures that are considered to be best practices for managing diversity and inclusion within organizations. However, the relevant literature indicates that because different groups of employees may be

targeted by different organizations, these practices may vary. This is due to different groups may have different needs. These differences are highlighted in the sections that follow and discuss LGBT people, immigrants, people with different religious beliefs, people who are physically or mentally disabled, and people that vary in age range.

1.7.1 LGBT employees

In order to demonstrate how LGBT employees are recognized equally, Fullerton (2013) presented the organizational policies of a US bank where the paternity leave policy specifically refers to same-sex relationships as well. While opinions have evolved in places like the US, where LGBT employees are protected by anti-discrimination laws, there will always be those who have strongly previous beliefs (Fullerton, 2013).

Johnson (2015) explored inclusion from the perspective of transgender people. It is argued that holding transgender people accountable to various norms of behavior while pushing them into a false binary that labels them as odd and unnatural is cissexist and damaging to transgender people's full inclusion in social scientific research (Johnson, 2015).

Additionally, IBM, a leading global innovator company in technology, was among the first organizations to provide lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender employees diversity and inclusion policies (Mor Barak, 2017). Its initiatives focus on giving LGBT employees a sense of value as well as giving them the tools they need to interact with customers and perform to the best of their abilities at work (IBM, 2016, as cited Mor Barak, 2017).

1.7.2 Immigrants

Hyman et al. (2011) examined inclusion HR policies and practices from the perspective of immigrants and people from different cultural backgrounds. It is proposed by Hyman et al. (2011),

for organizations to increase the equitable representation of racialized groups and assure their involvement in decision-making processes. Furthermore, professional staff recruitment and retention should take into account a multicultural workforce and embrace various perspectives and beliefs to offer equal advancement opportunities (Hyman et al., 2011).

On top of that, according to Hyman et al. (2011), businesses should make an effort to comprehend the racial and cultural backgrounds of the people they hire and recruit. Finally, Hyman et al. (2011), suggests that all institutions integrate cultural competences and anti-racism approaches into governance, organizational policy, and staff recruitment.

Adding to Hyman et al. (2011)'s findings, Forde et al. (2015) focused on organizational inclusion practices and difficulties that both employees and managers encountered while establishing and maintaining a health program for Chinese immigrants in Canada. The findings of Forde et al. (2015), showed that the department which was responsible for the newcomers (Chinese) had essentially taken on an integration function where newcomers were expected to fit into current programs. Forde et al. (2015) referred to four critical organizational practices that were established: (a) having various staff supporters, (b) adopting a relaxed access counseling approach, (c) building community connections and outreach, (d) applying culturally sensitive marketing. All those practices listed, were identified by managers and employees as having a positive impact on immigrants' feeling of inclusion (Forde et al., 2015).

1.7.3 Religion

According to Héliot et al. (2019), a fully inclusive work environment encourages employees to express their religious identities at work. Engaging with religious diversity in an open and concerted manner requires structured organizational climate and policies of inclusion that is value-expressing, not value-free, and that can take into account the extent to which common

religious values align or can be aligned with organizational values (Héliot et al., 2019). Therefore, it is expected:

Hicks (2003) did agree, and labeled those organizational-inclusive policies for religion, respectful pluralism at work. Respectful pluralism entails resistance to religious favoritism but defending the right to religious expression in the workplace (Hicks, 2003).

1.7.4 Disability

Ten organizational policies and practices that an organization implements in order to actively recruit individuals with disabilities were identified during the research of Erickson et al. (2014). The first step is to establish connections with a third-party organization or agency that has a similar mission. The second step requires the corporation to establish connections with local groups that support the hiring of persons with disabilities. Next, HR and management positions should explicitly include people with disabilities in their diversity and inclusion plan while setting specific organizational goals for the hiring or recruitment of such individuals. The fifth practice demands that top management include people with disabilities in performance reviews so that their development can be monitored and, ultimately, improved. Moreover, Erickson et al. (2014) advised for the organizations to take part in internship programs or other initiatives that appeal to individuals with disabilities.

The seventh practice suggested in Erickson et al. (2014)'s research is that senior management should demonstrate a strong commitment to disability recruitment and hiring. Following that, ongoing reviews will be conducted to ensure that the online application system is accessible to those with visual, hearing, finger dexterity, and cognitive impairments. Furthermore, the company should inform job seekers in advance that appropriate adjustments are available during the job application process. The final practice is to evaluate pre-employment occupational

screenings to ensure their objectivity (Erickson et al., 2014). Following this theory, the below hypothesis is expected:

1.7.5 Age

HR policies should enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of all employees regardless of age (Boehm et al., 2013, as cited Lepak et al., 2006). According to Boehm et al. (2013), in order to do so, age-inclusive HR practices with regards to knowledge, skills, and abilities, must include age-neutral recruiting activities as well as equal access to training and additional education for all age groups. Organizations should ensure that all age groups have the essential knowledge and skills to perform their tasks successfully and contribute to business performance (Boehm et al., 2013).

In terms of motivation and effort, Boehm et al. (2013) stated that age inclusive HR strategies can offer equal possibilities to be promoted, transferred, and advance in one's career irrespective of age. Furthermore, training and educating managers on how to deal with an age variety workforce and adapt to the demands of different age groups may be a major incentive for employees (Boehm et al., 2013).

Taking it all together, the relevant literature demonstrates that there are numerous factors that influence employees' sense of inclusion in the workplace, and more importantly, there are numerous practices and policies that organizations can adopt to contribute to and increase employees' sense of inclusion. Many organizations have succeeded in cultivating inclusive cultures and utilizing HR practices to achieve this goal.

Correspondingly, the literature is relevant to this study because the author aimed to investigate the factors that affect Swissport Cyprus employees' feelings of inclusion and determine

how Swissport Cyprus can measure and improve employees' sense of inclusion. Additionally, the research investigated how employees at the company perceive diversity in the workplace and the extent to which their perception of diversity affects their sense of inclusion.

When it comes to further research, it seems to be needed in the aviation industry that the organization operates in order to specify the factors that influence this category of workers particularly. Overall, this study adds knowledge by exploring the factors that influence employees' feeling of inclusion, of an international company that operates in the airport. It is an area that is relatively rare to explore and approaching its workforce to gather information is not always easy. Therefore, this thesis may be used as the starting point for additional research in the aviation industry, and comparisons may be made with either competitors from other nations or from Cyprus.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research design and methods

The research design is cross-sectional, which according to Gratton & Jones (2010), cross-sectional means that data are gathered from more than one person and collected only once, via a questionnaire or a phone call, with the purpose of measuring the feeling of inclusiveness for Swissport's Cyprus employees. Through the questionnaire, the researcher attempted to quantify the extent to which employees believe they work in a diverse workplace and how important it is for them to work for a company that supports diversity.

