



**The importance of diversity among the Gen-Z and its implications
on diversity management at the workplace**

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Abstract

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<p>As a new generation is now entering the labor market, it is essential to know which role diversity plays in the Gen-Z's decision for an employer and how important the topic is for them as an employee. This knowledge thus enhances organizations' abilities to implement diversity management measures targeted to Gen-Z. This is decisive as in times of 'war for talents' attractive employer offerings can influence an applicant's decision for or against an organization.</p> <p>A quantitative study among 114 individuals aged 17-26 with international, but mainly German nationality background was conducted. The results were gathered by an online survey during the period between 3rd April 2023 and 23rd April 2023.</p> <p>The theoretical part composes the development of diversity management including its legal framework and discusses the concept of diversity, its dimensions, and management. Moreover, the necessity, benefits, and challenges of diversity management are noted. The paper also composes the process of effective diversity management and its implications for human resource management. The theoretical part additionally summarizes the key characteristics of the Gen-Z.</p> <p>The study results show that diversity at the workplace is important to the Gen-Z. They see a necessity for diversity management, especially in the training and career development process of organizations. Even though diversity is not among the top priorities that an employer must offer them, it can be a critical criterion to decide for a certain organization. The Gen-Z perceives diversity management to be a corporate task for whose success every individual is responsible. The main goal of diversity management is seen in the creation of a diverse and inclusive work environment. The research confirms that organizations should position themselves toward diversity. It is necessary to invest (non)-financial resources in appropriate diversity management to foster a diverse and inclusive corporate culture right at the entry point of an employee lifecycle. This prevents the issue of subgroup divisions and discrimination. Meanwhile, it fosters creativity and innovation. Having role models and supporters of diversity among HRM and top management can guide employees toward the acceptance of workplace diversity.</p>
Keywords diversity, diversity dimensions, diversity management, Gen-Z

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List of abbreviations

Corporate social responsibility	<i>CSR</i>
Diversity and inclusion	<i>D&I</i>
Diversity dimensions	<i>DD</i>
Diversity management	<i>DM</i>
Generation-Z.....	<i>Gen-Z</i>
Human resource management.....	<i>HRM</i>
Human resources.....	<i>HR</i>
Investigative question	<i>IQ</i>
Key performance indicator	<i>KPI</i>
Mean.....	<i>x</i>
Number	<i>n</i>
Research question	<i>RQ</i>
Workplace diversity management	<i>WDM</i>

1 Introduction

Since the year 2013, Germany is celebrating the Diversity Day annually. It is an action day initiated by the Charta der Vielfalt e.V. [Charta of Diversity] which is an employer initiative to promote diversity in German companies and institutions. Its aim is a prejudice-free working environment where all employees – regardless of age, ethnic origin and nationality, gender, and gender identity, physical and mental abilities, religion and world view, sexual orientation, and social origin – are valued. (Charta der Vielfalt e.V., 2023a, 2023b.)

Although on this special day politicians, managers, activists, and many others come together to discuss how diversity can be lived, to present best practices, or organize participatory actions, it also draws attention to the fact that diversity still needs more attention and evolution in society, but particularly in the workplace.

This thesis builds on that fact and posits that diversity and its management are essential in today's workplace culture. Especially now as a new generation, the Generation-Z (Gen-Z) is entering the labor market, it is the right point of time to (re-)build workplace diversity management (WDM). To ensure that an organization's diversity management (DM) meets the expectations and needs of the Gen-Z, this study examines the importance of diversity among the Gen-Z and its implications on DM at the workplace.

This thesis is divided into five sections. It is introduced by the study's research background, the research question, and the scope of the study. After that, the relevant academic literature is reviewed, and the corresponding theoretical framework is presented. The third chapter describes the research methods. Based on this, the fourth section summarizes the results of the analysis. The study concludes by discussing the main findings and their robustness. In addition, recommendations for organizations as well as suggestions for future research are presented.

In accordance with the thesis advisor all citations in this paper are referenced according to APA American Psychological Association, 7th edition guidelines.

1.1 Research background

In the past years, an increasing number of organizations have found themselves in a battle to recruit specialists in a labor market that is characterized by a rapidly shrinking supply of qualified workers. Moreover, globalization has accelerated demographic and social developments that have caused changes in social norms and prerequisites for employees and employers. Nowadays, it is getting more common to find groups of people in the labor market that had rather been invisible a few years ago. For example, due to global migration waves, more foreign nationalities can now be

found at work. In addition, the gender or age demography has become more heterogeneous because of new working models, better labor conditions, or initiatives towards employer health management. (Merklein, 2017, p. 1.)

However, this evolution of diversity is still in progress and there are still many achievements to be made to move from a more diverse to an equal and inclusive work environment. In Finland, for example, "only 20% of CEOs are women, whereas about 70% of semi-skilled jobs are occupied by women" (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018, p. 68). The gender pay gap shows "that, on average, women are paid approximately 20% less than men across the world" (ILO, 2018, p. 23) and at the EU level, "only 50.6% of persons with disabilities are employed, compared to 74.8% of persons without disabilities" (Lecerf, 2020, p. 2). Furthermore, a study by Merklein (2017, p. 160) conducted in 2015 and mainly targeted the diversity dimensions of gender and sexual orientation in German organizations revealed that only 38.7% of employees were satisfied with the DM in their organization.

To achieve the goal of a work environment based on the principles of diversity, equality, and inclusion, the necessary structures must still be ongoingly prepared. The importance, as well as benefits, must be highlighted, and the connected challenges and conflicts must be adequately managed. That is when the concept of DM comes into place.

Although it seems that diversity and its management at the workplace are currently 'en vogue', they often lack corporate commitment, a clear strategy, and specific targeting towards the individuals that should be addressed.

Therefore, in this thesis, the focus will be laid on WDM and the related needs and importance of the Gen-Z towards this subject. This specific target group was chosen as it consists of individuals who have been or will be entering the job market and in consequence will shape the leadership style of tomorrow. If organizations understand the demands of the Gen-Z towards an employer, organizations are more likely to win the "War for Talents" (Hansen & Hauff, 2019, p. 37). Simultaneously, individualized DM measures can help to close barriers to facing diversity. Instead, they contribute to a corporate culture in which everyone acknowledges diversity and is willing to work towards its benefits rather than being reluctant by potential challenges.

1.2 Research question

The thesis aims to investigate the importance of diversity among the Gen-Z and its associated implications on DM at the workplace. Moreover, it is analyzed which attitude the Gen-Z has towards diversity and its dimensional scope. Related to that, it is scrutinized whether DM in organizations is

of importance and how DM at the workplace must be conceptualized to meet the needs and expectations of the Gen-Z as the next era of employees.

The goal of this thesis is to point out to corporate leaders, managers, and HR responsible how workplace diversity is valued among the Gen-Z and how important it is to implement measures of WDM to attract the Gen-Z as employees. This study is perceived as building the baseline of an individual roadmap toward a corporate DM strategy.

For this objective, the research question (RQ) is worded as: "What are the Gen-Z's expectations on diversity management at the workplace?"

To provide significant research results, the RQ is divided into four mutual exclusive investigative questions (IQs):

IQ 1: How familiar is the Gen-Z with the concept of diversity?

IQ 2: What are the Gen-Z's attitudes towards diversity at the workplace?

IQ 3: What are the Gen-Z's attitudes towards diversity management at the workplace?

IQ 4: What are according to the Gen-Z the main tasks of workplace diversity management?

Table 1 represents the overlay matrix. It summarizes the IQs and their corresponding theoretical framework, research methods, results chapters as well as questions asked in the survey.

Table 1. Overlay matrix

Investigative question (IQ)	Theoretical framework	Research methods	Survey questions	Result chapters
IQ 1: How familiar is the Gen-Z with the concept of diversity?	2.2 Legal evolution of diversity management 2.4.1 The 'Big 8' of diversity 2.4.2 Visible and invisible characteristics 2.4.3 Four layers of diversity 2.4.4 Relations-oriented, task-oriented, readily detected, and underlying diversity	Quantitative research	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	4.2

	<p>2.5.1 Three cases of diversity</p> <p>2.5.2 Three perspectives on workforce diversity</p> <p>2.6.1 Necessity of workplace diversity management</p> <p>2.6.2 Benefits of workplace diversity management</p> <p>2.8 Implications for HRM</p>			
<p>IQ 2: What are the Gen-Z's attitudes towards diversity at the workplace?</p>	<p>2.1 Development of diversity management</p> <p>2.3 Considerations of the Gen-Z from an HR perspective</p> <p>2.4.1 The 'Big 8' of diversity</p> <p>2.4.2 Visible and invisible characteristics</p> <p>2.4.3 Four layers of diversity</p> <p>2.4.4 Relations-oriented, task-oriented, readily detected, and underlying diversity</p> <p>2.5.1 Three cases of diversity</p> <p>2.5.2 Three perspectives on workforce diversity</p> <p>2.6.1 Necessity of workplace diversity management</p> <p>2.6.2 Benefits of workplace diversity management</p>	<p>Quantitative research</p>	<p>7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 21, 22, 23</p>	<p>4.3</p>

	2.6.3 Challenges of workplace diversity management Three perspectives on workforce diversity			
IQ 3: What are the Gen-Z's attitudes towards diversity management at the workplace?	2.5.2 Three perspectives on workforce diversity 2.6.1 Necessity of workplace diversity management 2.6.1 2.8 Implications for HRM	Quantitative research	10, 15, 16, 17	4.4
IQ 4: What are according to the Gen-Z the main tasks of workplace diversity management?	2.5.1 Three cases of diversity 2.5.2 Three perspectives on workforce diversity 2.8 Implications for HRM	Quantitative research	18, 19, 20	4.5

1.3 Key concepts

The key concepts being discussed within the scope of this thesis are diversity, diversity dimensions (DD), diversity management (DM) as well as Generation-Z (Gen-Z).

Diversity is the sum of characteristics that make up differences between individuals along several DD (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2016, p. 147; Olejniczak-Szuster, 2022, p. 329). It implies the recognition, respect, acceptance, and tolerance of the resulting individual uniqueness (Ohunakin et al., 2019, p. 93).

Diversity Dimensions (DD) are a concept to break down the complexity of diversity. In US American research, Plummer's 'Big 8' are usually applied. It names the eight dimensions of race, gender, ethnicity/nationality, organizational role/function, age, sexual orientation, mental/physical ability, and religion. (Plummer, 2003, p. 25.)

Diversity Management (DM) is often referred to "as 'equality at the workplace', 'diverse workforce', 'equal opportunities', and 'inclusion'" (Seliverstova, 2021, p. 4). It denotes "a strategic organizational approach to workforce diversity development, organizational culture change, and empowerment of the workforce" (Arrendondo, 1996, p. 17). It profounds in the acknowledgment and

respect of people's differences and the promotion of benefits resulting from heterogeneity (Seliverstova, 2021, p. 8). The main goal is the promotion of workplace diversity and equality (Olejniczak-Szuster, 2022, p. 327). Therefore, DM aims at reducing disadvantages faced by people with diversity characteristics, on one side, and to convince leaders about the benefits diversity can bring with it, on the other side (Genkova et al., 2022, p. 121).

In this thesis, the term **Generation-Z** is referred to people born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019). As digital natives, they have been exposed to the Internet and have grown up with the use of digital and social media since their early childhood (Modreanu & Andrişan, 2022, p. 264). Synonyms used are among others, children of the Internet, Internet generation, Post-Millennials, or iGeneration (Dimock, 2019; Klaffke, 2022, p. 19; Levickaitė, 2010, p. 173; Schroth, 2019, p. 6).

1.4 Demarcation

As diversity and its management is an extensive topic, the first boundary that is made concerns the demarcation of the key concepts of diversity and DD. In this work, the term diversity is specified in the context of workplace diversity, meaning the heterogeneity of individuals occurring at work. Concerning the extension of diversity, literature associates it often with levels, perspectives, or dimensions. The author of this paper refers to the 'Big 8' of diversity which is the concept of DD by Plummer (2003, p. 25). Other aspects such as education level or personality are rather neglected. Since much of the diversity literature focuses on gender, this paper also draws a minor spotlight on it.

Next, the thesis topic is examined from a specific business angle. It only addresses diversity and DM from the human resources (HR) perspective. It is not considered a goal to show the necessity or benefits DM might have on the marketing or sales side of an organization.

Moreover, the thesis does not aim at providing a holistic view of the DM process as it would exceed the scope of this topic. Instead, the focus lies on the evaluation stage of DM as an entry point for organizations to develop a strategic roadmap toward an individualized and effective DM.

The author aims to portray the underlying topic on a global level. This originates from globalization as well as increasing (labor) migration waves that have led the importance of workforce diversity and the appliance of DM to grow on a worldwide level. In the research section, the internationality aspect was tried to be achieved by conducting cross-country research. The research has been spread globally and has reached young adults from 16 different nationalities. In the theory chapters, the international perspective is reflected by referring to worldwide acknowledged concepts. Additionally, global figures are mentioned. Whenever some of the figures and statements relate to country-specific information, this is done with the intention to provide the reader with an exemplary view for a better and more insightful understanding of the topic.

The last demarcation that is made concerns the target group referred to in the research section. The research survey addressed young adults, born between 1997 and 2005, and thus people belonging to the Gen-Z. Apart from that, there were no further delimitations regarding, for example, educational background, field of work, or nationality made. This approach secures that the diversity among the Gen-Z is reflected, and the research results are applicable to a broader scope of organizations.

1.5 Benefits of the thesis

This thesis provides useful insights about the importance of diversity and DM among the Gen-Z which benefits a range of stakeholders: (i) businesses/organizations, (ii) Gen-Z, and (iii) the researcher herself.

The thesis is especially beneficial for organizations and businesses in general. It provides guidance on whether and how organizations should adapt their DM strategy to meet the demands of the upcoming next employee generation, the Gen-Z. This can lead to more employer attractiveness.

The thesis topic is also associated with benefits for the Gen-Z themselves as the underlying research for this topic is based on the target group of current young professionals and young adults who recently have joined or are about to enter the job market. In the quantitative research the Gen-Z's importance on diversity and DM is analyzed and practical measures are derived. That helps organizations to create workplaces that reflect the Post-Millennials' requirements and preferences. Consequently, a workplace and workplace culture in which diversity is managed as valued by the Gen-Z can be established. The opinions and wishes of the Gen-Z can be put into practice.

Lastly, the topic of this thesis also benefits the researcher herself. By thoroughly studying the subject of diversity, DM, and Gen-Z, the researcher was able to acquire valuable knowledge. This can be a career advantage when applying for HR positions. Moreover, being faced with statistical evidence of unequal treatment in workplaces because of diversity characteristics motivates the researcher to commit herself more intensively to enhancing diversity at the workplace and in society to contribute to a future corporate and societal culture of diversity and inclusion (D&I) becoming a norm.

1.6 Internationality of the topic

The internationality of the topic is a thesis requirement stated in the curriculum of the Bachelor's degree in International Business B.Sc. This condition is met by the following aspects: (i) economic and social development, (ii) dimensions of diversity, and (iii) the data set.

Economic and social development such as globalization, demographic change, change of values, and the internationalization of organizations' operations are some aspects that explain the need and have favored the development of an international-oriented labor market (Merklein, 2017, p. 1; Shen et al., 2009, pp. 235–236). Nowadays, people are encouraged or due to wars or political suppression forced to look for an employer outside their home countries. Simultaneously, due to the lack of skilled labor force, organizations also see the need of recruiting globally and thus have extended the geographical scope of their HR processes. However, to address and integrate people from many different ethnic or social backgrounds, adequate management of the rising level of diversity is needed. Therefore, the concept of DM becomes a more and more important topic in organizations worldwide.

The second aspect supporting the internationality of the thesis topic is explained by the dimensions of diversity. Particularly the dimensions of race as well as ethnicity/nationality imply that the view of heterogeneity in organizations is widened across national borders as workforce diversity implies people working together from different countries and cultures.

Lastly, the data that is used for the research section of this work has an international dimension. It encompasses statistics of participants from 16 different nationalities.

2 Diversity, workplace diversity management, and Gen-Z in the context of HRM

This chapter encompasses the theoretical framework of the thesis. It comprises theories and the general context of diversity and its related topics. The part covers a short summary of the development and legal evolution of DM as well as common Gen-Z characteristics. It further explains the concept of diversity, its dimensions and management, and the with DM associated approaches. Moreover, the necessity, benefits, and challenges of DM are noted. Lastly, the process of an effective DM as well as the implications of WDM on HRM are highlighted.