Regarding the research method, the research is conducted using a case study method and the quantitative approach. According to Yin (1989), the case study method can refer to an occasion, an entity, a person, or even an analytical unit (Noor, 2008). It is an empirical investigation that uses a variety of sources of evidence to examine a current phenomenon in its actual work environment (Yin, 1989, as cited Noor, 2008).

The research's case regards a ground handling services provider in the aviation industry, Swissport Cyprus. Swissport operates at more than 280 airports across more than 40 countries in six regions, which include two airports in Cyprus. To illustrate how Swissport operates: the airlines are Swissport's customers, and the company offers services based on the airline's contract with the company. Some of the services that Swissport provides are check-in, lost and found, ticketing, loading, and off-loading aircrafts, cleaning the aircrafts, serving private jets. The services that Swissport offers may differ from one country to another. De-icing, for instance, is not offered in Cyprus because the country does not experience snowy weather. Swissport in Cyprus employs 414 permanent and 70 seasonal employees in both airports and has 52% market share.

The phenomenon being investigated for Swissport Cyprus is the extent to which employees feel they work in an inclusive environment, and their perception for working in a diverse. The author believes that in order for an organization to succeed it requires its employees to feel happy when going to work. In this case, the employees work on 24/7 shifts, which makes it even harder for them to perform. Therefore, if they feel a part of a team, included, and valued in their workplace they are more likely to want to keep their job in the company.

Case studies are about how and why things happen, allowing for the examination of contextual realities and the discrepancies between what was anticipated and what actually happened (Andreson, 1993 as cited Noor, 2008).

Regarding the quantitative approach, Sukamolson (2007), defined quantitative research as the process by which researchers try to describe and explain the phenomena they observe, using numerical representation and manipulation of the data that those observations reflect on. Quantitative research is also useful for quantifying opinions, attitudes, and behaviors in order to determine how the total population feels about a particular issue (Sukamolson, 2007), which in the current study regards diversity and inclusion in the aviation industry.

Most quantitative research is conducted using a questionnaire, which in the current study was in the form of a web-based one. According to Young (2016), questionnaires appear to be especially appealing to less experienced researchers, such as students working on dissertation projects. There are substantial advantages to conducting online questionnaires for research purposes, which include the following:

- Easy access to all employees regardless of geographical location (the questionnaire was sent to employees at Larnaca and Paphos Airports at the same date and time)

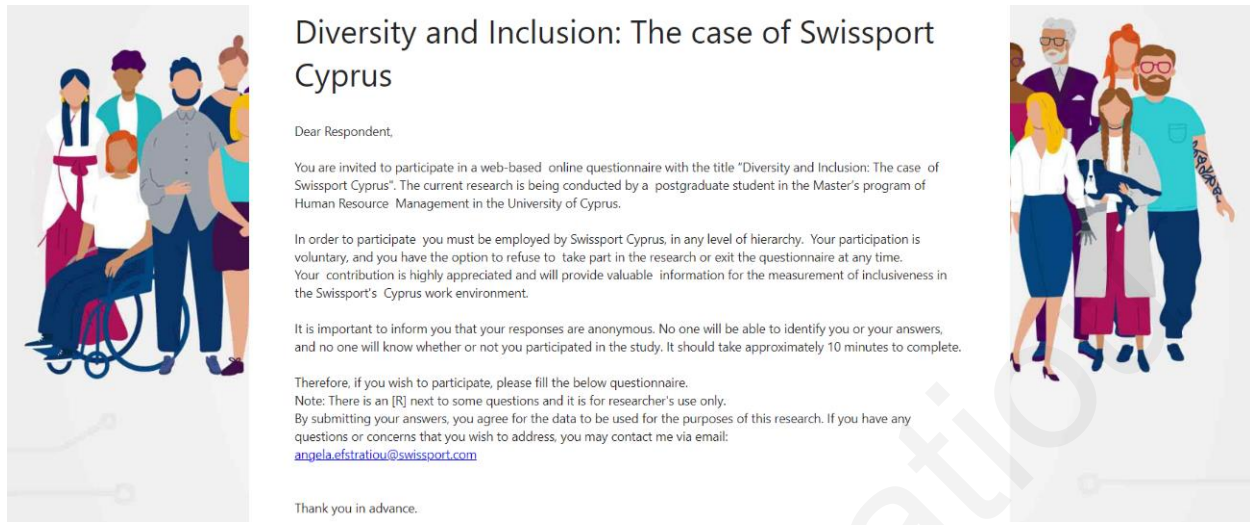
- Cost-effectiveness
- Anonymous submission of answers, which leads to the limitation of biases.
- The data that is gathered can be processed and analyzed relatively easily compared to spoken data, which must be transcribed.

Given that it is challenging and time-consuming to develop valid and reliable scales (Gratton & Jones, 2010), the questions used are based on Mor Barak's (2017) research. Utilizing pre-existing questionnaires, which have already undergone reliability and validity evaluations, makes it much more convenient for the researcher to compare her findings to those of other researchers.

2.2 Questionnaire structure

Initially, a brief summary is provided in order to explain the background of the researcher and the purpose of the questionnaire as shown in Image 3.1. The questionnaire is created in Microsoft forms and includes demographic, closed-ended, and pre-coded questions as well as a rating system. As a result, a one-dimensional Likert scale is provided for the participant to indicate the degree to which he or she agrees or disagrees with a statement on a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree). The questionnaire is structured in 3 main parts consisting of demographic questions, feelings of inclusion and the degree to which the workforce of Swissport Cyprus perceives that they work in a diverse environment.

Image 2.1: Brief summary



Part 1

Demographics

In the first part, participants were asked to select what best fits them in terms of gender, age range, level of hierarchy of their position, sexual orientation, whether or not they have been diagnosed with a mental or physical disability, and finally, their religious beliefs.

Part 2

Inclusion

The Mor Barak inclusion-exclusion scale (MBIE) (2005) was used to measure employee feelings of inclusion, on a six-point Likert scale (1=Strongly disagree, 6=Strongly agree), consisting of 15 items. This scale examines the extent to which individuals perceive themselves to be a part of critical organizational processes such as having access to information, involvement and participation with the organization, and influence in decision-making. Moreover, Mor Barak's existing scale, implements a matrix system that overlaps five work-organization system levels (work group, organization, supervisor, higher management, and social/informal) with three inclusion dimensions (decision making, information networks, and participation/involvement).