2.1 Development of diversity management

Although it seems that DM in the workplace has reached momentum just over the last couple of years, its evolution has already started in the 1950s. It grew out of the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s when people in North America protested against contemporary gender and racial discrimination. (Merklein, 2017, p. 17.) As a result, restricting and discriminating laws were abolished and the so-called affirmative action policies as well as the equal employment opportunities act were introduced and incorporated into the civil rights act of 1964. The main aim was to terminate employment discrimination based on race, religion, sex, etc., and to promote equal employment and career development of minority groups such as blacks and females. (Köllen, 2021, p. 259; Merklein, 2017, p. 17.)

During the 1980s, many organizations gradually started to add a business perspective to the laws (Franken, 2015, pp. 38–39; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998, p. 969). The corresponding practices were referred to as "managing diversity" (Stephenson & Lewin, 1996, pp. 168–169). Being implemented by an increasing number of American multinational companies, the principle of DM has spread gradually outside the American border (Egan & Bendick, 2003, pp. 704–705). Recent social movements like #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter not only made civil society aware of inequalities but also impacted businesses and their leaders to foster DM (Blueprint, 2022).

2.2 Legal evolution of diversity management

The further penetration of DM within the European continent started around the turn of the millennium and was particularly enforced by legislation. Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam empowered the European Union to legally act against discrimination. Two further directives fostered the protective rights of minorities as well as the principle of equal treatment regarding access to employment and working conditions and the prohibition of discrimination due to, for example, ethnicity, age, or sexual orientation. (Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services, 2003, p. 3; Merklein, 2017, pp. 17–18.) Followed by national Diversity Charters in 2004, more and more organizations

committed themselves to promoting diversity and equality in the workplace (Starr-Glass, 2017, p. 112).

Nowadays, many countries have approved their own laws promoting D&I in the workplace. Taking Germany as a reference, the Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz [German General Act on Equal Treatment] (AGG, 2006, § 1) puts special emphasis on the prevention or elimination of discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, gender, religion, or belief, disability, age or sexual identity. Moreover, the Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz [German General Act on Equal Treatment] (AGG, § 2, section 1) specifically addresses its appliance in selection processes or employment relationships.

Moreover, the Deutscher Bundestag [National Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany] implemented a quota on the employment of severely disabled persons with the Sozialgesetzbuch Neuntes Buch [Social Code – Book IX] (SGB IX, 2016, § 164). In addition, the adjustment of the Gesetz zur Ergänzung und Änderung der Regelungen für die gleichberechtigte Teilhabe von Frauen an Führungspositionen in der Privatwirtschaft und im öffentlichen Dienst (FüPoG II) [Act to supplement and amend the regulations for the equal participation of women in management positions in the private and public sectors] in the Bundesgesetzblatt [Federal Law Gazette] intends a quota on female representation in supervisory boards (BGBl., 2021/Part I No. 51).

2.3 Considerations of the Gen-Z from an HR perspective

Generally, investigations about the Gen-Z are still ongoing, and depending on the underlying literature, they lead to different results. This can already be proven by the temporal delimitation of this generation when the starting point varies between 1995 and 1997 and the endpoint encompasses the years between 2010 and 2015 (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022, p. 2; Dimock, 2019; Jones et al., 2019, p. 64; Lanier, 2017, p. 288; Schroth, 2019, p. 5). This paper refers to the definition of the Pew Research Institute. It demarcates the Gen-Z between 1997 and 2012. (Dimock, 2019.)

When speaking of the Gen-Z, research often refers to synonyms such as "Post-Millennials" (Schroth, 2019, p. 6) and "Digital Natives" (Prensky, 2001, p. 2). The latter term already reflects that people belonging to that group grew up with technology and digital tools and were born into a world in which access to the Internet and social media determines the way they live and work. This shapes the Gen-Z's new style and spirit towards responsibility and leadership and influences the way organizations will operate and how they are led in the future. However, these changes lie also the foundation "to many organizational conflicts, particularly in the light of the intergenerational gap between managers and workers" (Lev, 2021, p. 108). This carries with it challenges towards human resource management (HRM) and corporate management and needs therefore "facilitating effort" (Lev, 2021, p. 108).

Generally, literature describes the Gen-Z as "the most diverse and purpose-driven generation" (Formanek, 2021, p. 29). Diversity is particularly seen in their racial and ethnic background – taking the United States as a reference (Fry & Parker, 2018). Growing up in a heterogeneous environment with almost unrestricted access to information, the Gen-Z is more open to different worldviews and therefore has a generally more positive and unbiased attitude towards diversity. This is confirmed especially by US literature. (Seemiller & Grace, 2016, p. 10.)

Work-life balance, mutual respect, appreciation by colleagues and honest leaders as well as a constructive feedback culture are important for the Gen-Z. They value work with flexibility regarding working hours and location and meaning in its operations. With their entrepreneurial spirit, they want to impact the world. Moreover, they usually prefer face-to-face communication with managers and co-workers over digital communication tools. (Bencsik et al., 2016, pp. 93–94; Gebhardt et al., 2015, p. 9; Lev, 2021, p. 109; Workplace Intelligence, 2014.)

Although the Gen-Z describes themselves as being loyal (Seemiller & Grace, 2016, p. 8), their commitment towards the workplace, respectively the employer is rather low and they are courageous enough to resign from their jobs whenever their expectations and work values are not met (Gebhardt et al., 2015, p. 9; Lev, 2021, p. 109; Pauli et al., 2020, p. 11). To motivate them, the Gen-Z appreciates rewards and the feeling of doing something significant by "making a difference for someone else" (Seemiller & Grace, 2016, p. 15). While the latter aspect is especially motivating women, men are rather motivated "by leaving a legacy, learning something, and competing with others" (Seemiller & Grace, 2016, p. 16). Apart from work happiness, a pleasant working atmosphere with team spirit, and continuous learning, financial remuneration is still an important factor for them (de Boer & Bordoloi, 2022, p. 379; Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015, pp. 479–480; Pauli et al., 2020, p. 14).

The Universum World's Most Attractive Employers study (2022, p. 9) with 185,067 business, engineering, and IT students from nine of the world's biggest economies questioned gives evidence for the latest trends in employer attractiveness. Young people are now rather focused on competitive salaries as well as high future earnings. In addition, also the importance of work-life balance and flexible working hours has risen. (Universum, 2022, p. 5.) Simultaneously, the need for challenging work is falling behind (Universum, 2022, p. 16). From the employer branding perspective, there has been a shift from focusing on purpose-driven performance towards emphasizing inclusivity regarding different mindsets or attitudes (Universum, 2022, p. 19).

However, as the research of Universum (2022) and de Boer and Bordoloi (2022) proves, it is important to remark that there are differences between work values depending on the underlying national culture. In addition, attitudes, characteristics, and preferences can vary from individual to

individuum, depending on, for example, educational or social background. (de Boer & Bordoloi, 2022, p. 381; Universum, 2022, p. 23.) Nevertheless, attributes such as the importance of a feedback culture, purposeful work, and the courage to resign from a job whenever it does not lead to satisfaction are found throughout most of the investigated studies.

Moreover, aspects such as the by Seemiller and Grace (2016, p. 8) mentioned Gen-Z's open-mindedness are essential virtues that build a profound base on the elaboration of WDM.

2.4 The concept of diversity and its dimensional scope

Generally, the term diversity summarizes various characteristics that make individuals differ from each other. However, there are many theories on how to define diversity more specifically and how to cluster the differentiating characteristics. (Yadav & Lenka, 2020a, p. 903.) This paragraph summarizes the most common categories.

2.4.1 The 'Big 8' of diversity

As mentioned in the key concept section, this thesis refers to the American 'Big 8' of diversity by Plummer (2003, p. 25). The corresponding dimensions can be described as follows:

Age: Refers to the age distribution. Due to demographic change and a shrinking labor supply, it is getting more common for people from different age groups to work together. (Jackson et al., 1995, p. 206.)

Ethnicity/nationality: The exact denotation of ethnicity differs from country to country. However, it is often associated with the respective minority people; in Europe usually designated as "ethnic minority" (Sadiq, 2019, p. 123). "In the United Kingdom, it is referred to as BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) or BME (Black Minority Ethnic); in America, the term 'people of colour' is used more often" (Sadiq, 2019, p. 123). Ethnicity/nationality forms cultural norms, holidays, idiom proficiency, or group affiliation (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2003, p. 41).

Gender: Is perceived as "a socio-cultural term that refers to the attributes and roles associated with being a woman or a man" (United States Agency International Development [USAID], 2018, p. 12). In addition, a third gender, the so-called non-binary identity has been developed over the past decades. It is often referred to individuals who assign themselves to neither being male nor female. (Cartwright & Nancarrow, 2022, p. 577.) While gender attributes can vary, sexual characteristics as physiological and biological attributes remain unchanged (Köllen, 2012, p. 146; USAID, 2018, p. 12).

Organizational role/function: Refers to one's position, its associated tasks, and experiences at the workplace. It is often based on functional level, level of seniority, work content, and location. (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2003, pp. 53–57.)

Race: Refers to "the origin, heritage, or ancestry" (Köllen, 2021, p. 262) of individuals. The demarcation of ethnicity is rather blurred (Köllen, 2021, p. 263).

Religion: Refers to one's faith or spiritual beliefs and the corresponding rules that guide them, the practiced rituals, and celebrated holidays (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2003, p. 46).

Sexual orientation: Distinguishes between same-sex sexual desire (homosexuality) and opposite-sex sexual desire (heterosexuality). The position in between is referred to as bisexuality which means that the desire can be addressed to the own sex or the other. Moreover, there are many more positions in between either rather directed towards homosexuality or heterosexuality or not to any specific sex. Every individual who differs from the 'norm' of heterosexuality is usually associated with the LGBTQI+ community. (Drescher, 2007, pp. 206–208; Köllen, 2012, p. 146.)

Mental/physical ability: Can refer to physical disabilities, like sitting in a wheelchair, dyslexia, and mental retardation (Sadiq, 2019, p. 124).

2.4.2 Visible and invisible characteristics

Diversity is divided into visible characteristics (age, ethnicity, race, gender, mental/physical ability) and invisible characteristics (nationality, organizational role/function, sexual orientation, religion) (Franken, 2015, pp. 22–23; Rahnfeld, 2019, p. 19).

Related denotations are observable and underlying attributes (Milliken & Martins, 1996, p. 416), surface-level and deep-level diversity (Harrison et al., 1998, pp. 97–98), primary and secondary dimensions (Loden & Rosener, 1991, as cited in Jabbour et al., 2011, p. 59) or high visibility and low visibility diversity attributes (Pelled, 1996, p. 617).

2.4.3 Four layers of diversity

This model by Gardenswartz and Rowe (2003) distinguishes between (i) the individual personality and (ii) the internal dimensions that cannot or are difficult to change, but shape what one expects or assumes (age, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, ethnicity, race). Moreover, there are (iii) the external and changeable dimensions (geographic location, income, personal habits, recreational habits, religion, educational background, work experience, appearance, parental status, marital status) and (iv) the organizational dimensions (functional level/classification, work content/field, division/department/units/group, seniority, work location, union affiliation, management status). (Franken, 2015, p. 23; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2003, pp. 32–33.)

2.4.4 Relations-oriented, task-oriented, readily detected, and underlying diversity

The following dimensional scope was summarized by Jackson and Joshi (2011), particularly in the context of workplace diversity. There are four distinctions:

Relations-oriented diversity refers to attributes (e.g., gender, age, personality characteristics) that shape relationships with others, but have no influence on task performance. Organizational tenure, experience, or cognitive abilities are summarized by task-oriented diversity as they may impact how one is executing tasks. Readily detected diversity (or surface-level diversity) is associated with characteristic differences among individuals of a team. They are easy to be perceived (e.g., age, gender, nationality). Lastly, there is underlying diversity (often called deep-level diversity). The attributes related to this category refer to one's personality, attitudes, or skills and can primarily be detected by personal interactions. (Jackson & Joshi, 2011, pp. 653–654.)

In the research of Singh and Point (2004, pp. 301–302) and also in the paper of Shen et al. (2009, p. 235), it is pointed out that the comprehension or the focus of diversity and its different dimensions usually differ depending on the underlying organization and country.

2.5 Approaches to diversity management

DM is a concept that evolves from the inside of an organization by creating a workplace culture of equality and inclusion (Gordon, 1995, as cited in Shen et al., 2009, p. 238). The main idea of DM is to make employees and leaders aware of an organization's heterogeneity as well as the different individual needs and potentials that originate from it. For that, certain measures and procedures are implemented to promote the benefits and reduce weaknesses WDM. The heterogenous peculiarities of individuals and groups are emphasized and now used as strategic resources. (Stotz & Wedel-Klein, 2013, p. 47.)

Various opinions exist about how to manage workplace heterogeneity effectively to foster mutual respect, acceptance as well as tolerance. Furthermore, theorists and practitioners have come up with various approaches how to enhance diversity benefits while mediating its challenges. This paragraph provides two concepts on how diversity and DM play together.

2.5.1 Three cases of diversity

The legal, moral-ethical, and economical/business summarize the three main reasons that explain why organizations turn towards DM (Merklein, 2017, p. 17):

Legal case: As addressed in chapter 2.2, there are universal rights and national laws that protect diversity and equal rights in the workplace. In this context, the main task of WDM is to make sure that organizations do not harm any of these legislations to prevent suits (Köllen, 2012, p. 144).

Moral-ethical case: Diversity is perceived as "a matter of fairness and justice" (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009, p. 9). It is strongly related to the corporate social responsibility (CSR) of organizations and aims to create a work environment based on equality and inclusion (Hofmann, 2016, p. 30).

Economical/business case: It results from a "utilitarian conviction" (van Dijk et al., 2012, p. 76). DM should build a framework so that diversity is managed in a way that economic advantages can be achieved. Organizations believe that diversity has a positive impact on factors such as financial performance, customer satisfaction, decision-making, or innovation (Formanek, 2021, p. 169). The aspects of equal treatment and prevention of discrimination become rather trivial (Franken, 2015, p. 112).

2.5.2 Three perspectives on workforce diversity

There are three strategic perspectives on workplace diversity and its management (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Thomas & Ely, 1996):

Integration-and-learning perspective/learning-and-effectiveness paradigm: The individual skills, experiences, and insights of employees can be valuable to rethink business processes, strategies, and practices to better achieve an organization's mission (Ely & Thomas, 2001, p. 240; Thomas & Ely, 1996, p. 80). Diversity is therefore seen as "a resource for learning and adaptive change" (Ely & Thomas, 2001, p. 240).

Access-and-legitimacy perspective: This perspective originates in the recognition of the culturally diverse markets and clients of an organization. Workplace diversity made up of especially heterogeneous cultural and ethical backgrounds of employees is primarily seen as a way to simplify the access to new markets and constituencies. Consequently, this perspective is often perceived as equivalent to the business case of diversity. (Ely & Thomas, 2001, p. 243; Thomas & Ely, 1996, pp. 83–84.)

Discrimination-and-fairness perspective: It arises from a moral conviction of justice and fair treatment of the overall society. Diversity initiatives focus "on providing equal opportunities in hiring and promotion, suppressing prejudicial attitudes, and eliminating discrimination" (Ely & Thomas, 2001, pp. 245–246). Culturally diverse teams and organizations should therefore be proof of fair and equal treatment of employees (Ely & Thomas, 2001, pp. 245–246; Thomas & Ely, 1996, p. 81).

2.6 Necessity, benefits, and challenges of workplace diversity management

Even though diversity and its management are necessary to combat differences and to prove an equal and inclusive work environment, many organizations are nevertheless still reluctant to

implement concrete measures as diversity is often perceived as a "double-edged sword" (Jackson & Joshi, 2011, p. 652) that brings next to benefits also challenges with it. This is also reflected in research which usually has led to mixed results. An effective DM can help to mediate both effects.

2.6.1 Necessity of workplace diversity management

There are plenty of developments why today's workforce is becoming more diverse. The following four reasons explain why effective DM is crucial to promote the positive outcomes of diversity.

In the first place, there is the development of globalization along with socio-cultural transformation and economic liberalization that leads to more diversity in organizations (Yadav & Lenka, 2020a, p. 901). Especially due to the development of the Internet, digitalization, faster transportation, and a global supply chain net, the number of foreign trade partners and a more culturally diverse customer base have emerged. The business world has become more interconnected globally and many local companies trade with foreign partners or have subsidiaries abroad. An exchange between employees of different locations or the sourcing of foreign workers has become the norm as many people (must) leave their home countries and search for new employment opportunities abroad. Managing diversity in this context means preparing employees to work in multicultural and socially heterogeneous teams.

The migration based on job perspectives is, however, also promoted by the "War for Talents" (Hansen & Hauff, 2019, p. 37) and organizations' approaches to sourcing globally to meet the demand for qualified workers despite a shrinking supply of the market. This leads consequently to more diversity in the workplace as people from other cultures or educational backgrounds are hired. DM can contribute to employer attraction on the one hand, and successful integration, on the other hand. (Merklein, 2017, p. 91.)

A reason for the aggravation of labor supply is demographic change which is also the third argument that leads to more diversity in organizations. The mixture of different ages and the corresponding values and attitudes pose challenges among employees. Consequently, DM has to act as a mediator. (Seliverstova & Pierog, 2021, p. 118.)

Lastly, there is the increasing relevance of legislative and compliance aspects that explain the necessity of DM. No matter if quotas or anti-discrimination laws, there is a rising number of national and international laws that aim at more equality and inclusion in the workplace. DM can also take over the task of supervising whether and how legal obligations are met within the organization. (Formanek, 2021, p. 164; Köllen, 2021, p. 261.)

To emphasize the above-mentioned reasons, there are also plenty of figures that prove the necessity of an adequate DM. WDM can be an important contributor to combating current gaps in, for

example, female representation, equal remuneration, or employment of people with disabilities. In the EU, for example, the gender employment gap in 2021 stood at 10.8%. Thus, women (67.7%) remained still underrepresented in comparison to men (78.5%). (European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2023, p. 60.) This gap is even more significant when looking at employment in part-time. In 2021, 28.3 % of employed women worked in a part-time position while men accounted for 7.6% (European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2023, p. 61). The disability employment gap remains almost at the same level since the beginning of its measurement in 2014. In 2021, it stood at 23%. (European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2023, p. 12.) Moreover, adding up to 13% in 2020, the gender pay gap did only improve a little over the last years (European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2023, p. 65).

That DM still needs more awareness and support by leaders proves a study among leaders and employees of DAX (German stock market index listed) enterprises. While employees have perceived a lack of DM, many executives have not been aware of it and thus have not noticed any urgency to implement it. They have rather assessed DM to be a task for the future. (Genkova & Schreiber, 2019, as cited in Genkova & Schreiber, 2022, p. 305.)

2.6.2 Benefits of workplace diversity management

If managed well, diversity comes with beneficial outcomes. Skimming through academic literature, one can derive a long list of benefits. The most important ones are highlighted in the following.

To begin with, the McKinsey & Company 'Delivering through Diversity Report' of 2018 delivers insights into the benefits of diversity (Hunt et al., 2018). The report refers to data from more than 1,000 companies located in 12 different countries. The data applied dates back to the period between December 2016 and November 2017. (Hunt et al., 2018, p. 35.)

Generally, it has been found a significant "relationship between diversity and business performance" (Hunt et al., 2018, p. 1). Especially diversity among the leadership positions matters: "Companies in the top-quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 21% more likely to outperform on profitability and 27% more likely to have superior value creation" (Hunt et al., 2018, p. 1). Moreover, the best-performing organizations "on both profitability and diversity had more women in line (i.e., typically revenue-generating) roles than in staff roles on their executive teams" (Hunt et al., 2018, p. 1).

Apart from gender diversity, it is also ethnic/cultural diversity that impacts profitability positively. "Companies in the top-quartile for ethnic/cultural diversity on executive teams were 33% more likely to have industry-leading profitability" (Hunt et al., 2018, p. 1).

Another study by Jabbour et al. (2011) with 15 large, typical Brazilian companies of different sectors has revealed a couple more diversity benefits (Jabbour et al., 2011, p. 63). The organization's HR managers have highlighted aspects such as increased motivation, creativity, and innovation, more mutual respect and social cohesion leading to better interpersonal relationships and a decreasing employee turnover as well as positive impacts on the company image by clients and investors (Jabbour et al., 2011, pp. 70–71).

2.6.3 Challenges of workplace diversity management

Apart from the benefits, it is however also necessary to mention that WDM does not come without challenges. By reviewing 40 years of diversity research, Williams and O'Reilly (1998, p. 120) have concluded that under ideal circumstances, diversity could have positive effects. In reality, however, it is more likely that diversity "impede[s] group functioning" (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998, p. 120).

This claim can be explained by the research on social categorization (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1987) or social identification theory (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Turner, 1982, as cited in Williams & O'Reilly, 1998, p. 83) as well as the similarity attraction paradigm (Berscheid & Walster, 1978, as cited in Williams & O'Reilly, 1998, p.5; Byrne, 1971, as cited in Williams & O'Reilly, 1998, p. 85). Social categorization and social identification theory suggest that people categorize themselves into social groups depending on attributes such as gender, ethnicity, or organizational membership and use those categories to delineate themselves (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998, pp. 83–84). This forms inner and outer groups as well as biases (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998, p. 89). The similarity attraction theory gives an explanation of how diversity can now negatively impact an organization. It suggests that individuals feel more comfortable interacting and working with other individuals that are like them (e.g., similar values or attributes). In consequence, every individual with different values or attributes might feel less integrated into such a rather homogenous work group. This leads to lower commitment or satisfaction, even turning into a higher turnover rate. (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998, p. 85; Yadav & Lenka, 2020b, p. 586.)

Referring to the already mentioned study among Brazilian companies (Jabbour et al., 2011), there are also major challenges listed that HR managers face in diversity and its management. Generally, the potential of diversity is often underestimated, and managers are confronted with resistance. Furthermore, there is the threat of discrimination and conflicts based on jokes, provocations, or different opinions related to race, religion, or sex. (Jabbour et al., 2011, pp. 67–68.) In literature, this is also known as the social cognitive theory. It occurs when people are categorized by

visible characteristics to easily sort and process data. This, however, favors the rise of stereotypes and discrimination. (Bright et al., 2019, pp. 392–393.)

Lastly, it can be added that it is challenging for organizations to find a balance between approving advantages to minority groups without losing the support of the majority group in the workplace. DM must therefore find an equilibrium considering both interest groups. (Merklein, 2017, p. 21.)

2.7 Process of an effective diversity management

Literature lists several steps to ensure successful DM. The following paragraphs summarize the most important aspects as an entry point for the evolution of fortunate DM.

As a first step, it is recommendable to gather data about the current organization's diversity status and to analyze present HR diversity measures. The heterogeneous personnel itself should be included in this process. From that, potential cultural barriers or any levels of unfairness or resistance can be derived. (Franken, 2015, p. 64; Shen et al., 2009, p. 242.)

Next, a corporate vision and mission as well as goals towards diversity should be articulated. These should preferably be implemented in the organizational strategy and be supported by the top management level. (Franken, 2015, pp. 64–65; Hunt et al., 2018, p. 27; Kundu et al., 2015, p. 122.) Particularly HRM should act as a role model by "exhibiting exemplary behaviors" (Jabbour et al., 2011, p. 60).

Followed by the analysis and the set objectives, consistent, but tailor-made DM initiatives can be introduced. These initiatives should be adapted to specific circumstances within the organization and the outside setting (e.g., geographic location, socio-cultural context). (Hunt et al., 2018, p. 28.) Furthermore, they should be based on the three pillars of pre- and aftercare services (e.g., parental leave, retirement, health care), support offers in professional life (e.g., counseling, mentoring) as well as the exchange of information and knowledge (e.g., training, talks) (Merklein, 2017, p. 70).

As a last step follows the evaluation of the DM's effectiveness and efficiency (Franken, 2015, p. 65). Pre-defined key performance indicators (KPIs) can help with the assessment.

2.8 Implications for HRM

WDM is often seen as a task of an organization's HRM. Greenwood (2002, p. 261) critically defines HRM as "the effective management of people to achieve organisational goals." According to her, the term 'management' is in this context just applied as a euphemism for the term 'use' (Greenwood, 2002, p. 261). In an organization, it is important to manage diversity in a way so that it is not perceived as "[h]ard' HRM, where employees are viewed instrumentally as a means to achieve organisational goals" (Greenwood, 2002, p. 268).

Researchers approve the strong interconnection between HRM and DM and that customized HR strategies (e.g., organizational learning, knowledge creation, flexibility) contribute to effective DM (Shen et al., 2009, p. 237). As Shen et al. (2009, p. 237) bring it to the point: "Diversity management has a place in HRM and should be at the heart of human resource practices and policies."

Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2017) list six key functions of HRM including selection and recruitment plans, performance assessment, development of the human resource, establishing a system of penalties and rewards, encouraging the participation of employees, and ensuring the well-being of employees (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhardt & Wright, 2017, as cited in Nweiser & Dajnoki, 2022, p. 19). Especially in the selection and recruitment process HRM and DM must interplay "as selecting people of different backgrounds related to the different aspects of diversity [...] is the basis of having a diverse workforce in the organisation" (Nweiser & Dajnoki, 2022, p. 20). Moreover, penalties and rewards have to be identical among gender or ethical backgrounds to keep up the motivation among employees (Nweiser & Dajnoki, 2022, p. 21). It must also be considered that different generations set distinct priorities for their work. According to a study conducted by Towers Perrin (2003), employees aged between 18 and 29 years typically value base salary, variable pay, and company shares the most, while employees aged between 30 and 44 typically value medical aid, base salary, and deferred remuneration. Employees aged between 45 and 54 years are thought to view base salary, deferred remuneration, and retirement funding as important while employees of 55 years or older value retirement funding and base salary equally together with medical aid. (Towers Perrin, 2003, as cited in Pregnolato et al., 2017, p. 3.)

Moreover, the reflection of diversity grows in importance also in the employer branding of organizations. The positive relationship between portraying heterogeneity in an organization's advertisements and the recruitment of job seekers from minority groups has already been proven by the research of Perkins and Thomas (2000, p. 248).

Another major implication of HRM towards DM is to build suitable frameworks that pave the way for DM acceptance among employees and support among leadership positions by stressing the individual's needs rather than focusing on the organization's self-interest. Jabbour et al. (2011) specifically highlight HR departments to be "the most relevant area to manage diversity" (Jabbour et al., 2011, p. 59). Since HRM as people management cares about the interpersonal relationships within an organization, HRM must recognize and control any employee behaviors that could hurt DM measures (Jabbour et al., 2011, p. 67). A diversity approach is vital to guarantee equal, fair, and inclusive conditions for applicants and employees.

3 Research methods

This chapter justifies the research method applied, introduces the research design, and describes how the data was collected. Moreover, it encompasses a description of the underlying population and sample as well as considers the research reliability.

3.1 Research method

Literature like Creswell and Creswell (2018, p. 3) lists three general approaches to research: (i) quantitative, (ii) qualitative, and (iii) mixed methods.

Quantitative research is characterized by using numbers rather than words as well as "closed-ended questions and responses (quantitative hypotheses)" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 3). It is applied when the relationship between variables is examined to test theories. The numerical data of quantitative research is usually analyzed by statistical measures. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 4.)

Qualitative research, in comparison, constitutes words over numbers and involves "open-ended questions and responses (qualitative interview questions)" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 3). It tries to explore and understand complex problems (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 4). As researchers are strongly involved in the data collection phase by, for example, conducting interviews and interpreting the information given, the qualitative research increases, however, the potential for biases and distortion. Shaped evaluations will consequently decrease the reliability of the research results. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp. 183–184.) Moreover, the qualitative data analysis process involves a more extensive procedure. Protocolling, summarizing, coding, and interpretation are much more time-consuming for qualitative than for quantitative research. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp. 190–199.) The limited time frame for completing this Bachelor's thesis thus delimits the reliability and accuracy needed for the analysis of qualitative research. Furthermore, as this research topic aims at providing a rather general overview of the topic, the few but probably extensive results from qualitative research might not meet the researcher's claim of validity and reliability.

Whenever research encompasses elements of both research methods, one refers to mixed methods research. Combining quantitative and qualitative research provides further insights into a research topic. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 4.) Literature suggests that with mixed methods research individual occurring biases in quantitative and qualitative research neutralize potentially biased results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 14). It contributes to a more extensive understanding of the research topic's findings and would provide the opportunity to compare the perspectives derived from qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 216). However, for the

well as related concepts and theories were investigated. The goal was to become familiar with the scope of the topic and to reveal the current state of past research findings as well as persisting deficits in academic research. From the derived findings, the initial underlying RQ for this thesis could be affirmed, and the corresponding IQs were adopted.

In the second step, the quantitative research in the form of an online survey for the RQ and its IQs was prepared (Appendix 1). Before sending out the survey to the actual target group, a sidestep for editing, elaboration, and testing was added. The questionnaire was elaborated together with the help of the thesis advisor and additionally tested concerning cohesion and spelling mistakes by sending it out to friends. After the editing process and another round of testing and feedback from family and friends, the online survey was finally spread.

As a last step, after a period of three weeks, the questionnaire was closed and the answers were finally analyzed, summarized, and illustrated by using SPSS and Excel.

3.3 Population and sampling

The population of the research encompasses the Gen-Z which is referred to people born between 1997 and 2015 in this thesis. The population is not further delimited by aspects such as nationality, educational background, or work experience. No official statistics have been found that measure how many people belong to the Gen-Z global population. A report by OC&C Strategy Consultants (2019, p. 3) mentioned an estimation of at least 33% of the world population that belongs to the Gen-Z. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2022, p. 5) estimated the world population to amount to around 7,942 million people in 2022. This would result in around 2,620.86 million Post-Millennials.

To be able to draw conclusions from the conducted research on the population, the sampling method was applied. It "is a procedure to select a limited number of units from a population in order to describe this population" (Saris & Gallhofer, 2014, p. 9). Together with the thesis advisor, it was agreed to reach a minimum of 100 survey participants to be able to draw significant research results.

To derive a proper sample from the population, a sampling frame was constructed (Saris & Gallhofer, 2014, p. 9). Table 2 summarizes the identified sample units that could contribute to the sample:

Table 2. Sampling frame with sample units

Near	Distant
Family, friends, and acquaintances	People from Internet forums
Professional network based on contacts from work, voluntary commitment, and study program	People based on other participants' private and professional network
Fellow students of the International Business B.Sc. study program of ESB Business School	

The main aspect of the sample was the participants' year of birth, respectively their current age. Generally, the definition of Gen-Z in this thesis results in an age frame between 8 and 26 years. However, it was considered that to derive significant results for the in this thesis underlying RQ, the lower age limit must be adapted. It was assumed that for pupils aged 8 or slightly older, the questions asked might turn out to be too difficult and sophisticated to properly query and answer them. Moreover, they might not be able to contribute any insightful ideas about diversity and its related concepts as they do not yet have any clear understanding about work life, nor do they demand any specific requirements towards their future job and employer yet. In consequence, for the sample, the lower year of birth limit was adapted to the year 2005, making the youngest possible participant 17, respectively 18 years old. This borderline was taken as in many countries the age of 18 is the point in time when teenagers turn into legal adulthood. They have finished their primary education and are now starting either to have their first real work experience or continue their educational process at university. Moreover, in many countries, the age of 18 brings with it more rights and obligations that are subject to the assumption that individuals have now the necessary and adequate knowledge and capability to weigh their decisions made.

The respondents were chosen by non-probability sampling which is defined as "the probability of an element being selected is unknown" (Scherbaum & Shockley, 2015, p. 23). To multiply the number of people reached, first-level participants were asked to forward the research survey to their Gen-Z network and preferably to the corresponding pre-defined year of birth frame. This approach is denoted by literature as snowball sampling method. (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 141.)

3.4 Data collection

For the quantitative research method, survey research was found to be a suitable data collection tool. It delivers statistically significant results for a time-limited research period based on "rapid turnaround in data collection" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 149). A survey can be spread

comparably easily, and the descriptive questions can be answered in a less time-consuming way. Therefore, an online questionnaire that comprised questions related to the in chapter 1.2 listed IQs was designed. Most of the questions derived were quantitative. Only one question turned out to be qualitative as it was an open-ended question. The survey was designed by Webropol. This tool was applied for two reasons: Firstly, the researcher had already experience using this tool. Secondly, the researcher's university provided a support service for this software.