Part 3

Diversity climate

The diversity climate scale seeks to explore employees' perceptions of the organization's diversity climate (Mor Barak et al., 1998). It consists of 16 items, using a six-point Likert scale (1=Strongly disagree, 6=Strongly agree) with two dimensions: organizational and personal. The organizational dimension refers to how members of minority groups and women perceive management policies and procedures that affect them (e.g., discrimination or preferential treatment in hiring and promotion procedures). Furthermore, it refers to management actions that influence the inclusion or exclusion of women and members of minority groups (for example, mentorship programs or the preservation of the "old boys' network"). The personal dimension refers to how individuals perceive the value of diversity for teams and the organization as a whole, as well as how comfortable they are interacting with people from various backgrounds.

2.4 Data collection

First of all, managers from all departments and the supervisors were informed in advance through phone call about the research I would be conducting and that their participation was highly important for me. Next, I mentioned the online questionnaire that I would send via email in the following days, as well as the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of the data that I would collect. I clarified that the responses would be submitted anonymously, and that neither the participant nor his or her answers would be identifiable. Because I knew most of the participants, I explained the importance of having their support and honest participation.

The process of gathering the data began on 26th October 2022 and ended on 20th November 2022. About 10 days after sending the questionnaire, I began calling departmental managers to accelerate the procedure in case staff members had forgotten or ignored the email due to their

workload. It is worth mentioning that I did not ask the participants to complete the questionnaire during their shift but rather during their free time.

2.3 Sampling

The current study's sample includes all permanent Swissport Cyprus (414 permanent, 70 seasonal) employees from all departments. Due to the fact that the research is only being conducted for the employees of this organization, the sampling method used is targeted sampling. According to Williams et al. (2009), targeted sampling has the benefit of allowing samples to be taken from a selected subpopulations whilst also completely ignoring others. These subpopulations can be identified by observable traits, in this case their employer (Williams et al., 2009). Anyone who works for the particular company (Swissport Cyprus) can be included in the subpopulation for this study.

As shown in Table 2.1, 80 complete responses were collected. Out of the 80 respondents (N=80), 44 of them identify their gender as female (55%), while the rest 36 of them as male (45%). Swissport Cyprus employs 414 permanent employees and the 80 responded, meaning the 20% of company's permanent workforce participated in the study.

Table 2.1: Sample

Gender		
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	44	55.0
Male	36	45.0
Total	80	100

2.5 Data analysis

When quantitative research is conducted, statistical analysis is needed to analyze the data. For the data analysis and the internal reliability measurement the software IBM SPSS Statistics is used. It is a handy software where large data can be used (Gratton & Jones, 2010) and contains a large number of statistical tests.

Initially, descriptive statistics are used. The data are entered into the software and then are coded (assigning a numerical value). Then, the measure of frequencies is used to list the demographic data in percentages. Following that, for each item, a measure of central tendency (mean) and a measure of variability (standard deviation) are calculated to see how far the values deviate from the mean. In addition, the grand mean for the two variables is calculated, combining the items of each variable in a grand mean.

2.6 Internal reliability of measurements

In order to determine how accurate, the measurements are, Cronbach's alpha is used. Internal reliability signifies consistency in measurement when there are multiple item measures to determine whether the items are related to each other and measure the same variable (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As shown below, the value of 0.836 (Inclusion) and 0.699 (Diversity) for internal reliability is considered to be efficient (Schutte et al., 2000, as cited Bryman & Bell, 2011) and employed as a rule of thumb to denote an acceptable level of internal reliability.

Table 2.2: Measure of internal reliability (N=80)

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Operationalization
Inclusion	0,836	15 items on a 6-point Likert scale
Diversity climate	0,699	16 items on a 6-point Likert scale

2.7 Ethical considerations

The sample population consists only of employees who have Swissport Cyprus's emails, which means that seasonal employees with contracts that are renewed every 6 months did not participate in the study. The problem with seasonal employees is that even if they have worked for the company for years, and still did not sign a contract for a permanent position, they do not have a Swissport email. Furthermore, the timing of my questionnaire was not ideal, because employees in Cypriot airports went through redundancies, which resulted in strikes. Therefore, I cannot be certain that they were truthful and objective in their responses, since they were emotionally burdened.

It is important to note that I made an effort to explain to the staff that my research has nothing to do with the company's current situation and the redundancies. I further clarified that I would only use their responses for the purposes of my dissertation, so I will need them to be fair and honest, putting aside their feelings about the reduction of staff. Last but not least, I assured the workers that after I complete my study and reach my conclusions, I will get in touch with them to let them know where the business stands on diversity and inclusion.

3. Results

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analysis (descriptive and inferential statistics). The demographic characteristics of the sample are listed. Then the means and the standard deviations of the two variables and each item that constitutes them are presented. Additionally, the Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (r) results are provided to demonstrate whether there is a positive, negative, or no correlation between the independent variables, and whether or not the hypothesis is confirmed.

3.1 Demographic characteristics of the sample

In the beginning of the questionnaire the participants were asked about their demographic data. The demographic information collected is indicated in Table 3.2. The majority of respondents are women (45% men and 55% women). The age groups of 31–40 (27.5%) and 41–50 (27.5%) have the highest percentages of each at 27.5 (%). Following that, the age group of 51-60 holds a slightly lower percentage equal to 26.3. The age group of 18 to 30 years old then accounts for 17.5%, and the age group 61 and over only accounts for 1.3%.

Regarding hierarchy, 45% of respondents hold entry-level positions, followed by 28.7% who hold middle-level positions, 21.3% who hold senior-level positions, and 5% who hold executive-level positions. Concerning the sexual orientation of the participants, 95% are heterosexual, 2.5% are homosexual, and the remaining 2.5% would rather not reveal their sexual preference. Furthermore, 95% of respondents said they had never received a diagnosis of a physical or mental disability, with the remaining 5% responding in the affirmative. Last but not least, 95.1% of the participants identified as Christians, 3.9% as non-religious, and 1.3% as other.

Table 3.1: Demographic characteristics of the sample

	N	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	36	45.0
Female	44	55.0
Age		
18-30	14	17.5
31-40	22	27.5
41-50	22	27.5
51-60	21	26.3
61+	1	1.3
Level of hierarchy		
Entry level	36	45.0
Middle Level (Team Leader/Supervisor)	23	28.7
Senior Level (Manager/Senior Supervisor)	17	21.3
Executive level	4	5.0
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual/Straight	76	95.0
Homosexual/Gay or Lesbian	2	2.5
Prefer not to say	2	2.5
Have you ever been diagnosed with either mental or physical disability?		
No	76	95.0
Yes	4	5.0
Religion		
Christianity	76	95.1
Non-religious	3	3.9
Other	1	1.3

3.2 Evaluation of Swissport Cyprus employees' sense of inclusion

The results for the mean and standard deviation of the two variables, inclusion, and diversity climate, which influence the employees' perceptions of a diverse workforce, and their sense of inclusion at Swissport Cyprus, are presented.