To address as many people as possible with a relatively low administrative workload, the questionnaire was spread online and digitally through the following channels:

1. Social Media (WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn)
2. Intranet (Slack channel of the researcher's workplace, Microsoft Teams channel of ESB Student Consulting)
3. Mailings (Round mail within the International Business study program at ESB Business School)
4. Online forums (e-fellows.net community, SurveyCircle)

All in all, 136 people participated in the online survey that was designed for this research topic. Among them were 21 people who did not belong to the desired target group of people born between 1997 and 2005. Moreover, one person did not answer the survey completely. That led to a final number of $n=114$ participants.

The data collection encompassed a period starting from 3rd April 2023 until 23rd April 2023. During the data collection process, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured.

3.5 Reliability and validity

Reliability is an important aspect when performing research. It refers in quantitative research "to the consistency, stability, and repeatability of results" (Mohajan, 2017, p. 67). That means that in identical situations, the research results obtained should always be similar. In addition, the validity of the results should be assured. Validity itself describes the accuracy of results from the researcher's, reader's, or research participant's standpoint (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 199). In terms of validity, one distinguishes between internal and external validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp. 169–171; Mills et al., 2010). The latter is also usually known as generalizability. It indicates how well the findings of the study sample can be transferred to other similar populations and contexts. (Mills et al., 2010.) Internal validity, in contrast, concerns the derivation of a cause-and-effect relationship. Inferences that are derived from the research data to the population should not be affected by aspects such as the treatment or experience of study participants. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp. 169–170; Mills et al., 2010.) This chapter explains to what extent the requirements of reliability and validity are met for the research of this thesis.

The level of reliability and validity was promoted by applying the quantitative research method in the form of an online survey. The data was collected based on numeric measurements which ensured more objective results (Aityan, 2022, p. 420). The participants were able to answer the questionnaire independently of the researcher's observation. As the researcher was not directly (face-to-face) confronted with the survey participants, the risk of potential personal researcher's (un)conscious biases has additionally been limited. On the other hand, it facilitated the reach of a higher number of research participants and a more heterogenous group of respondents as the survey could be easily spread online. An additional high level of anonymity and confidentiality, which was ensured throughout the survey, encouraged the participants to answer truthfully (Aityan, 2022, p. 353). No data item could be traced back to any of the participants. All these factors balanced potential biases in the sample and led to generally more significant reliable and valid research results to be drawn onto the population.

Furthermore, in the following chapters, the research results will be explained and analyzed in a detailed as well as critical way. The conclusions drawn from it will be made transparently and clearly to guarantee an as high as possible level of reliability. Like this, potential delimitations in terms of validity will be openly discussed.

Nevertheless, one must highlight that also this underlying quantitative research comes along with limitations in terms of reliability and validity. In the following, three categories that might delimit this research are explained:

1. Sample size

Although the set sample size of a minimum of 100 participants was reached, the final sample size still limits the conclusions that can be drawn from the sample to the population. Out of the 136 participants, 22 must stay unconsidered as they were not born between 1997 and 2005 or did not fill out the survey completely. That left a final sample size of 114 people. Due to this small number, it was restricted to dividing the sample into further sub-groups to investigate possible correlations or differences between, for example, gender or nationality as statistically significant results could not be guaranteed.

2. Age frame

Although this thesis aims to analyze the Gen-Z's (born between 1997 and 2012) expectations towards diversity and diversity management, the survey itself was only targeted to people born between and including 1997 and 2005. The reason lay in the survey questions which requested a certain level of understanding of diversity and workplace environment. Moreover, it should be ensured to only address a target group of young professionals and young adults who recently have joined or are about to enter the labor market a short time from now.

Moreover, with 21 people being 22 years old and 26 people being 23 years old, there is also a bi-ased skewness in age distribution within the target group.

3. Sampling method and resulting biases

For this research, a special form of non-probability sampling named convenience sampling was applied (Scherbaum & Shockley, 2015). Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method that is characterized by "sample elements that are readily available in a given context" (Scherbaum & Shockley, 2015). For this underlying research, it referred to the researcher's peers that were relatively easy to reach as well as the sharing of the survey in online forums that were easily accessible. This approach enabled the researcher to gather data relatively comfortably without too much administrative effort. However, this sampling method also boosted the likelihood of biases (Scherbaum & Shockley, 2015).

There are at least three biased tendencies that should be further explained in the following:

1. Educational background

First of all, the respondents reached have a clear tendency towards a business-related educational background striving for a university degree in business or management. This can be explained by the researcher's International Business study background and spreading the survey among her peer group.

2. Experience background

Related to the previous point, it must be mentioned that due to convenience sampling and the majority of people reached still being students, the number of participants with actual work experience or background is relatively small. This reduces the liability to derive any conclusions about whether there are differences in the attitude and needs towards DM regarding the educational background or current work status.

3. Nationality

Although it was tried to spread the survey among internationals, the final data reflects with a share of 80.7%, a majority of participants of German nationality (Chapter 4.1). This might be a good approach to represent the German labor market, however, it limits the reliability to draw conclusions to a global population.

4 Results

This section encompasses the results from the quantitative research for this thesis. It discusses the findings and draws connections to the theoretical framework. It is subdivided into a demographics chapter which is followed by four chapters in which the results of each IQ will be analyzed.

4.1 Demographics

Derived from the survey's target group, the participants' ages ranged between 17 and 26 years. The average age amounted to 22.2 years. (Appendix 2.)

69.3% of the survey participants were female, and 28.9% were male. Less than 1% indicated to be non-binary. (Appendix 3.)

84.2% of all participants were currently living in Germany (Appendix 4). The survey reached 16 different nationalities. However, the major group of 80.7% was of German nationality (Figure 2).

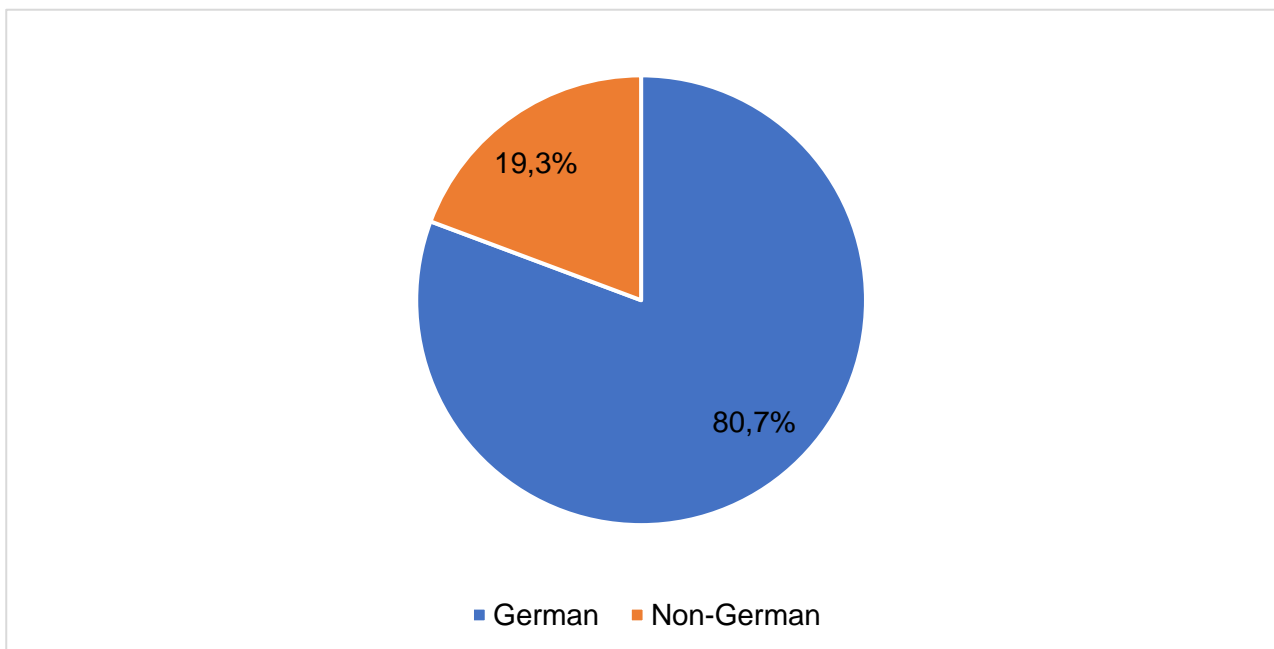


Figure 2. Respondents' nationality (n=114)

These results can be explained by the fact that the survey was mainly spread throughout a Germany-based network.

With 72.8%, most of the people questioned were students with primary economic or law study backgrounds (40.2%) (Appendix 5; Appendix 6). Half of all students were currently working; the other half did not pursue any work (Appendix 5). Most people who indicated that they were working pursued a job in the field of economics or administration (25.7%) (Appendix 7). The high

percentage of students, especially ones with economic background, and young adults working in the economy and administration area, can be justified by the sources used to spread the questionnaire. The primary string of data collection encompassed students, especially those with an International Business background.

4.2 Gen-Z's familiarity with the concept of diversity

Exactly half of the people questioned associated diversity with tolerance, inclusiveness, and openness (Figure 3).

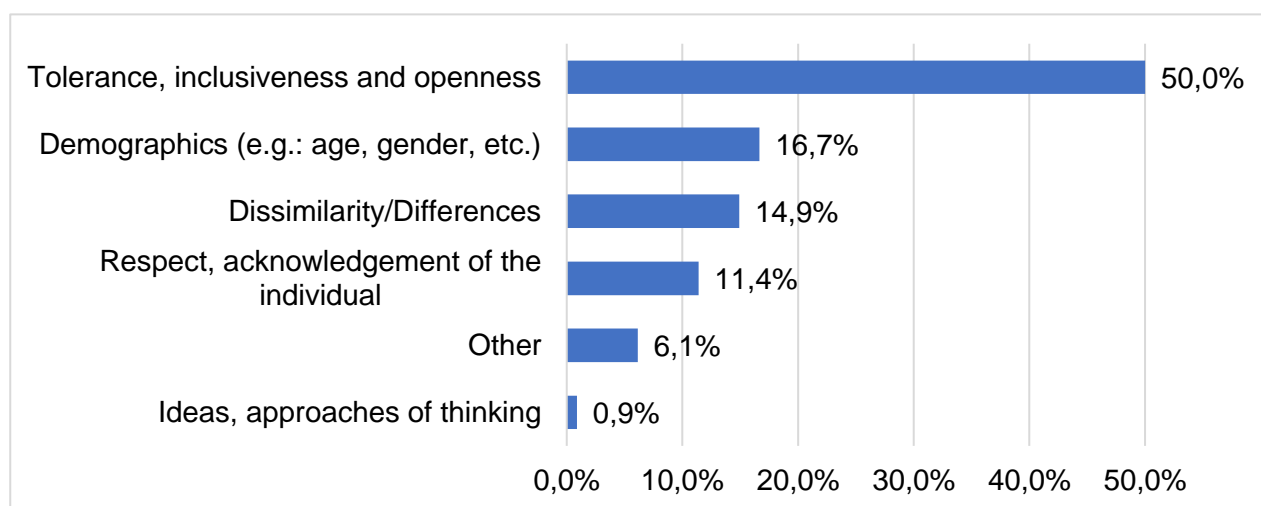


Figure 3. Associations with the term 'Diversity' (n=114)

In academic research, these are also common aspects mentioned, usually applied in the HRM context of diversity and DM objectives (Chapter 2.8). The main associations towards the definition of diversity, however, focus on visible or invisible differences of individuals and their resulting uniqueness. This might include dimensions such as demographics but can also encompass other aspects like personality characteristics or social background depending on the underlying definition and scope of diversity. (Chapter 2.4.1; Chapter 2.4.2; Chapter 2.4.3; Chapter 2.4.4.)

When asked about their familiarity with the terms DM, DD, and diversity, the research shows that the people questioned were most familiar with the latter one. Almost everyone has already heard of diversity and 94.8% felt capable of giving a (somewhat) correct definition of it. The least familiar were the young adults with the concept of DD. To one-third, the term was unknown. An additional 31.6% have heard of DD but could not explain it. The term DM was not known to 33.3% of the respondents. 26.3% indicated that they could not give any correct explanation. (Appendix 8.)

A justification of the above-mentioned distribution is given by the survey questions 4, 5, and 6. According to the quantitative research, the respondents' study and educational background were one

of the main reasons for their familiarity with the three terms. For DD, it accounted for 43.4%. The context of leisure (36.8%) and advertisement (30.3%) were additionally rated high. DM was often come across in the field of studies/education (52.6%) as well as at the workplace (46.1%). Diversity itself is a term heard in advertisement (82.3%), studies/education (81.4%), and leisure (72.6%). (Figure 4.)

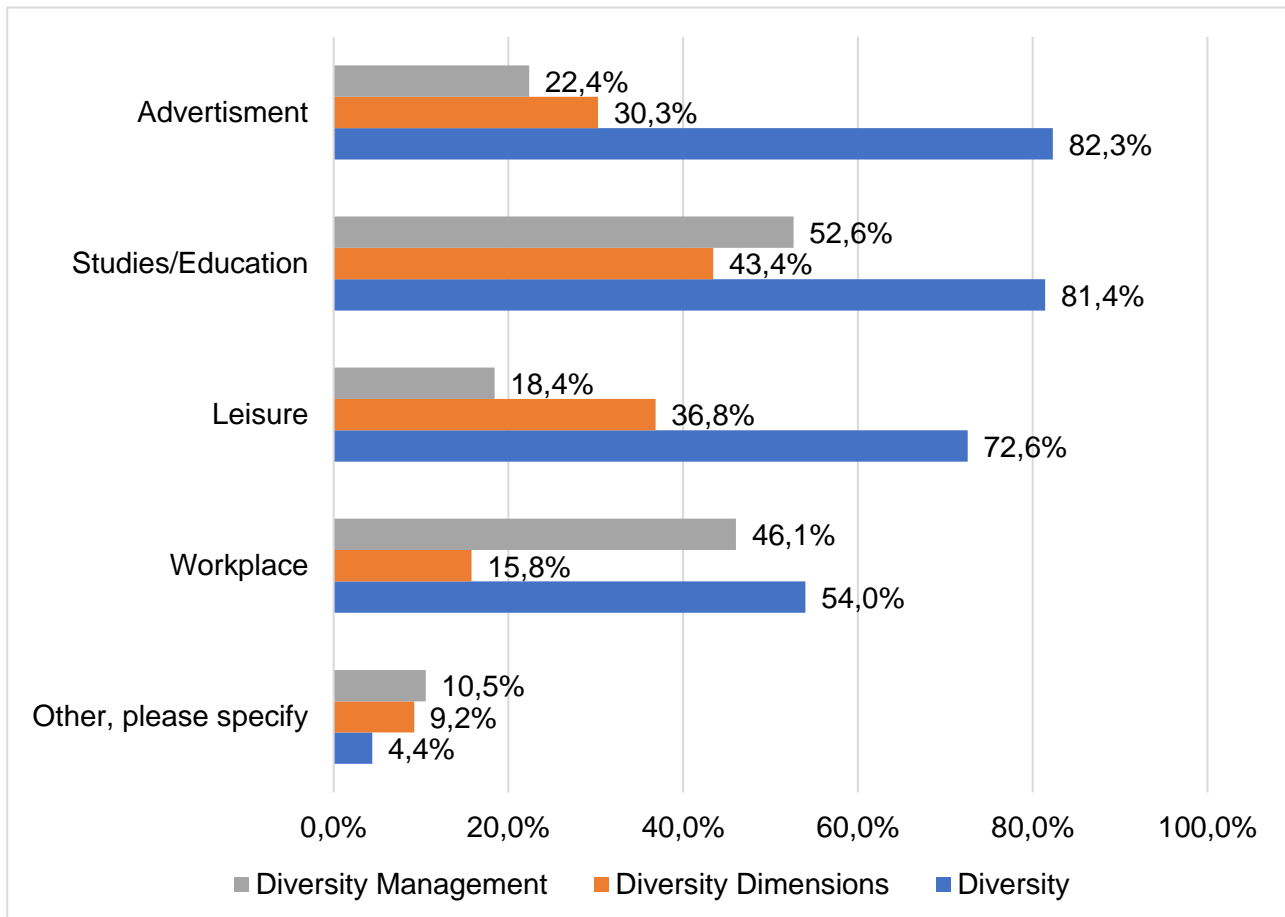


Figure 4. Context of familiarity of 'Diversity', 'Diversity Dimensions', and 'Diversity Management' (n'Diversity'=333; n'Diversity Dimensions'=103; n'Diversity Management'=114)

The study/educational aspect refers to the fact that many study participants were currently students with a background in economics and law (Chapter 4.1). Especially in business or economic studies, diversity and its management are often mentioned as a subtopic as part of HRM (Chapter 2.8). Law students might come across diversity while working with equal opportunities legislations or lawsuits related to discrimination and unequal treatment (Chapter 2.2). However, these laws or diversity guidelines are nowadays also commonly discussed and applied in public. Moreover, many participants might be fellow students of the researcher's study subject of International Business. In this context, diversity is much more experienced and present, for example through exchange semesters or group project assignments in culturally diverse teams.

That especially diversity and DD are concepts, the respondents came across very often in leisure and advertisement relates to the fact that diversity is nowadays much more discussed and represented in society and politics as well as (social) media which can be more easily accessed through progresses in digitalization. Incidents and resulting movements starting from the American civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s and being continued with recent #Black Lives Matter or #MeToo demonstrations raise awareness of challenges that arise if diversity is not properly managed. Although the marketing and sales side of diversity is outside the scope of this thesis, the research results additionally proved that diversity concepts are an effective tool for (product) marketing and (employer) branding purposes to sustainably address and sustain a larger target group. Additionally, globalization and internationalization have promoted the diversification of society and its dimensional scope of it, for example, in the context of race and nationality (Chapter 2.6.1). Lastly, DM has been attributed more importance at the workplace, often initiated by HRM. Businesses do not only manage diversity for ethical reasons, but also the benefits of a diversified workforce on business success are now more attractive for them. (Chapter 2.5.1; Chapter 2.5.2; Chapter 2.6.1; Chapter 2.6.2; Chapter 2.8.)

For the comparably rather low knowledge of DD and DM, there might be two reasons. One explanation is the fact that in public discourses diversity is often discussed as a closed concept associated with the most obviously differentiating aspects of gender, ethnicity, and age. The whole extent of diversity and its much more numerous DD would often go beyond the scope of public discussion and understanding. DM in contrast is a technical term in the field of HRM or corporate management. Therefore, it is rather seldom applied and heard by non-experts.

4.3 Gen-Z's attitudes towards diversity at the workplace

With a mean of $x=4.03$ (1=Very negative, 2=Somewhat negative, 3=Neutral, 4=Somewhat positive, 5=Very positive), the respondents assessed their personal attitude towards diversity at the workplace positively (Appendix 9). 43.9% even indicated having a very positive personal attitude. An additional 29.8% stated to have a somewhat positive attitude. (Appendix 11.) This positive standpoint correlates with the findings in the literature mentioned in chapter 2.3. They state that the Gen-Z's grow-up in the contemporary most diverse generation based on their unrestricted access to information results in a more positive and unbiased attitude towards diversity.

A similar positive picture can be derived from the respondents' assessment of their personal experience towards diversity in the workplace. Although with a mean of $x=2.88$ (1=Very negative, 2=Somewhat negative, 3=Somewhat positive, 4=Very positive), the experience seems worse than the personal attitude, still 78.1% of people with past or current work experience voted for a

somewhat or very positive personal experience (Appendix 11; Appendix 12). One reason for the lower mean can also be explained by the fact that there was no 'Neutral' option to choose from.

Insightful findings are additionally derived by comparing the means (1=Very negative, 2=Somewhat negative, 3=Neutral, 4=Somewhat positive, 5=Very positive) of the attitude towards diversity depending on the variables of nationality and gender. It resulted in female and non-German respondents expressing a more positive attitude. (Appendix 9.) Due to small sample sizes for the variables 'male' (n=33) and 'non-German' (n=22), the statistical significance was verified by applying Nonparametric Tests (Appendix 9; Appendix 13; Appendix 14). The Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test was performed on a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ to compare the means of gender. The results show that female respondents had a significantly more positive personal attitude towards diversity ($p=0.007$) with a mean of $x=4.25$ than their male counterparts with a mean of $x=3.45$. (Appendix 9; Appendix 13.) To compare the means of nationality, the Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test was executed on a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$. The outcome indicated that non-Germans perceived diversity more positively ($p=0.006$) with a mean of $x=4.59$ than Germans did with a mean of $x=3.89$. (Appendix 9; Appendix 14; Appendix 13.)

As mentioned above, the Gen-Z's attitude and experience towards diversity are positive and the Post-Millennials themselves are seen as the most diverse generation as indicated by Formanek (2021, p. 29) in chapter 2.3. However, the visibility of diversity has not yet arrived in the workplace. With 72.8%, the Gen-Z respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that many workplaces do not yet reflect the diversity that is present in today's society (Figure 5).

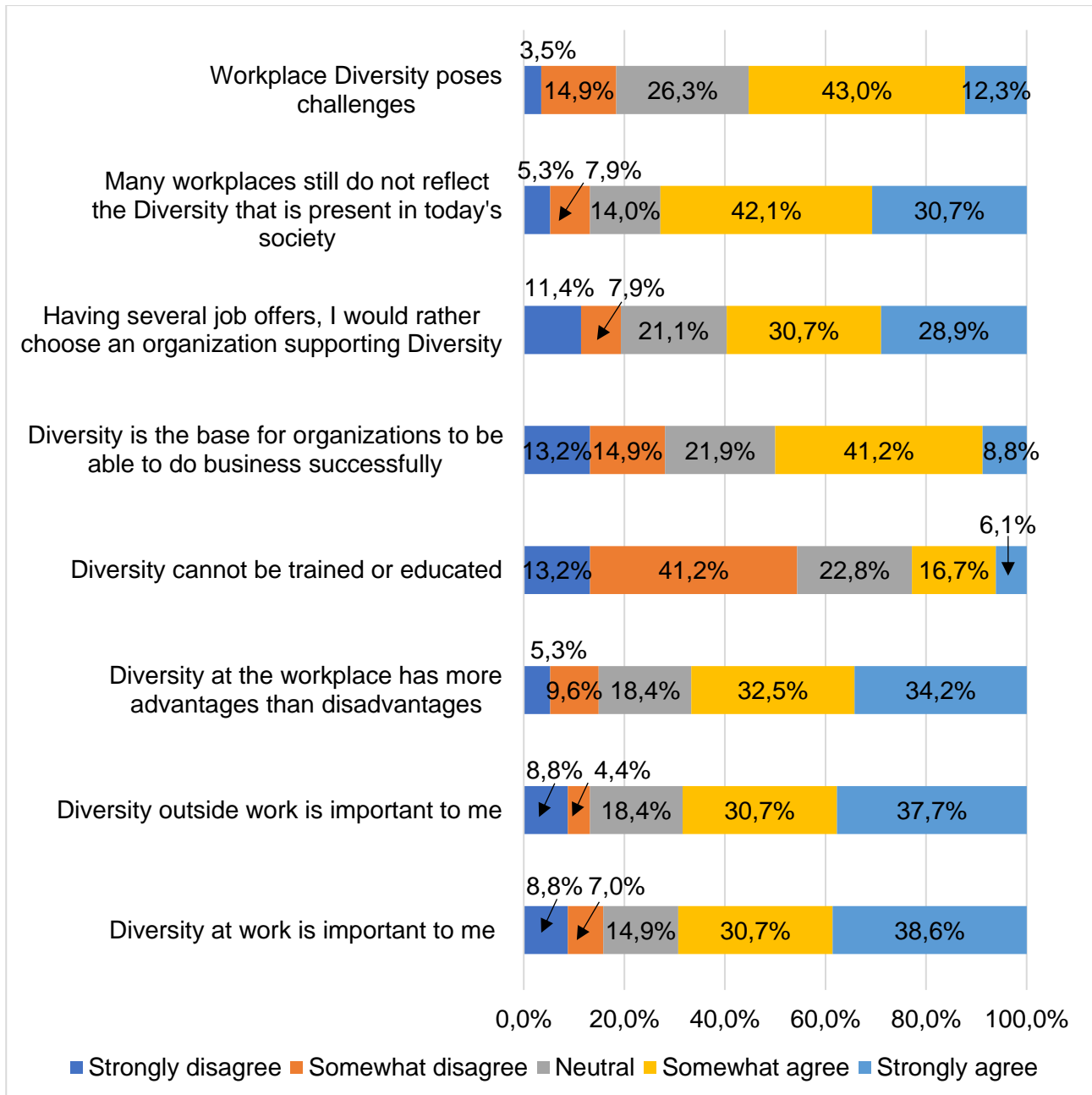


Figure 5. Distribution of personal agreement level on diversity statements (n=114)

This perception is also proven by studies such as the one by the European Commission (2023, p. 60) mentioned in chapter 2.6.1 which discusses the gender and disability employment gap as well as the female underrepresentation in the workplace.

That more effort and investment in diversity might be beneficial is also underlined by the Gen-Z respondents of this research. Half of them agreed that diversity is the base for organizations to be able to do business successfully and 66.7% associated diversity at the workplace with more advantages than disadvantages (Figure 5). In chapter 2.5.1 and chapter 2.5.2, approaches like the business case of diversity, the learning-and-effectiveness paradigm, or the access-and-legitimacy

perspective show that diversity can lead to economic advantages, can improve business processes, or can simplify access to and settling in foreign markets. Altogether, diversity consequently can indeed contribute to businesses' success. In addition, chapter 2.6.2 addressed many benefits of diversity. However, with the challenges mentioned in chapter 2.6.3, diversity can also bring disadvantages. In fact, in literature, there is no common opinion on whether diversity is more advantageous or disadvantageous. The consequences usually depend on individual commitment and management.

The young adults' importance towards diversity was addressed both in the workplace (69.3%) and outside the work context (68.4%). For 59.6% of them, diversity could even be an argument to decide for a certain employer if there was a choice between several job offers. (Figure 5.)

For both statements, there were differences to be detected in the means (1=Strongly disagree, 2=Somewhat disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Somewhat agree; 5=Strongly agree) depending on the variables nationality and gender. Diversity at work was more important for women ($x=4.15$) than for men ($x=3.06$) (Appendix 15). The same applies to non-Germans whose mean of $x=4.41$ exceeded the mean of people with German nationality ($x=3.70$) (Appendix 16). When it comes to diversity as a reason to decide on a certain employer, females ($x=3.87$) and non-Germans ($x=4.36$) addressed more importance to it than males ($x=2.91$) and Germans ($x=3.39$) did (Appendix 15; Appendix 16). As the number of respondents for the variable male ($n=33$) and respectively non-German ($n=22$) was relatively small, the statistical significance of the results was approved by applying Nonparametric Tests on a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ (Appendix 15; Appendix 16; Appendix 17; Appendix 18). The Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test was performed to compare the means of gender. The results showed that female respondents addressed significantly higher importance to diversity at work ($p<0.001$) and diversity as a reason to decide on a certain employer ($p<0.001$) than their male counterparts. (Appendix 17.) To compare the means across nationality, the Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test was applied. The outcome proved that non-Germans addressed significantly more importance to diversity at work ($p=0.008$) and when deciding on a certain employer ($p=0.001$) than Germans did. (Appendix 18.)

However, when the participants were asked about their 1-3 most important aspects at the workplace, diversity & inclusion rather played a subordinate role with 18.4%. The highest importance was assigned to an attractive salary and (non-)financial benefits (63.2%), work-life balance (62.3%), and supportive colleagues/management (40.4%). (Figure 6.)

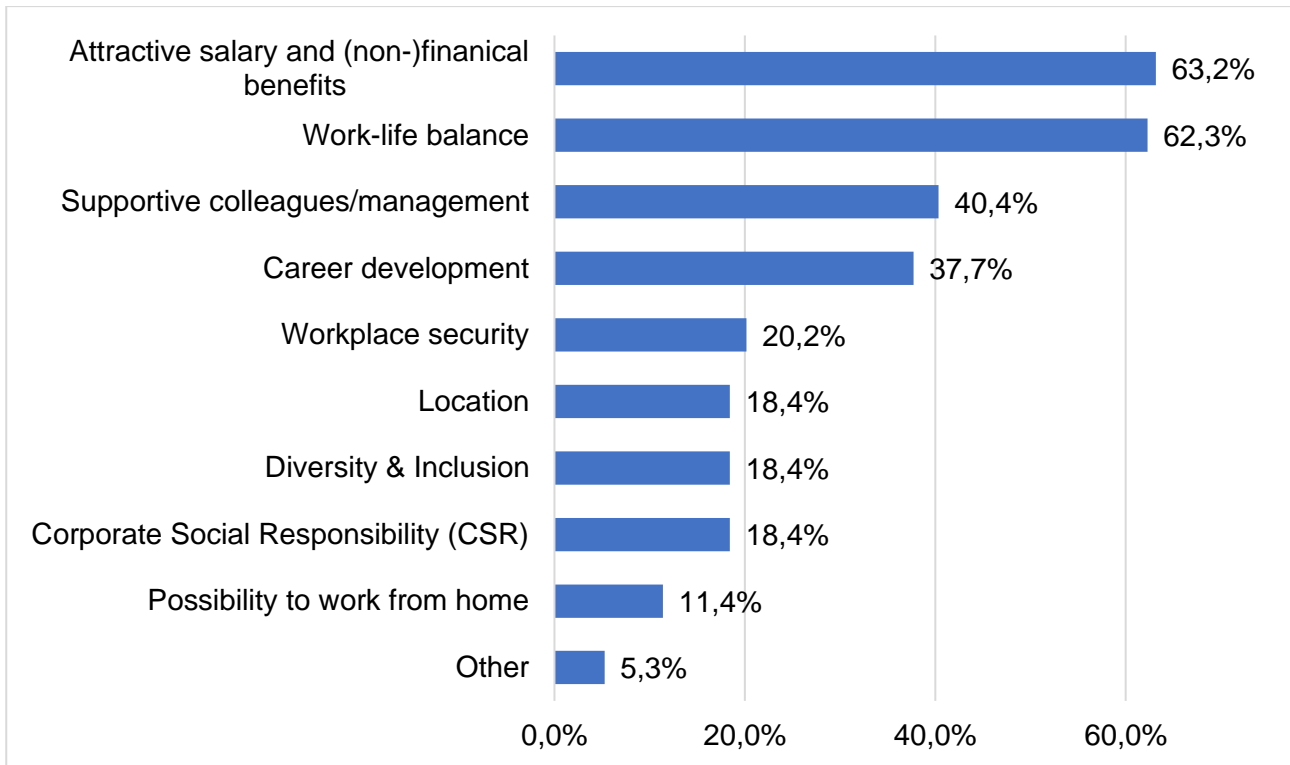


Figure 6. The 1-3 most important aspects at the workplace (n=337)

This confirms the study findings of Universum (2022, p. 5) mentioned in chapter 2.3 in which competitive salaries, high future earnings, work-life balance, and flexible working hours were perceived as essentials for employer attractiveness.

Being asked about their 1-3 most important DD, the research showed that diversity was especially important concerning gender (57.9%), ethnicity/nationality (51.8%) as well as age (46.5%) (Figure 7).

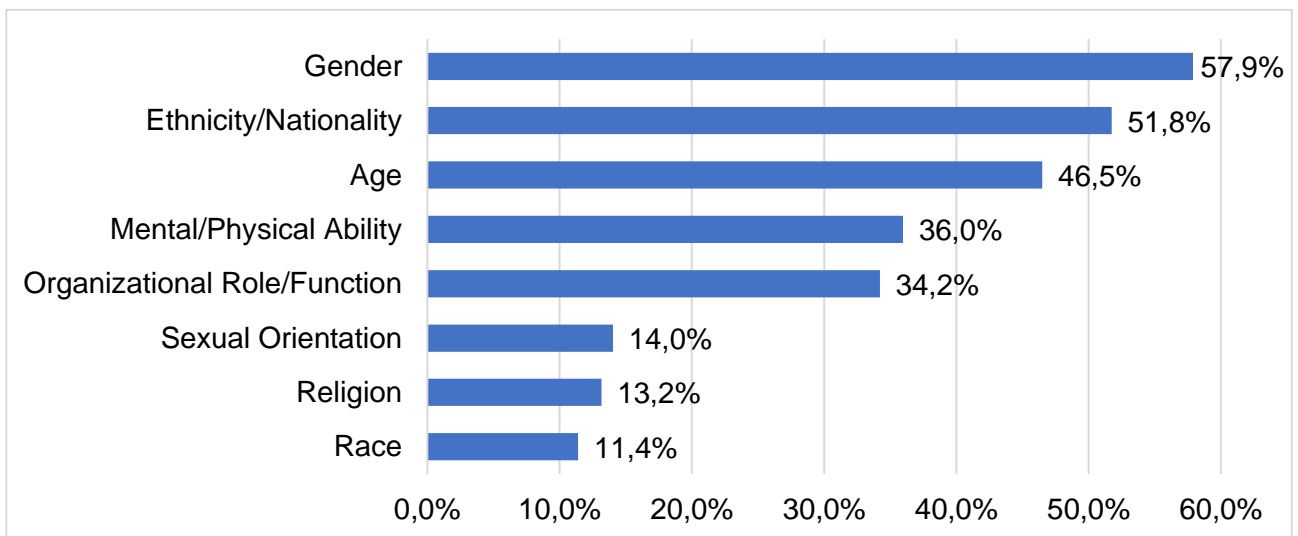


Figure 7. The 1-3 most important diversity dimensions (n=302)

These are also the most common aspects mentioned and supported when it comes to DM measures in organizations and society. This has been proven, for example, by global equality movements like #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo. (Chapter 2.1.) Moreover, no matter which framework of DD is applied, the three aspects mentioned above are usually included (Chapter 2.4.1; Chapter 2.4.2; Chapter 2.4.3; Chapter 2.4.4).