Table 4.2 presents the results for employees' sense of inclusion in Swissport Cyprus. It is evident that overall, the employees of Swissport Cyprus feel included in their organization since inclusion's grand mean is 3.6567 (SD=0.85777), which according to Mor Barak (2017)'s clarification, higher scores on the scale reflect higher feeling of inclusion.

Employees of Swissport Cyprus feel included by their work groups because they trust they have influence over decisions made in their work groups regarding their tasks (4.20), and their coworkers openly share work-related information with them (4.46). Moreover, respondents feel included in their organization due to the fact they are always informed about informal social activities and company's social events (4.35). It is found that there is broad consensus regarding employees actively participating in work-related activities of their work groups, with the highest score on the scale (4.93).

On the other hand, some items received the lowest score, indicating communication issues between the majority of employees and higher-level management other than their immediate supervisor. As an example, the statement that employees are frequently invited to participate in meetings with management other than their immediate supervisor received the lowest score for that item (2.39). Following that is an argument that employees are frequently invited to participate in meetings with management higher than their immediate supervisor (2.54) and asked to contribute to the planning of social activities that are not directly related to their job function (2.85).

The 3 items of Mor Barak’s (2017) scale that are coded reversible, are indicated with an [R] next to them in Table 4.3. The higher the score for those questions, the more strongly the respondent disagrees with the statement given in that item. It is observed that employees disagree on the statement for their supervisor not sharing information (4.11) and there is an even stronger disagreement for the statement of employees rarely being invited to join their coworkers when they go for lunch or drinks after work (4.38). Opinions do not appear to come to a consensus on the item which states that respondents are frequently among the last to know about important changes in the organization (3.46), but still there is a slight disagreement.

Table 3.2: Inclusion – Descriptive Statistics (N=80)

	Mean*	Std. Deviation
I have influence in decisions taken by my work group regarding our tasks.	4.20	1.562
My coworkers openly share work-related information with me.	4.46	1.492
I am typically involved to actively participate in work-related activities of my work group.	4.93	1.145
I am usually among the last to know about important changes in the organization [R].	3.46	1.645
My supervisor does not share information with me [R].	4.11	1.534
I am often invited to contribute my opinion in meetings with management higher than my immediate supervisor.	2.54	1.614
I am often invited to participate in meetings with management higher than my immediate supervisor.	2.39	1.488
I am often asked to contribute in planning social activities not directly related to my job function.	2.85	1.600
I am always informed about informal social activities and company social events.	4.35	1.294
I am rarely invited to join my coworkers when they go for lunch or drinks after work [R].	4.38	1.594
<i>Inclusion (AVG)</i>	3.6567	.85777
* Likert scale 1-6, 1 = Strongly disagree, 6 = Strongly agree		

3.3 Evaluation of Swissport Cyprus employees' perception on diversity climate in the organization

Table 3.3 shows the results for employees' views about the diversity climate in Swissport Cyprus. The participants responded to 12 normal questions and 4 reversible questions using Mor Barak's (2017) 16-item scale. Since the grand mean for diversity is 3.9852 (SD=0.67147), it is clear that employees of Swissport Cyprus generally perceive diversity in the workplace as a positive aspect for their organization. As explained by Mor Barak (2017), higher scores on the scale indicate a more positive perception towards diverse climate.

Employees appear to commonly agree with the idea that having diverse viewpoints within an organization adds value (4.81), and they also believe that diversity is a strategic business issue (4.35). Furthermore, respondents scored slightly lower (3.30) in terms of feeling at ease with people from backgrounds other than their own, which can be explained by their strong consensus agreement on the statement that learning more about cultural norms of diverse groups would assist them become more effective in their jobs (4.44).

Furthermore, the participants agreed that managers provide feedback and evaluate employees fairly, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, or social background (3.93), and that human resource policies are applied fairly to all employees (4.09).

In terms of a mentoring program, participants appear to disagree (2.85) with the statement that the organization has a mentoring program in use which identifies and prepares all minority and female employees for promotion. In addition, it is observed that the employees slightly agree (3.18) on the statement for the company spending enough money and time on diversity awareness and related training.

In Table 3.4, the 4 items of Mor Barak's (2017) scale that are coded reverse are distinguished with a [R]. The higher the score for those questions, the more strongly the respondent disagrees with the statement given in that item.

It is clear that employees strongly disagree on the statement for feeling that they have been treated differently in Swissport Cyprus because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or age (5.11). Furthermore, they commonly disagree on the statement that diversity issues keep some work teams here from performing to their maximum effectiveness (4.79). Respondents further scored high disagreement for the statement of being afraid to disagree with members of other groups for fear of being called prejudiced (4.30), and there is no such a thing as “Old Boys Network” alive there (3.79).

Table 3.3: Diversity – Descriptive Statistics (N=80)

	Mean*	Std. Deviation
I feel that I have been treated differently here because of my race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or age [R].	5.11	1.526
Managers here give feedback and evaluate employees fairly, regardless of employees' race, gender, sexual orientation religion, age or social background.	3.93	1.784
Managers interpret human resource policies (such as sick leave) fairly for all employees.	4.09	1.494
There is a mentoring program in use here that identifies and prepares all minority and female employees for promotion.	2.85	1.744
The "old boy's network" is alive and well here [R]. Note: The old boy's network is an informal system in which wealthy men with similar social or educational background help each other in business or personal matters.	3.79	1.589
The company spends enough money and time on diversity awareness and related training.	3.18	1.589
Knowing more about cultural norms of diverse groups would help me be more effective in my job.	4.44	1.474
I think that diverse viewpoints add value.	4.81	1.223
I believe diversity is a strategic business issue.	4.35	1.397
I feel at ease with people from backgrounds different from my own.	3.30	1.702

I am afraid to disagree with members of other groups for fear of being called prejudiced [R].	4.30	1.634
Diversity issues keep some work teams here from performing to their maximum effectiveness [R].	4.79	1.402
Diversity (AVG)	3.9852	.67147
* Likert scale 1-6, 1 = Strongly disagree, 6 = Strongly agree		

Simple Linear Regression

Simple linear regression was used to assess whether positive perception of diverse climate in workplace, gender, age, level of hierarchy of position, sexual orientation, disabilities, and religious beliefs significantly predict the sense of inclusion of employees of Swissport Cyprus. The results of the regression suggested that the abovementioned independent variables explained 36.5% of the variance, $R^2=.365$, $F(7,72) = 5.920$, $P<.001$.

The positive perception towards diversity climate in workplace ($\beta = .425$, $p<.001$) and the level of hierarchy of a position ($\beta = .328$, $p<.002$) are statistically significant and contribute to the prediction of the feeling of inclusion of employees in workplace.

In contrast, gender ($\beta = -.158$, $p<.162$), age ($\beta = -.044$, $p<.697$), sexual orientation ($\beta = -.063$, $p<.576$), disability diagnosis ($\beta = .100$, $p<.375$) and religious beliefs ($\beta = -.096$, $p<.397$) are not statistically significant, and cannot be used as predictors for the sense of inclusion of employees in Swissport Cyprus.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.604 ^a	.365	.304	.71582

Predictors: (Constant), Religion, Sexual orientation, DiversityTotal, Age range, Gender, Level of hierarchy of your position, have you ever been diagnosed with either mental or physical disability?

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.232	7	3.033	5.920	<.001 ^b
	Residual	36.893	72	.512		
	Total	58.125	79			

a. Dependent Variable: InclusionTotal

b. Predictors: (Constant), Religion

, Sexual orientation

, DiversityTotal, Age range

, Gender, Level of hierarchy of your position

, Have you ever been diagnosed with either mental or physical disability?

Correlations

		InclusionTotal	Gender	Age range	Level of hierarchy of your position	Sexual orientation	Have you ever been diagnosed with either mental or physical disability?	Religion	DiversityTotal
InclusionTotal	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.158	-.044		-.063		-.100	-.493
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.162	.697		.576		.375	.000
	N	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
Gender	Pearson Correlation	-.158	1.000	-.003		-.053		-.092	-.058
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.162		.976		.638		.416	.221
	N	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
Age range	Pearson Correlation	-.044	-.003	1.000		-.054		-.246	-.085
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.697	.976			.633		.028	.455
	N	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
Level of hierarchy of your position	Pearson Correlation	.409	-.053	.129	1.000	-.136		.153	-.184
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.638	.253		.229		.175	.055
	N	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
Sexual orientation	Pearson Correlation	-.063	-.133	-.054	-.136	1.000		-.070	-.052
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.576	.238	.633	.229			.536	.645
	N	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
Have you ever been diagnosed with either mental or physical disability?	Pearson Correlation	.100	-.092	.246	.153	-.070	1.000	-.211	.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.375	.416	.028	.175	.536		.061	.216
	N	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
Religion	Pearson Correlation	-.096	-.138	-.140	-.215	-.047	-.211	1.000	-.113
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.397	.221	.215	.055	.680	.061		.318
	N	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
DiversityTotal	Pearson Correlation	.493	-.058	-.085	.184	.052	.140	-.113	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.611	.455	.102	.645	.216	.318	
	N	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80

3.3 Test of the research hypotheses

In this section hypotheses are tested to verify the correlation between the dependent variable (inclusion) and the independent variables (disabilities diagnosis, religious beliefs, age, diversity climate, level of hierarchy of a position, sexual orientation, gender). The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between the variables, is shown in Table 3.4 below. The correlation results for the hypotheses testing demonstrate that Hypotheses 4, 5, 6 and 7 are confirmed, whereas Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, are rejected.

Table 3.4: Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (N =80)

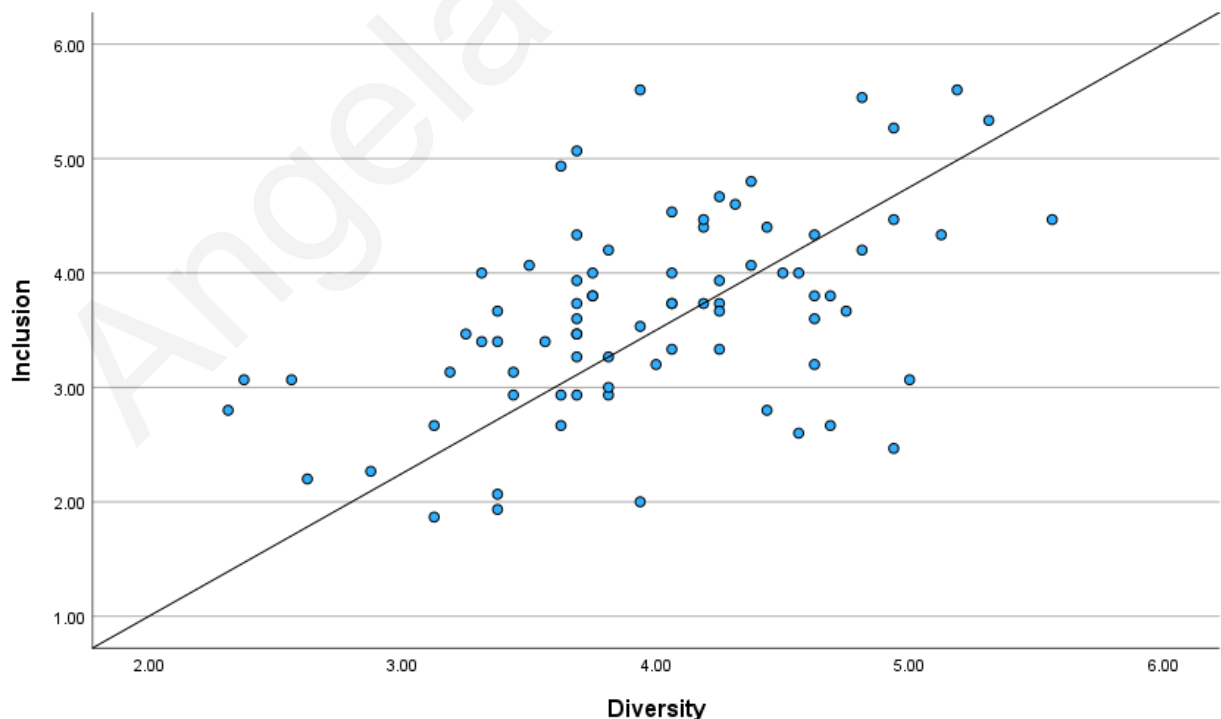
		Disabilities	Religion	Age Range	Diversity Climate	Level of hierarchy	Sexual Orientation	Gender
Feeling of Inclusion	Pearson Correlation	.100	-.096	-.044	.493	.409	-.063	-.158
	Significance * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.375	.397	.697	.000	.000	.576	.162
Hypotheses		Hypothesis 1: Employees' feeling of inclusion is correlated with individual's diagnosis of disability.	Hypothesis 2: Employee's feeling of inclusion is higher for individuals belonging to the dominant religious group.	Hypothesis 3: Swissport Cyprus employees' feeling of inclusion is higher for individuals belonging to the dominant age group.	Hypothesis 4: Swissport Cyprus employees' feeling of inclusion has a positive correlation with perception of diversity climate.	Hypothesis 5: Employee's feeling of inclusion is correlated with individual's position in the company.	Hypothesis 6: Employee's feeling of inclusion is not higher for individuals belonging to the dominant sexual orientation category.	Hypothesis 7: Employee's feeling of inclusion is not higher for individuals belonging to the dominant gender.
		Rejected	Rejected	Rejected	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed

Scatter Plot

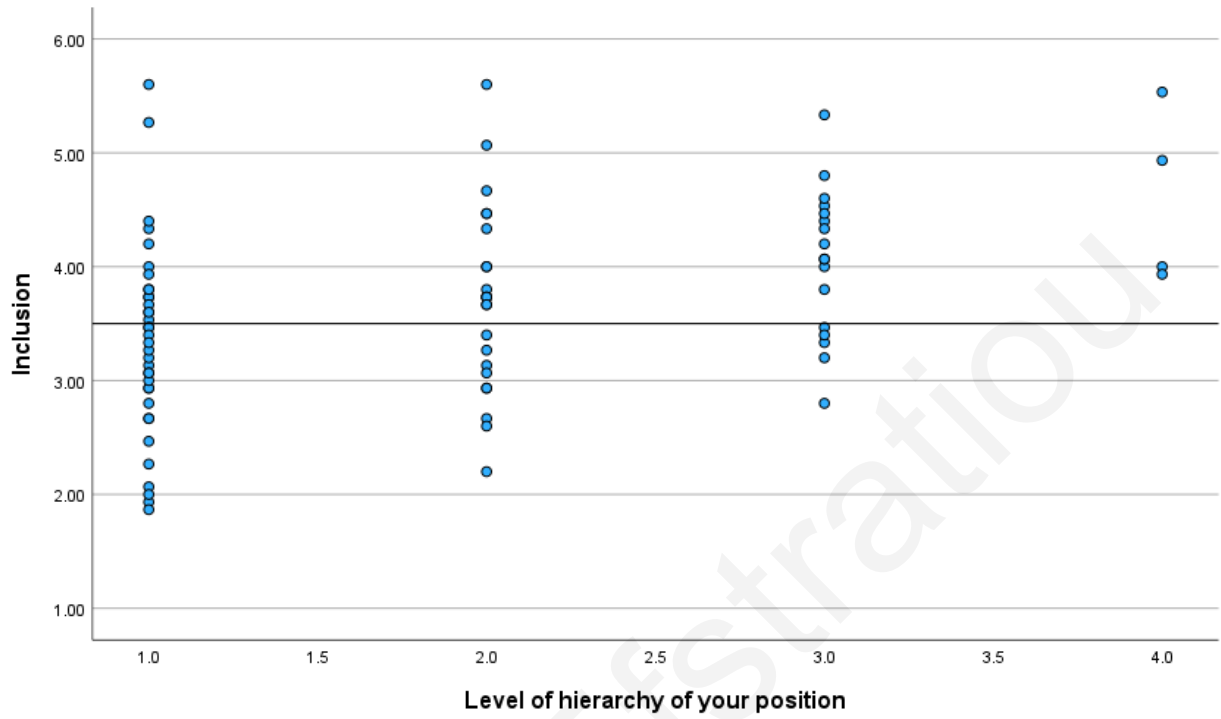
It is confirmed that there is a positive correlation between the feeling of inclusion for employees of Swissport Cyprus and their view for diverse climate in workplace. The more positive an individual perceives diversity, the higher is their sense of inclusion in the organization as shown below in Graph 4.1. Additionally, it is demonstrated in Graph 4.2 that employees' feelings of inclusion in Swissport Cyprus are positively correlated with their level of hierarchical position. The feeling of inclusion for employees increases with the level of the position.

However, it is clear that some employees at lower levels of the organization—such as entry level, middle level, and senior level—experience the same level of inclusiveness as those in executive positions.

Graph 3.1: Scatter Plot - Inclusion



Graph 3.2: Scatter Plot – Level of hierarchy



4. Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter summarizes and discusses the study's main findings and provides references to previous research on the topic. Following that, the author draws conclusions and indicates the overall key finding of the research. The research aims to contribute to the measurement of Swissport Cyprus employees' feelings of inclusion using Mor Barak's (2017) scales, to evaluate perceptions of diversity and the sense of employee' inclusion. The relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables is examined.

The first area the author chose to research is the factors that can affect employees' sense of inclusion. Employees' perceptions of diversity, as well as demographic data from the participants: gender, age, sexual orientation, level of hierarchy, disability diagnosis, and religion, are the independent variables that were used to run the correlation with the dependent (inclusion) variable. The results of this research revealed that the sense of inclusion is affected by the perception of diversity and the level of hierarchy that an individual acquires in Swissport Cyprus. Consequently, the age, gender, sexual orientation, disability diagnosis and religious beliefs have no impact on the feeling of inclusion of Swissport Cyprus' workforce.

The current study's findings are aligned with the findings of Daya and April (2014)'s research, who also had found no relationship between employee's feeling of inclusion and gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, and disability. Even though Daya and April (2014) did not include perception of diversity as a factor that influence employee sense of inclusion, they found positive correlation between race, position in the company, geographic location, and the department of employee. Similarly, the author of this research found a positive correlation between the level of hierarchy and the sense of inclusion. This indicates that, in this specific organization, it is the level of hierarchy that forms the power relations among employees; employees perceive themselves as

insiders or outsiders based on their position in the hierarchy. This aspect appears to be so strong that it transcends people's other social identities.

It is evident from the current research that Swissport Cyprus' employees are satisfied with the level of inclusion in their work group and coworkers. This is a key aspect, and Nair's earlier research (2015) confirms it by specifying that relationships with coworkers and managers are some of the factors that positively influence the feeling of inclusion in the workplace (Barak, M. E. M., 1999, as cited Nair, 2015). Nevertheless, the same study discovered that having access to information and resources, as well as giving employees the chance to participate in and affect the decision-making process, are equally vital (Barak, M. E. M., 1999, as cited Nair, 2015). The same idea is forwarded by Mor Barak's (2017) research, which contends that workplace inclusion is a reflection of how much employees feel they are involved in organizational decision-making process. However, it was revealed throughout the author's research that participation in decision-making and access to important information received the lowest score, indicating to Swissport Cyprus that this is an area to pay attention to if the company wants to improve employees' feelings of inclusion.