The study participants believed that diversity enriches organizations on the functional level. Enterprises can benefit from diversity especially through a better understanding of customers, competitors, and markets (60.5%), a higher level of creativity and innovation (55.3%) as well as attracting more talents as potential employees (39.5%) (Figure 8).

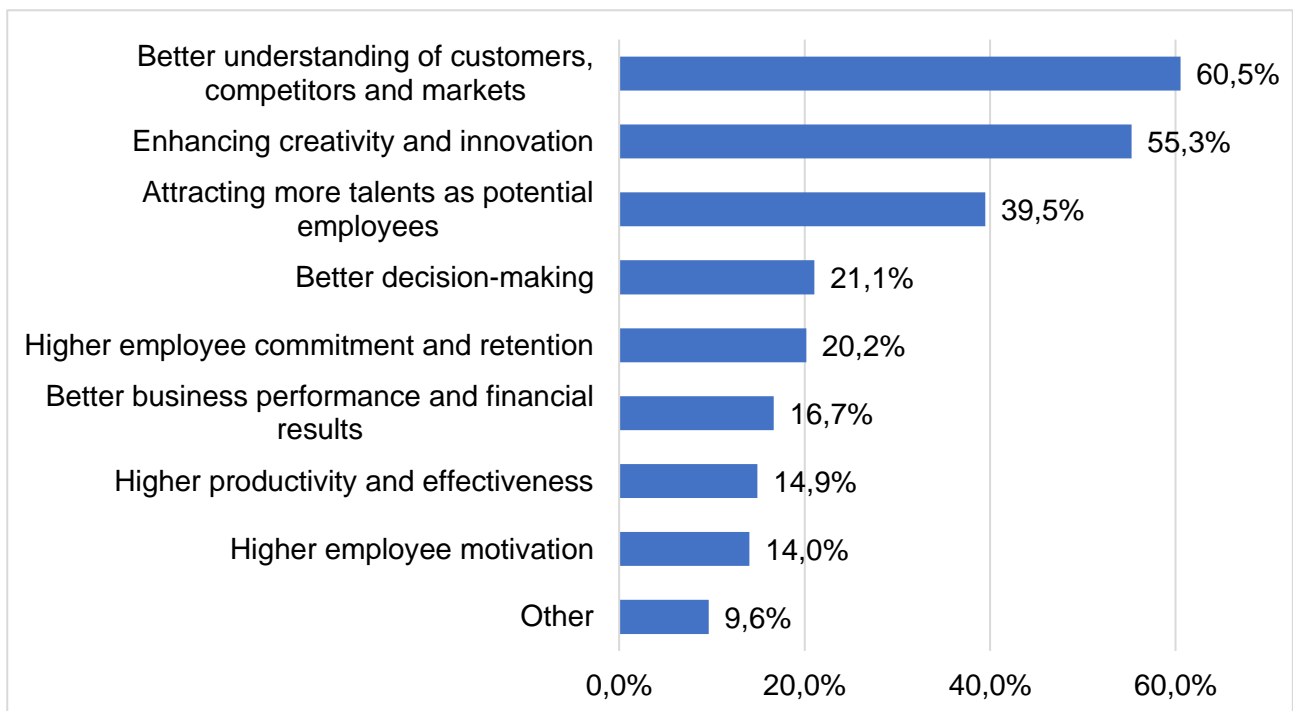


Figure 8. The 1-3 main diversity benefits for an organization (n=287)

These benefits relate to the ones found in academic research discussed in chapter 2.6.2 as well as to the business case of diversity, the learning-and-effectiveness paradigm, and the access-and-legitimacy perspective explained in chapter 2.5.1 and chapter 2.5.2.

Despite potential benefits, 55.3% of the respondents also considered the challenges assigned to workplace diversity (Figure 5). A big downside of diversity was seen in the division of organizations into subgroups which increased the potential for conflicts and discrimination (68.4%) (Figure 9). This challenge has also been discussed in chapter 2.6.3. According to social categorization and social identification theory (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998, pp. 83–84), people build social groups depending on attributes such as the DD like gender or ethnicity. As a result, individuals with similar

attributes are more likely to work together which leads to a separation between 'we' and 'them' subgroups.

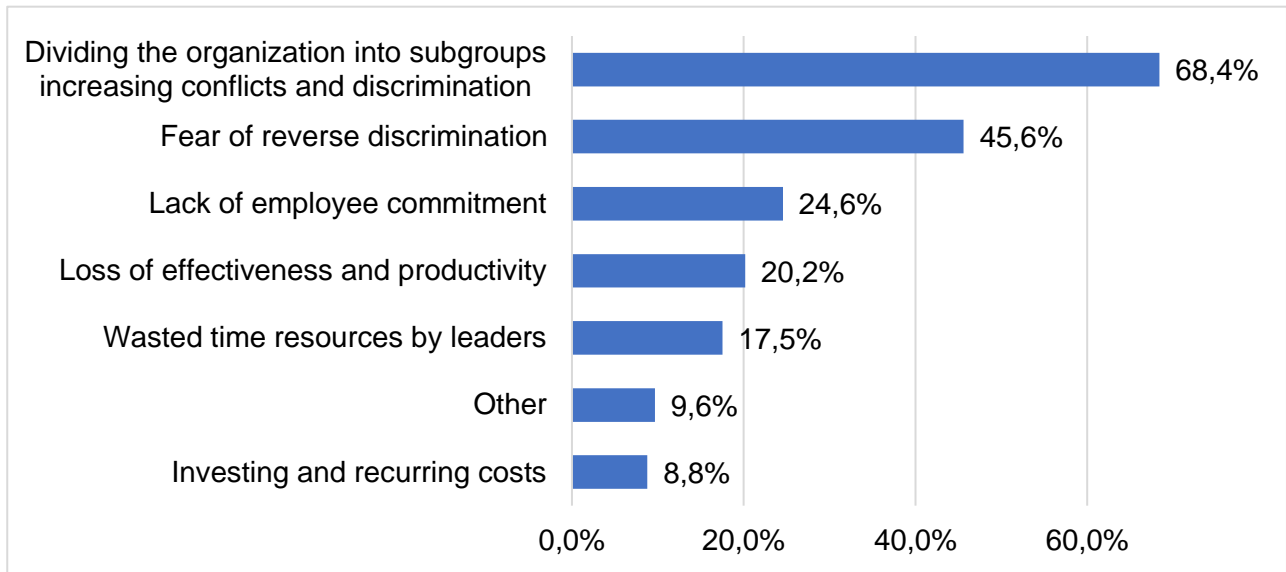


Figure 9. The 1-3 main diversity challenges for an organization (n=222)

Being asked about the characteristics that differentiate each respondent the most from other people in an organization, the majority opted for age (39.5%), personality characteristics (38.6%), and religion (28.1%) (Figure 10).

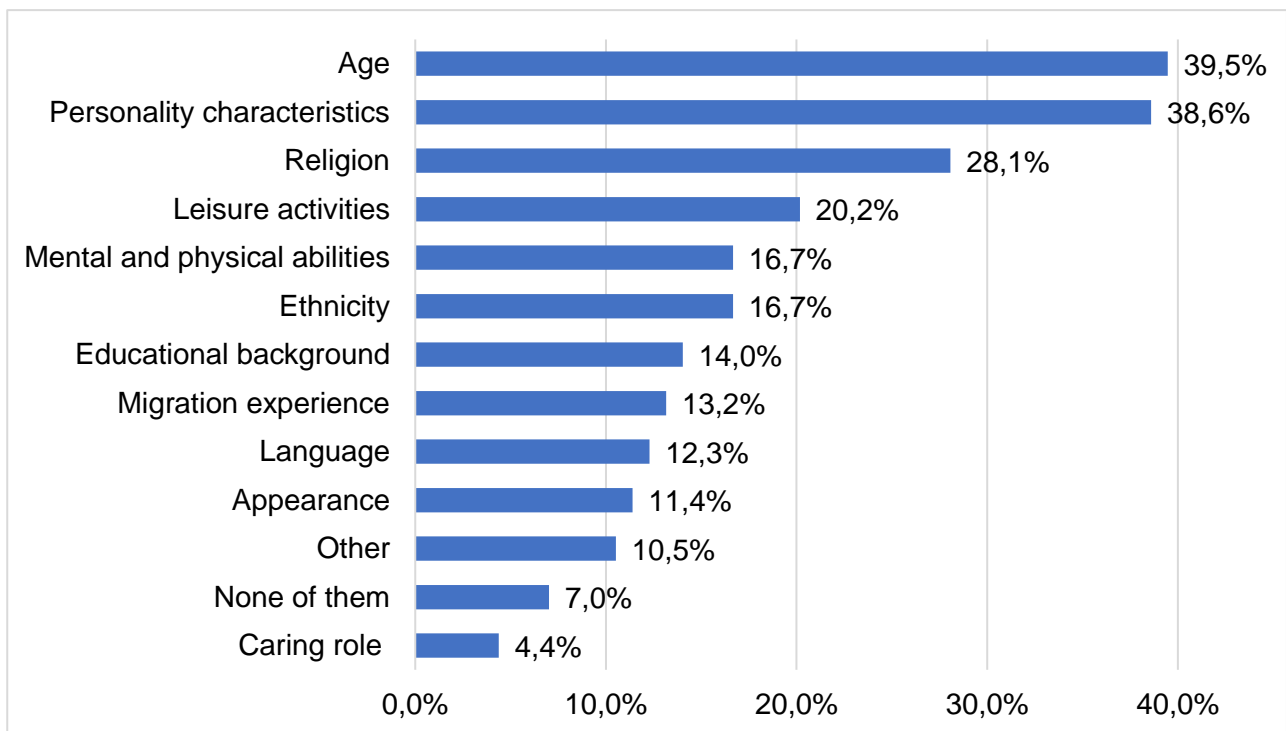


Figure 10. Respondents' characteristics that differ them the most from other people in an organization (n=265)

13.2% of all respondents indicated being confronted with disadvantages because of differences like the aspects mentioned above (Appendix 19). This relatively low percentage underlines the at the beginning of chapter 4.3 highlighted positive experience towards diversity in the workplace. However, people who did face disadvantages were most affected by discrimination in respect of salary and career development or felt the need to justify their differentiation. This left affected people with feelings of misunderstanding, exclusion, and loneliness.

These are some answers affected respondents listed:

"I am black and it's hard to move forward due to the discrimination I have faced sometimes."

"As a female working in male-dominated fields, it is sometimes more challenging."

"I feel the compulsion to behave in certain situations as required by superiors."

"I experience exclusion up to threats of dismissal in case of non-conformity."

"I am confronted with homophobia, misogyny, pre-judgment. I feel alone and not understood."

4.4 Gen-Z's attitudes towards diversity management at the workplace

For the respondents, the same access to resources and opportunities as others ($x=4.61$) as well as the feeling of being fully integrated into the organization ($x=4.46$) were very important. This was reflected by the mean ratings that were for both options close to the maximum (1=Not at all important; 2=Somewhat unimportant; 3=Neutral; 4=Somewhat important; 5=Very important). (Figure 11.)



Figure 11. Respondents' mean distribution of the importance of certain aspects at a workplace (n=114)

According to the Post-Millennials questioned, DM could indeed contribute to meeting these aspects. 78.1% and 84.3%, respectively, somewhat or strongly agreed that DM does indeed contribute to inclusion and more diversity in the workplace. Still, 53.5% believed that it can minimize discrimination as well as inequalities. (Appendix 20.) These aspects mentioned are also assigned to DM by literature, for example, explained by the discrimination-and-fairness perspective mentioned in chapter 2.5.2.

Alike chapter 2.6.1 which highlights the necessity of DM in workplaces, a clear majority of the survey participants (64.9%) somewhat or strongly agreed that organizations should be more engaged in diversity topics. The majority group thought that legal obligations and quotas towards diversity were insufficient (55.3%). (Appendix 21.) In fact, only 10.5% of the respondents believed DM to be redundant as following the legal obligations is sufficient (Appendix 20). That legal obligations are still insufficient is also reflected in official diversity inequalities statistics like the gender pay gap or disability employment gap that were mentioned in chapter 2.6.1.

Although 57.1% somewhat or strongly agreed that minority groups remain underrepresented in the work environment, the people asked were more skeptical about whether organizations should support more intensively employees belonging to a minority group. 59.6% voted against positive discrimination and 28.1% had a neutral opinion on that. Furthermore, only 28.1% believed DM to be the biggest challenge organizations will face in the upcoming years. (Appendix 21.)

Although the primary reasoning behind DM should be based on ethical societal rationale (71.9%), profitmaking reasons were still accepted by 39.5%. 31.6% had a neutral opinion about it. 58.8% thought that DM leads to better corporate performance. Most of the survey participants believed in the success of DM as only 14.9% perceived DM to be ineffective. (Appendix 20.)

Generally, the research results show that female respondents had a more positive and supportive attitude toward DM than their male counterparts. For example, they more strongly agreed in aspects such as 'DM contributes to inclusion', 'DM minimizes discrimination and inequalities', or 'DM leads to more diversity in the workplace'. (Appendix 22.) Due to the small sample sizes of the variable 'male' (n=33), the Nonparametric Test on a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ was applied (Appendix 22; Appendix 23). The Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test proved that female respondents significantly more strongly agreed with the statements 'DM contributes to inclusion' ($p=0.046$), 'DM minimizes discrimination and inequalities' ($p=0.010$), and 'DM leads to more diversity in the workplace' ($p=0.016$) than their male counterparts. (Appendix 23.)

Being asked about who in an organization should be mainly responsible for DM, a majority of 36.0% considered DM to be a corporate task over which everyone should take responsibility.

23.7% assigned the task of DM to HRM. Less than 1.0% indicated that a specific diversity representative should mainly be responsible for DM. (Figure 12.)

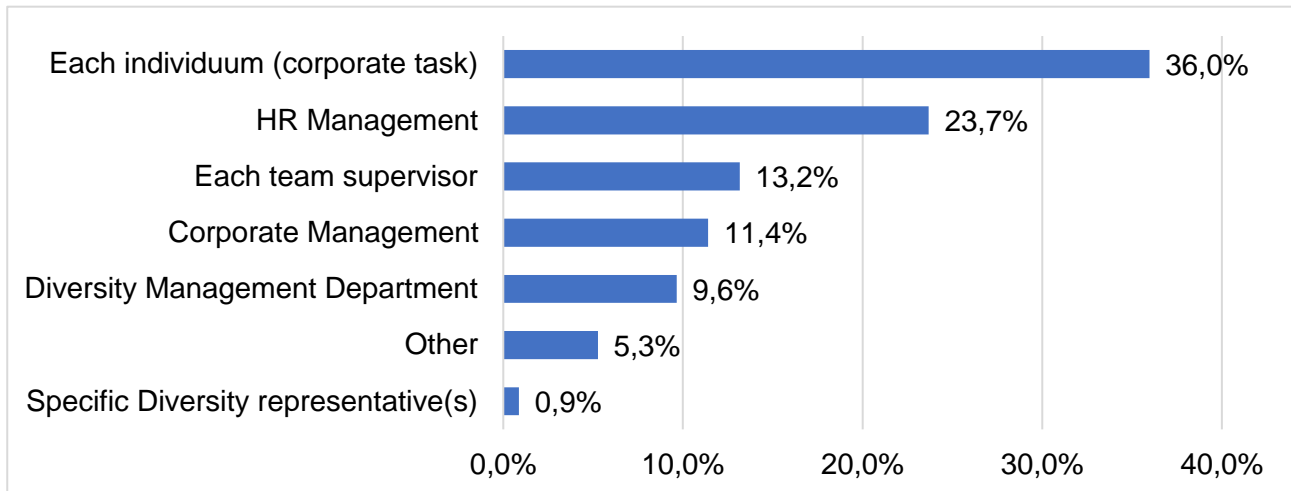


Figure 12. Responsibility of diversity management in an organization (n=114)

The success of DM indeed depends on every individual in an organization as it is a human-centered concept that can only succeed with the support of individuals. However, in contrast to the research results of this Gen-Z study, experts like Shen et al. (2009, p. 237) or Nweiser and Dajnoki (2022, p. 18) mentioned in chapter 2.8 allocate DM itself usually in HRM. That can be explained by the many functions of HRM that have a direct impact on an organization's diversity evolution (e.g., the selection and recruitment process).

The role model character of top management regarding DM success highlighted in literature was also acknowledged by the underlying research group. Although only 11.4% of the respondents said that corporate management should mainly be responsible for DM, a vast majority of 72.8% believed that the support of top management is crucial for an effective DM (Figure 12; Appendix 21). Nevertheless, DM often still lacks top management's support as indicated in chapter 2.6.1.

4.5 Main tasks of workplace diversity management

With a clear majority of 81.6%, the respondents perceived the creation of a workplace environment based on equity and inclusion to be the top priority of DM tasks. It was followed by the implementation of practical measures and benefits for employees with 34.2%. (Figure 13.)

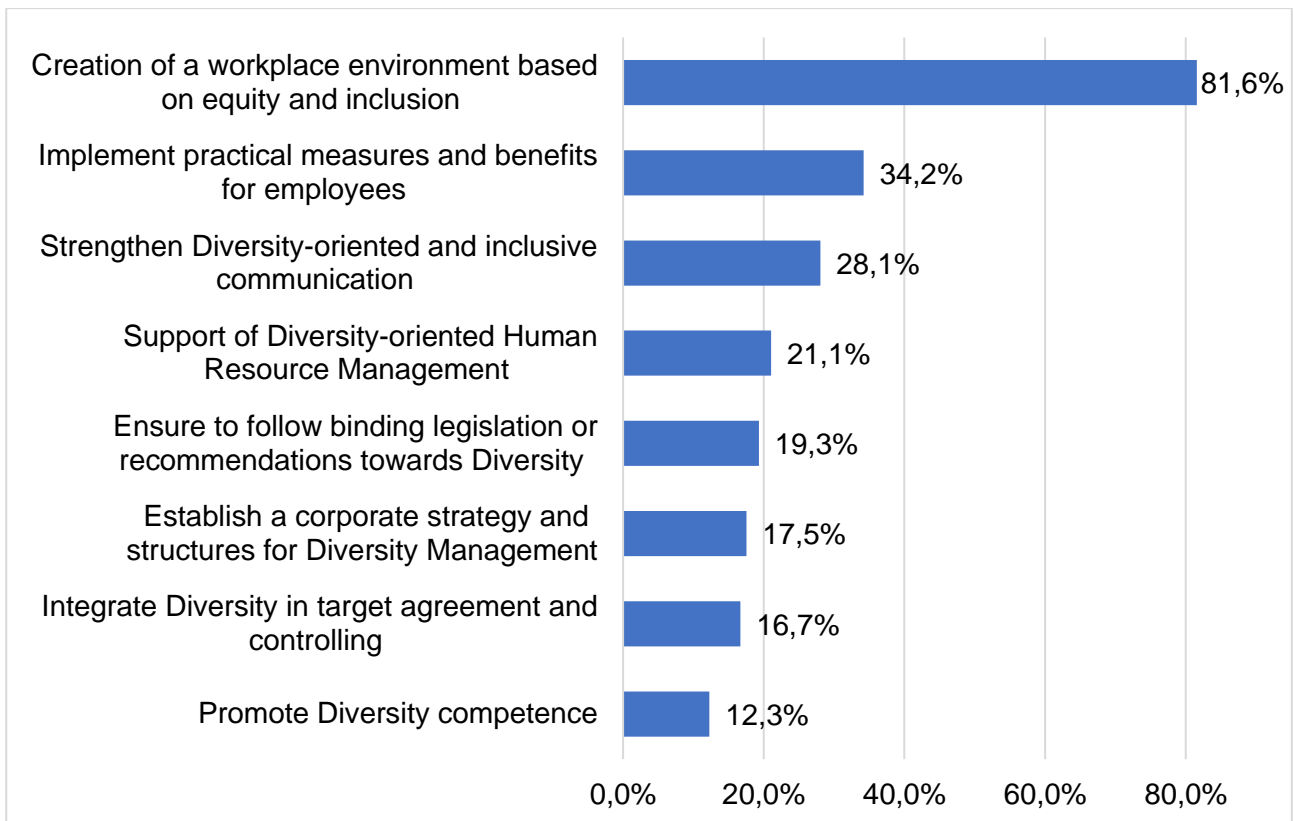


Figure 13. The 1-3 main diversity management tasks in an organization (n=263)

These preferences contribute to the enforcement of equality and the elimination of discrimination aimed for by the discrimination-and-fairness perspective explained in chapter 2.5.2 as well as the moral-ethical case of diversity mentioned in chapter 2.5.1. Other selection options such as the promotion of diversity competence (12.3%), or the integration of diversity in the target agreement and controlling (16.7%) were rated as rather subordinated tasks (Figure 13).

The most attractive DM measures that make the Gen-Z respondents decide for an employer were flexible working hours and workplaces (49.1%) as well as an anonymized application process (32.5%). The offer of diversity training (4.4%), confession-independent prayer rooms (4.4%), as well as job rotation opportunities (6.1%), were pretty much irrelevant. (Figure 14.)

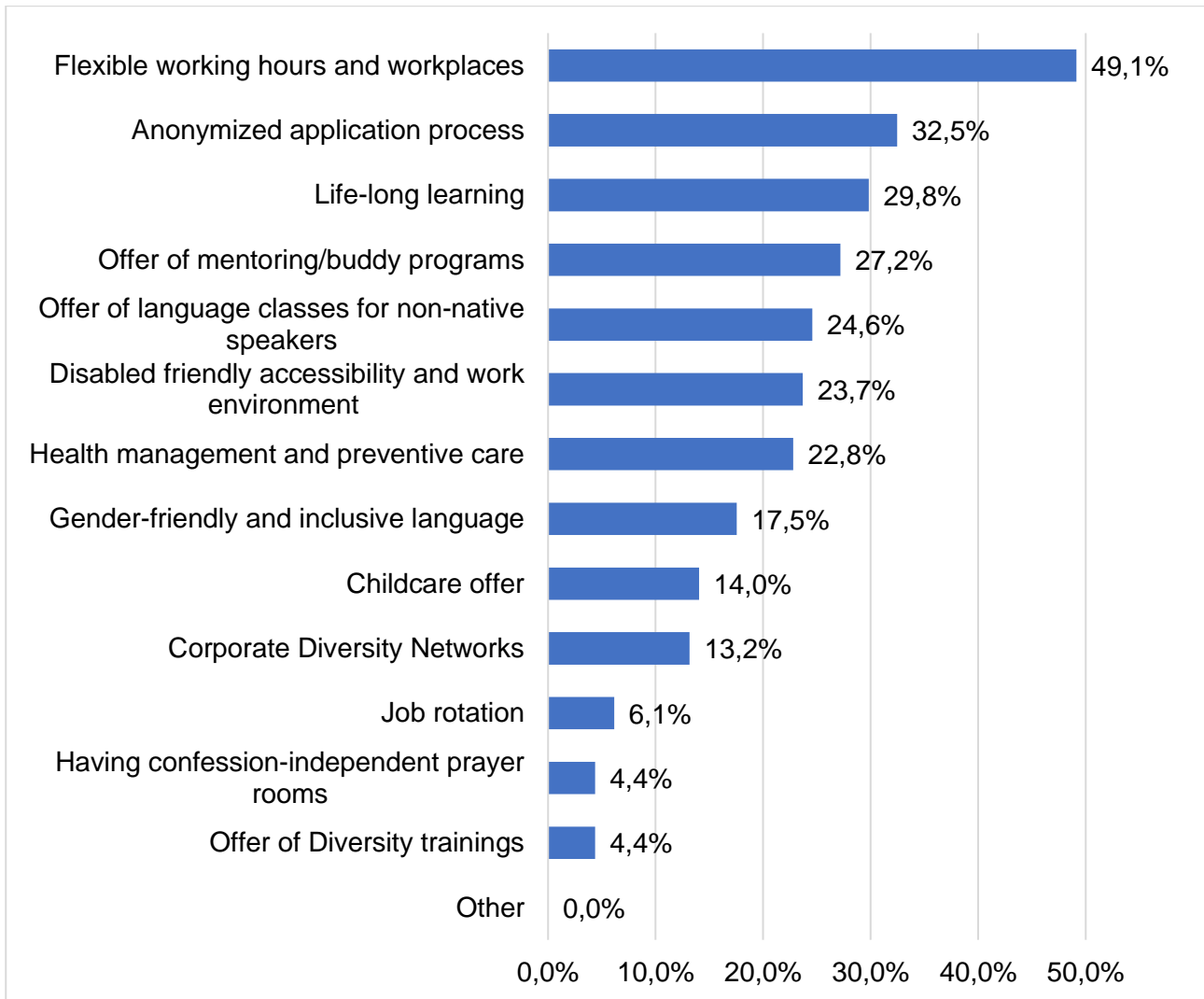


Figure 14. The 1-3 most attractive diversity management measures when deciding on an employer (n=307)

Chapter 2.8 highlighted the close interconnection between DM and HRM. This synergy is also reflected by the answers in the underlying survey. For most respondents, DM was essential at every single HRM touchpoint (searching and informing about an employer, recruitment and selection process, onboarding, training and career development, performance evaluation and feedback) (Figure 15). This confirms Shen et al. (2009, p. 237) who ascribe DM to be a central task of HRM. With a mean of $\bar{x}=3.67$ (1=Not at all important; 2=Somewhat unimportant; 3=Neutral; 4=Somewhat important; 5=Very important), most importance was addressed to the training and career development aspect (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Mean of the importance of diversity management at the respective touchpoints (n=114)

This relates to the respondents' ranking of the 1-3 most important aspects of the workplace mentioned in chapter 4.3. The aspect of career development was voted with 37.7% in 4th rank. (Figure 6.)

The survey results also showed that women, as well as non-Germans, addressed a higher importance to DM at most of the respective touchpoints than their counterpart group of males or Germans, respectively (Appendix 24; Appendix 25). Due to small sample sizes for the variables 'male' (n=33) and 'non-German' (n=22), Nonparametric Tests were performed on a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ (Appendix 24; Appendix 25; Appendix 26; Appendix 27). The Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test approved that women addressed significantly higher importance to DM at all of the respective employee lifecycle touchpoints ($p<0.05$) mentioned in the survey than males did (Appendix 26). The Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test indicated significantly higher importance for non-Germans on the touchpoints of 'recruitment and selection' ($p=0.032$), 'onboarding' ($p=0.019$), and 'performance evaluation and feedback' ($p=0.034$) than for Germans (Appendix 27).

5 Conclusion

Based on the findings in academic literature, previous research, and the underlying survey conducted, all results are now brought together to summarize the key findings of this research. From that, recommendations for organizations are derived as well as the thesis' credibility and limitations are critically discussed. The paper closes with suggestions for further research and a chapter about the researcher's personal learnings.

5.1 Key findings

The theoretical baseline for this thesis is the concept of diversity and DM. The term diversity summarizes a set of different characteristics, referred to as DD, such as age, gender, or ethnicity, that set an individual apart from others. This can often result in discrimination or exclusion. A useful approach in organizations that aims at overcoming possible challenges and instead promotes the benefits of heterogeneity at the workplace is DM.

The research has shown that Post-Millennials are most familiar with the term diversity itself. Almost everyone can at least give a superficial definition of it. The expressions of DD and DM are in contrast more unknown. The familiarity with the terminologies can mainly be referred to the Gen-Z's studies or education. The term diversity is moreover familiar in the context of advertisement. When thinking about diversity, the Gen-Z associates the terminology with tolerance, inclusiveness, and openness. As the familiarity of diversity and its related concepts among the Gen-Z have not yet been extensively investigated in other studies, these findings provide a new viewpoint on the topic.

The Gen-Z has a generally positive attitude and experience towards diversity. They, particularly women and non-Germans, address importance of it both inside and outside their work life. Especially in today's workplaces young adults perceive the necessity of diversity and argue that many workplaces do not yet reflect the diversity that is present in society. Data provided by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (2023) underline this standpoint. Diversity can play a decisive role for the Gen-Z when deciding on an employer of choice. Nevertheless, the top priorities are still occupied by other aspects such as (non-)financial benefits, work-life balance, and supportive colleagues/management which are supported by the study of Universum (2022). The Post-Millennials conceive diversity as a contribution to business success especially on the functional level. Enterprises can benefit from diversity through a better understanding of customers, competitors, and markets, a higher level of creativity and innovation as well as attracting more talents as potential employees. This stands in line with the research of Jabbour et al. (2011) and additionally supports the concept of the three cases of diversity (Merklein, 2017) as well as the three perspectives on workforce diversity (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Thomas & Ely, 1996). However, the young adults are also aware of potential challenges. A big downside of

diversity is seen in the division of organizations into subgroups and resulting in conflicts as well as discrimination. These aspects are also discussed in literature and research such as the ones of Williams and O'Reilly (1998), Yadav and Lenka (2020b), and Jabbour et al. (2011). Although only a small percentage indicate to be faced with disadvantages at the workplace because of diversity-related differences (e.g., sexual orientation, gender, skin color), the related consequences like exclusion, misunderstanding, or loneliness must be addressed by organizations. The most important DD for the Gen-Z are gender, ethnicity/nationality, and age. These are also the ones included in the commonly applied diversity concepts like the 'Big 8' of diversity (Plummer, 2003), the visible and invisible characteristics of diversity (Franken, 2015; Rahnfeld, 2019), the four layers of diversity (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2003) as well as the relations-oriented, task-oriented, readily detected, and underlying diversity (Jackson & Joshi, 2011).

The Gen-Z has a rather positive attitude towards DM and acknowledges its importance. In fact, organizations should be more engaged in diversity topics, especially as many young adults conceive legal obligations as not being sufficient yet. For them, DM contributes to inclusion and more diversity in the workplace. Meanwhile, it minimizes discrimination as well as inequalities. This viewpoint is supported by the aspects that literature assigns to DM (Formanek, 2021; Köllen, 2021; Seliverstova, 2021). However, the young adults are more skeptical about whether organizations should support more intensively employees belonging to a minority group. Positive discrimination is rather neglected. For the Gen-Z the role model factor of organizational leaders in terms of DM is important. However, unlike Shen et al. (2009), the responsibility for DM is not addressed to leadership positions nor HRM, but to every individual in an organization. Generally, DM should rather be driven by ethical and moral reasons than by the strive for higher profits. In contrast, literature itself mentions both ethical and moral intentions as well as business-related motives. They are summarized by the moral-ethical case and the economical/business case of diversity (Merklein, 2017).

Lastly, the research results provide concrete solutions for the main tasks of WDM which help organizations to set DM in practice and properly address the Gen-Z. According to the Gen-Z, the top priority of DM is the creation of a workplace environment based on equity and inclusion. This is also reflected in definitions of DM stated in other research like the one of Seliverstova (2021) or Olejniczak-Szuster (2022). For the assurance of equity and inclusion, DM measures such as flexible working hours and workplaces as well as an anonymized application process are most attractive among the Gen-Z. Moreover, DM should be present at every single step of the employee lifecycle starting from the searching and information gathering of an employer until the process of performance evaluation and feedback. Most importance is addressed to the training and career development touchpoint, especially among women and non-Germans. Literature alike addresses the intersection of DM at different HRM and employee lifecycle touchpoints. According to Nweiser and

Dajnoki (2022), however, the interplay of HRM and DM is of special importance in the selection process.

5.2 Recommendations for organizations

The research has shown that diversity addresses importance among the Gen-Z and that their attitude towards it is positive. Even though the aspect of D&I is not among the top priorities of important aspects of the workplace, the research has proven that it can still be a decisive criterion for or against an employer when Gen-Z applicants have the choice between several job offers. (Chapter 4.3.) In times of lack of qualified workforce, it is thus quite to recommend to not neglect the importance of DM but acknowledge the expectations that Post-Millennials address towards WDM. In consequence, corporate commitment towards DM must be shown and actively put into practice. The inclusion of diversity in an organization's mission statement and the setting of clearly defined objectives is a good starting point (Franken, 2015, pp. 64–65; Hunt et al., 2018, p. 27). However, practical actions must follow.