Huong et al. (2016), argued that if an employee's perception of their organization's procedures, standpoints, and the treatment they receive are respectful and fair, they will feel included as part of the workgroup. This statement is supported by the current study's respondents, who scored significantly high on the diversity scale items corresponding to fair treatment, respectful behavior, and equal implementation of organizational policies for everyone. Given that perception of diversity is the most important variable influencing inclusion in this study, Huong et al. (2016)'s statement validates Swissport Cyprus employees' increased sense of inclusion.

Workplace inclusion, according to an earlier finding by Mor Barak (2017), also takes into account the degree to which employees feel they are a part of the organization's informal networks and communication systems. The result of the current study concurs Mor Barak's (2017) assertion, as participants' high overall scores on items related to internal communication, informal social interactions, and company's social events can be used to explain employees' increased sense of inclusion.

In addition, according to Mor Barak's (2017) findings, inclusion often suffers from people's unwillingness to put forth the time and effort necessary to learn about other cultures and their viewpoints for such initiatives pose a risk to their job security. Since respondents scored high on the diversity scale items, which measure employees' openness to learning about people from various backgrounds and their cultures, Mor Barak's conclusion does not match the results of recent research. The respondents further revealed that working with diverse work groups does not only make them feel at ease; it also helps them perform their jobs more effectively. Participants appear not to feel insecure as a consequence of the workforce's diversity.

Since the main findings of the research are discussed and linked to prior literature, the following part presents the author's conclusions.

The research that has been conducted enriches the existing literature on workplace inclusion and diversity. But more importantly, it contributes to Swissport Cyprus' efforts to measure employee sense of inclusion and monitor employees' perspective of diverse workforce while taking into consideration the variables that may affect those feelings.

The most important conclusion that the author draw from this research, is that the workforce of Swissport Cyprus does not feel included in all the aspects that higher management is

involved. The only exception regards the formal internal communication (i.e., memos, announcements) and employees' invitation in terms of company's social activities (i.e., Christmas parties, CSR activities), which they scored high, so they perceive themselves included.

However, when it comes to the important issues, such as decisions that have an impact on the organization or meetings to debate issues that directly affect employees (i.e., unions, contracts), the employees feel completely excluded. In meetings regarding employee evaluations or the company's future goals and aspirations, their responses translate to no invitation, no participation, and no contribution.

The author believes that open, honest, and direct communication can resolve all of the problems discovered through this study. It is clear that employees require their employer to invite them to and include them in meetings that are more significant than an annual social occasion. It is true that company events provide a wonderful opportunity for socializing, but the findings of this study suggest that in order to increase employees' feelings of inclusion, higher management must communicate with workforce on usual basis for important decisions.

A very important conclusion with regards to employees' perception for diverse workforce, is that workforce of Swissport Cyprus, claimed that they have never felt being discriminated during their working experience in the organization. It is a huge accomplishment to employ so many people, and still none of them scored agree on the scale item with regards to discriminative behaviors in any of the aspects that differentiate people. It is revealed that the culture and mindset in the organization in terms of minorities, welcomes all people from different backgrounds. Therefore, the author argues that the company should seize the chance to hire and select a variety of people, especially minorities, when it is possible given that employees appear to be very willing to work and cooperate with people who are different from themselves.

5 Implications and Recommendations of the study

In this chapter the practical implications and recommendations are listed. The findings of the current study could serve as a starting point for Swissport International to use the data and make comparisons with other countries that may be similar or dissimilar to Cyprus. A solid suggestion that the author proposes, is for the Swissport International to conduct similar research, to determine whether the sense of inclusion for all workforce appears to be broadly in line with Cyprus'. In case the global participants continue to score slightly above the average (as Cyprus does), the most important step to be taken is to establish diversity management and cultivate inclusive HR policies and practices. As a result, the company will be able to track and monitor progress in terms of its employees' sense of inclusion and make decisions for all the countries in which it operates while taking cultural factors into account.

The author identified several crucial areas for improvement in the field of workplace inclusion and diversity, particularly for Swissport Cyprus. The key observation of this study's findings is that there is a communication gap between employees and higher-level management. Employees are observed to communicate effectively with their work groups and immediate supervisors, but there is no communication at all with higher management. The organization needs to open communication channels, such as once a week open-door visits, in order to address the problem that communication gaps create. Employees need to feel that they can be heard not only from their immediate supervisor but the upper management as well.

If employees appear to avoid going to higher management due to fear or inconvenience, the company could form a council or propose elections for employee representative. The idea of elections is that anyone (especially lower-level employees) can become a candidate, and employees will vote for the person they want to be their representative and speak on their behalf

to higher management. Therefore, staff members who prefer to speak up for themselves can go to higher management (CEO, HR manager), while staff members who are uncomfortable with this recommendation can choose the representative to communicate their concerns.

Another suggestion for communication channels is for higher management to schedule weekly or monthly visits to the area where employees work, rather than waiting for employees to visit and express their concerns. It is important to mention that the offices of higher management are located outside Larnaca and Paphos airports. They are near, but not in the same building. Hence, leaving the office and approaching employees in "their" working environment would make them feel more comfortable speaking because they would perceive the discussion less formal and in a more relaxed mood compared to the head office conference room.

A further crucial finding of this research is that employees argue that they are not included in higher management's decision-making processes, despite the fact that they frequently receive communication from higher management in the form of emails and memos. They feel included in formal communication, but they do not appear to feel included in the process by which decisions for the company are made. Employees seem not to be informed in advance and consequently are not given the opportunity to interact with higher management while they are still debating; only after the decision has been made and formally announced they are allowed to do so.

An additional recommendation for promoting an inclusive culture at Swissport Cyprus concerns diversity training awareness and the hiring of a specialist to provide the necessary knowledge and information to the entire Swissport workforce.

In a perfect world, the organization would gain important advantages by investing in diversity training and development (efficiency, teamwork, respect). In reality, in order for

employees in the aviation sector generally to perform their jobs successfully and safely, a significant amount of time for mandatory training is required. Each employee is required to complete about 25 different training modules, and they all have a 2–3-year expiration date. These employees need to be released from their duties for the 2 to 8 hours of training that they might need to complete, which already costs the organization both time and money. To sum up, it would be extremely difficult for the company to release 400+ employees for an optional (not airline or operational) training, given that Cyprus experiences high season for 8 months out of the year, and that the remaining 4 months are used for the annual mandatory training for all employees.

Aside from how challenging the release process would be for the employees, a class can only accommodate a maximum of 20 people at a time. As a result, multiple classes will be required to provide training to all employees (400+), and the trainer will be paid multiple times for the sessions, which will increase the cost for the company. An option in order to avoid or minimize advisory service fees for the diversity trainer who will assist in the increased sense of inclusion, is to train an existing employee to become a certified coach in the specific area and reward him or she with bonuses for all training rather than paying for each session (class).

Secondments are a key initiative carried out by Swissport Cyprus. The winter months are Cyprus' low season, while they are other countries' peak travel periods (Netherlands, Switzerland etc.). When there is a need for support in other countries and there are employees who have valid training certificates that won't expire during low season, Swissport Cyprus follows a procedure in which those employees are asked if they would like to go and work for those countries for an agreed-upon period. Over the years, there has been a lot of secondment volunteering, which supports the findings that employees support and view diversity positively (they choose to work with foreigners).

The company prefers to hire new employees during Cyprus' high season rather than requesting international secondments, despite the fact that Cyprus supports various nations throughout the year during the low season. Demographic data clearly shows that workers are not as diverse as they would be if they were in a different nation. As a result, it is suggested that Swissport Cyprus seek assistance from a foreign country during the upcoming high season so that the staff can become familiar with a new culture and work with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

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6 Limitations of the study

There are certain limitations on this study that should be taken into account. First of all, it is clear from the demographic findings that not enough diverse personnel participated in the survey. Since the majority of the respondents appeared to come from similar backgrounds, they received high scores on the inclusion scale. Moreover, there was a lack of involvement from higher management (4 employees holding executive positions), and the author believes that it would be more accurate to base decisions on the results of the questionnaire if it had been completed by a diverse group of respondents.

The author's main concern with this study is the population that received the questionnaire. Unfortunately, the survey was only available for Swissport Cyprus employees who have a permanent contract. The company employs 70 seasonal employees and 414 permanents, but its policy is to only generate company emails for those who are permanent. Since the researcher decided to distribute the questionnaire in online version via email, the seasonal staff did not receive it. As a result, employees who have been with the company for years but do not have a permanent contract, were not eligible to take part in the study.

A further, and most significant limitation for the author, refers to the low number of participants in the study. Out of 414 permanent employees that received the questionnaire, only 80 responded. Therefore, the author cannot be certain that the responses can be generalized for all Swissport Cyprus population.

In addition, there are a lot of people that have permanent contracts but are workers that are older and are not familiar with technology, so they did not even check their emails to respond and participate in the study. The final limitation identified by the author is that the participation of

Paphos employees is significantly lower than that of Larnaca employees. Despite the fact that the survey was conducted anonymously, a large number of people left feedback about their experience while filling out the questionnaire, and all of them were from Larnaca. As a result, the author cannot be certain that the results in terms of colleagues' sense of inclusion and diversity climate represent both Cypriot Airports of Swissport Cyprus employees.

Last but not least, the author cannot be certain that the results of the previous literature can be compared to those of this study because there hasn't been enough research done in the industry in which the company operates. For the aviation sector, there is a knowledge and bibliography gap. Because of this lack of information about the general behavior of employees in the aviation industry, current research is vital and can be the first steppingstone for future researchers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire form – Inclusion

	Mean*	Std. Deviation
I have influence in decisions taken by my work group regarding our tasks.	4.20	1.562
My coworkers openly share work-related information with me.	4.46	1.492
I am typically involved to actively participate in work-related activities of my work group.	4.93	1.145
I am able to influence decisions that affect my organization.	3.56	1.652
I am usually among the last to know about important changes in the organization [R].	3.46	1.645
I am usually invited to important meetings in my organization.	3.02	1.676
My supervisor often asks for my opinion before making important decisions.	3.46	1.567
My supervisor does not share information with me [R].	4.11	1.534
I am invited to actively participate in review and evaluation meetings with my supervisor.	3.24	1.788
I am often invited to contribute my opinion in meetings with management higher than my immediate supervisor.	2.54	1.614
I frequently receive communication from management higher than my immediate supervisor (i.e., memos, e-mails).	3.90	1.620
I am often invited to participate in meetings with management higher than my immediate supervisor.	2.39	1.488
I am often asked to contribute in planning social activities not directly related to my job function.	2.85	1.600
I am always informed about informal social activities and company social events.	4.35	1.294
I am rarely invited to join my coworkers when they go for lunch or drinks after work [R].	4.38	1.594
<i>Inclusion (AVG)</i>	3.6567	.85777
* <i>Likert scale 1-6, 1 = Strongly disagree, 6 = Strongly agree</i>		

Appendix 2: Questionnaire form – Diversity

	Mean*	Std. Deviation
I feel that I have been treated differently here because of my race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or age [R].	5.11	1.526
Managers here have a track record of hiring and promoting employees objectively, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or age.	3.75	1.754
Managers here give feedback and evaluate employees fairly, regardless of employees' race, gender, sexual orientation religion, age or social background.	3.93	1.784
Managers here make layoff decisions fairly, regardless of factors such as employees' race, gender, age or social background.	3.71	1.822
Managers interpret human resource policies (such as sick leave) fairly for all employees.	4.09	1.494
Managers give assignments based on the skills and abilities of employees.	3.95	1.449
Management here encourages the formation of employee network support groups.	3.43	1.533
There is a mentoring program in use here that identifies and prepares all minority and female employees for promotion.	2.85	1.744
The "old boy's network" is alive and well here [R]. Note: The old boy's network is an informal system in which wealthy men with similar social or educational background help each other in business or personal matters.	3.79	1.589
The company spends enough money and time on diversity awareness and related training.	3.18	1.589
Knowing more about cultural norms of diverse groups would help me be more effective in my job.	4.44	1.474
I think that diverse viewpoints add value.	4.81	1.223
I believe diversity is a strategic business issue.	4.35	1.397
I feel at ease with people from backgrounds different from my own.	3.30	1.702
I am afraid to disagree with members of other groups for fear of being called prejudiced [R].	4.30	1.634
Diversity issues keep some work teams here from performing to their maximum effectiveness [R].	4.79	1.402
<i>Diversity (AVG)</i>	3.9852	.67147
* Likert scale 1-6, 1 = Strongly disagree, 6 = Strongly agree		