For young adults, DM should contribute to the creation of an inclusive and diverse work environment while minimizing discrimination as well as inequalities (Chapter 4.4). As for the Gen-Z, the most important DD are gender, ethnicity/nationality, and age, it is recommended that organizations especially focus on the promotion of these three aspects (Chapter 4.3). Suitable measures that might be effective, since they are valued among the Gen-Z and relate to the above-mentioned DD, are flexibility in terms of working hours and places as well as the implementation of an anonymized application process or life-long learning (Chapter 4.5).

Moreover, it has been analyzed when DM measures are particularly important for the Gen-Z. Generally, the Gen-Z addresses importance to DM at every single step of the employee lifecycle. Nevertheless, DM is especially essential in terms of training and career development. (Chapter 4.5.) Individualized training programs according to one's professional experience, the affinity of digitalization, or personal interests and needs must be established. When it comes to the touchpoint of the recruitment and selection process, the anonymized application process, as addressed by the Gen-Z, is one measure that can contribute to more diversity and equality in the very early phase of the employee lifecycle. Another very important touchpoint for DM measures among the Gen-Z is the process of performance evaluation and feedback (Chapter 4.5). Less biased appraisal methods by clearly defined KPIs or target agreements can be a starting point. However, further concepts must be elaborated to guarantee an unbiased, equal, and inclusive employee lifecycle. Generally, it is recommended to always enable the personnel's participation and input for ideas and improvements in any of the processes related to DM (Franken, 2015, p. 64).

Lastly, for a successful DM, organizations must find effective solutions against the challenges that diversity can bring with it. The Gen-Z highlights in particular the issue of subgroup divisions leading to conflicts and discrimination (Chapter 4.3). This is an issue also addressed in research by Williams and O'Reilly (1998), Yadav and Lenka (2020b), and Jabbour et al. (2011). A better onboarding process, addressing higher importance to teambuilding or buddy programs could increase the community feeling and thus minimize the risk of employee disunion. As young adults assess DM to be a corporate task, every individual should bear responsibility for enhancing diversity and mitigating challenges like potential sub-groups divisions (Chapter 4.4). In consequence, a close exchange of ideas and propositions by employees can balance the negative side effects of diversity and at the same time contribute to a feeling of being fully integrated, heard as well as valued. These are also some aspects that are very important for the Gen-Z at the workplace. (Chapter 4.4.) An open discourse about diversity enhances team-group cohesion. It supports the development of innovative and creative ideas on how to face diversity, but also practically shows how the input of employees with diverse backgrounds and attitudes can benefit. Having role models and supporters of diversity in the workforce can be helpful as they can guide employees to perceive diversity in organizations as something ordinary. Furthermore, it can be especially supportive when HR acts as a role model and when advocating people come from the top management level (Jabbour et al., 2011, p. 60; Kundu et al., 2015, p. 122). This latter one is also confirmed by the Gen-Z, as for them the support of top management is crucial for an effective DM (Chapter 4.4).

5.3 Credibility and limitations

Credibility is an indicator of the trustworthiness of research (McGinn, 2010). Several measures have been taken to ensure the credibility of the underlying research.

First of all, a lot of time has been invested in concise research planning. During this process aspects of reliability and validity have been considered. A consecutive research plan helped to structure the research topic and to set clear priorities and demarcations for the final research and its underlying online survey. The questionnaire itself has been tested and revised thoroughly before sending it out to the target group. This approach has strengthened the functionality and understanding of the survey as well as the precision of its results. Moreover, before publishing the research questionnaire, it has been tested among a small pilot group for cohesion and additionally discussed with the thesis advisor to make sure that the receipt of credible results is not limited due to a poor research survey design.

Secondly, the use of quantitative research affected the aspect of credibility positively. A higher number of participants and an increased level of heterogeneity among research participants could be achieved. Furthermore, the data analysis was based on numerical measures. This decreased

the potential for personal biases and led to more objective research outcomes. (Aityan, 2022, p. 420.)

Moreover, the results were explained, analyzed, and reflected in a detailed as well as critical way. Like this, potential delimitations in terms of credibility were openly discussed. (McGinn, 2010.)

Lastly, several findings of the underlying research have been supported by theories as well as conclusions derived by other researchers. Having highlighted similarities, but also differences in the results strengthens the level of credibility. (McGinn, 2010.)

Limitations are factors that weaken the generalizability and conclusions that can be drawn from research (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad, 2010, p. 180). One of the limitations of this study concerns the reduced level of internationality as, despite global reach, the major group of research participants was of German nationality. Moreover, due to a relatively high amount of business students in the sample, the sample does not perfectly represent the heterogeneity present within the study background and experience level of the Gen-Z. Thus, the transfer of results to the overall Gen-Z population may be restricted. Lastly, convenience sampling might have increased the level of biased results (Scherbaum & Shockley, 2015). However, other data collection methods would have been less effective and efficient to reach an adequate sample size that in turn contributed to more reliable results.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

The research has provided evidence that there is a necessity for DM in the workplace and its importance is also reflected among the target group of the Gen-Z. Nevertheless, this research reflects just a very simple base for research on this topic. Thus, further investigations are to be recommended.

One suggestion for more sophisticated results is to set a more specific target group, for example, solely focusing on a certain nationality of Gen-Z individuals or a certain study background. This would lead to more concrete findings.

Moreover, to provide a very detailed picture of the importance of diversity among the Gen-Z, a point of connection for further research would be to closer investigate the importance of each individual DD among the Gen-Z. This would provide a better picture of which DD an organization should focus on and which diversity initiatives would have the most chances to be effective.

In the next step, it is consequently advisable to research how DM initiatives can be implemented as well as further developed in a successful way. The so-called EFQM-Model (European Foundation for Quality Management-Model) is hereby one possible approach. It distinguishes between the

'enabler criteria' which address the procedures of a company and the 'result criteria' which can be traced back to the procedures. By continuously reviewing the development and implementation of diversity management, strengths, and optimization opportunities can be identified and new measures can be developed on that basis. Applying this method would help decision-makers to evaluate the effectiveness and potential of the evolution of DM measures. (Genkova, 2022, pp. 13–15.)

Another research approach would be an evaluation of the branch-related importance of DM or individual research for a specific organization. In this context, one could also evaluate whether DM is practicable according to business size, sector, or country focus. Small and medium-sized companies might not have the needed resources for practicing successful DM. Local operating enterprises might have less need for DM.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that diversity and the presence of a heterogeneous workforce are not the ultimate keys to success. There might be people with different genders, ages, or ethical backgrounds, and employees with or without disabilities. However, to retain them and make them feel part of the organization, DM should closely encompass the concept of inclusion – everyone should feel part and involved on the very same level to the organization and the organizational teams. Another option for further research would consequently be to what extent DM can promote inclusion in the workplace.

Lastly, a long-term practical study about DM might deliver insightful results. One could consider investigating two similar companies. In one organization, the Gen-Z will be confronted with many DM measures while in the other one DM is not present and the Gen-Z would have to take their own initiatives to promote diversity. One could investigate how interpersonal relationships will change and which impact the presence or absence of DM would have on a company's success as well as its employee attractiveness or public reputation.

5.5 Personal learning

This Bachelor's thesis has not only been a research process but also a personal learning progress. First of all, I have learned that a well-thought structure and a profound planning phase are essential. My thesis plan and GANTT chart were supportive frameworks throughout the whole thesis process as they helped me to focus and structure my work. However, I have learned that an initial plan must not be perceived as fixed and unchangeable throughout the corresponding process. Instead, it can and should be adapted based on new findings or more suitable ideas.

The GANTT chart and personal Outlook calendar have been additional helpful tools for managing and timing my workload. I knew which work packages I had to accomplish until the final

submission. Setting personal deadlines helped to push me forward and set priorities between my Bachelor's thesis, my internship, a voluntary university project, and my private life and commitments.

Moreover, I was lucky to make use of a digital literature organization and citation tool. With Citavi, I summarized all important notes and sections of primary or secondary literature research by creating my own little database. As I was able to interconnect Citavi with the Word application, it also helped me to save time when it came to the actual writing part and citing my sources.

Another aspect of personal learning is the point of work equipment and environment. Working on my thesis confirmed my hypothesis that I am more productive when I work in a room on my own in a silent environment. However, surprisingly, especially in the literature review phase I also really enjoyed skimming through literature and summarizing key aspects when I was outdoors or on a long-distance bus ride. The purchase of a secondary screen is another investment I don't regret as it really simplified my writing and research process and thus saved me a lot of working time.

Lastly, I would like to mention two more critical personal learnings. First of all, my quantitative research survey has confirmed that a broad network of people you know and can rely on is nowadays indispensable. Finding enough participants for my questionnaire was tough especially as I would describe my network as rather limited. Luckily, I was able to make use of some larger groups or channels based on my voluntary commitment. In addition, family and friends supported me a lot by forwarding my survey. However, I believe that stronger business contacts or a larger LinkedIn network would have made things a lot easier, and my data set potentially more diverse.

Secondly, the access to (free) academic literature is despite online resources still very limited. Although I had access to the online databases of two libraries – Haaga Helia UAS and Hochschule Reutlingen – and the additional option to borrow physical books from the library of Hochschule Düsseldorf, I have still not been able to access every source I needed. However, as literature is the source for learning and opening one's mindset, in my opinion, more academic resources must be accessible openly and for free to everyone.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Quantitative online survey

The importance of Diversity among the Gen-Z and its implications on Diversity Management in organizations

Mandatory questions are marked with a star (*)

Hallo, Hello, Salut, Buenos días, Hei, Dober dan, Ciao!

The greeting already shows, that nowadays, we live in a more and more diversified world. Managing this heterogeneity has become the primary focus of Diversity Management.

Therefore, I thank you very much for your interest in this topic and your support on my Bachelor Thesis on "**The importance of Diversity among the Gen-Z and its implications on Diversity Management in organizations**".

With the following questionnaire, your personal attitude and importance towards Diversity and Diversity Management will be investigated. The survey will take around 7-10 minutes to complete.

All data will be collected anonymously and cannot be traced back to you.

Thank you very much for your participation!

The survey is only intended to reach a specific age group of people that belong to the Gen-Z (Generation Z).

1. Were you born between 1997 (including) and 2005 (including)? *

- Yes
 No

2. Which aspect would you associate the most with the term 'Diversity'? (one option) *

- Dissimilarity/Differences
 Tolerance, inclusiveness and openness
 Demographics (e.g.: age, gender, etc.)
 Respect, acknowledgement of the individual
 Ideas, approaches of thinking
 Other, please specify
-

3. How familiar are you with the following terms? *

	I have heard of it, but cannot explain it	I can somewhat define what it means	I have heard of it and can give a correct definition	I can give a correct definition and know how it is applied in practice	Unknown
Diversity *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity Dimensions *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity Management *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. In which context have you come across the term 'Diversity'? (multiple options possible) *

- Workplace
- Studies/Education
- Leisure (e.g.: books, documentaries, friendships, etc.)
- Advertisement (e.g.: social media, newspapers, TV spots, etc.)
- Other, please specify _____

6. In which context have you come across the term 'Diversity Management'? (multiple options possible) *

- Workplace
- Studies/Education
- Leisure (e.g.: books, documentaries, friendships, etc.)
- Advertisement (e.g.: social media, newspapers, TV spots, etc.)
- Other, please specify _____

For the following questions, please keep the below-mentioned definitions in mind:

Diversity = The presence of different identities and lifestyles and the acknowledgement of the resulting heterogeneity (Franken, 2015, p. 18).

Diversity Dimensions: Age - Ethnicity/Nationality - Gender - Mental/Physical Ability - Organizational Role/Function - Race - Religion - Sexual Orientation (Krell *et al.*, 2007, p. 9)

Diversity Management = A concept often applied in Human Resource Management that aims at more heterogeneity in the workplace. It encourages the individual to bring to use his or her personal capabilities. It promotes the comprehension of different point of views and thus sets free creativity and motivation. The ultimate goal is to guarantee equal rights and equal opportunities along the different Diversity Dimensions. (Rahmfeld, 2019, pp. 18–19; Nweiser and Dajnoki, 2022, p. 18; Struthmann, 2013, p. 112.)

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7. How would you assess your personal ATTITUDE towards Diversity in the workplace? *

	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Neutral	Somewhat positive	Very positive
Attitude *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How would you describe your personal EXPERIENCE towards Diversity in the workplace? *

	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Somewhat positive	Very positive	No work experience
Experience *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Please rate the following statements: *

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Diversity at work is important to me *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity outside work is important to me *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity at the workplace has more advantages than disadvantages *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity cannot be trained or educated *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity is the base for organizations to be able to do business successfully *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having several job offers, I would rather choose an organization supporting Diversity *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Many workplaces still do not reflect the Diversity that is present in today's society *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workplace Diversity poses challenges *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. How important are the following aspects for you at a workplace?

	Not at all important	Somewhat unimportant	Neutral	Somewhat important	Very important
Diversity is an integral part of the corporate mission statement *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel fully integrated in the organization *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the same access to resources and opportunities as others *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I trust the management because they really care about Diversity *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I share the same values with the organization *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My voice counts and has meaning *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Which are the 1-3 most important aspects for you at the workplace?

(maximum 3 options) *

- Attractive salary and (non-)financial benefits
 - Career development
 - Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
 - Diversity & Inclusion
 - Location
 - Possibility to work from home
 - Supportive colleagues/management
 - Work-life balance
 - Workplace security (i.e.: job security in times of crises)
 - Other, please specify
-

12.

Which are your personal 1-3 most important Diversity Dimensions at the workplace? (maximum 3 options)

*

- Age
- Ethnicity/Nationality
- Gender
- Mental/Physical Ability
- Organisational Role/Function
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation

13. In your opinion, how does Diversity benefit an organization the most? (maximum 3 options) *

- Attracting more talents as potential employees
 - Better business performance and financial results
 - Better decision-making
 - Better understanding of customers, competitors and markets
 - Enhancing creativity and innovation
 - Higher employee commitment and retention
 - Higher employee motivation
 - Higher productivity and effectiveness
 - Other, please specify
-

14. In your opinion, how does Diversity challenge an organization the most? (maximum 3 options) *

- Dividing the organization into subgroups increasing conflicts and discrimination
 - Fear of reverse discrimination (e.g.: current majority groups will be forgotten when implementing new Diversity measures)
 - Investing and recurring costs
 - Lack of employee commitment
 - Loss of effectiveness and productivity
 - Wasted time resources by leaders
 - Other, please specify
-

15. Please rate your personal attitude to the following statements: *

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Diversity Management is mainly Social Washing* *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For effective Diversity Management, the support of top management is crucial *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal obligations and quotas towards Diversity are sufficient *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Minority groups are still underrepresented in the work environment *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizations should be more engaged in Diversity topics *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizations should support more intensively employees belonging to a minority group *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The management of Diversity is the biggest challenge organizations will face in the upcoming years *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When it comes to hiring, organizations should prefer people belonging to minority groups (= positive discrimination) *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***Social Washing** (often referred to as Woke Washing) = A marketing strategy intended to superficially improve the image of companies and brands. It includes measures to appear diverse and sustainable to the outside world, although this does not correspond to the truth. (Pötter, 2022; Warren, 2021, pp. 175-176.)

References

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Warren, D.E. (2021) "'Woke' Corporations and the Stigmatization of Corporate Social Initiatives". *Society for Business Ethics*, pp. 169–198.

16. Please rate: Diversity Management in organizations... *

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
...for profitmaking reasons is acceptable *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...for an ethical and societal rationale is more acceptable *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...leads to better corporate performance *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...leads to more Diversity in the workplace *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...contributes to inclusion *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...minimizes discrimination and inequalities *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...is ineffective *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...is redundant as following the legal obligations is sufficient *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Who should mainly be responsible for Diversity Management in organizations? (one option) *

- Corporate Management
 Diversity Management Department
 Each individual (corporate task)
 Each team supervisor
 HR Management
 Specific Diversity representative(s)
 Other, please specify
-

18. Which of the following are the 1-3 most attractive Diversity Management measures when you decide for an employer? (maximum 3 options) *

- Anonymized application process
 Childcare offer
 Corporate Diversity Networks (e.g.: women network, LGBTQIA+ network)
 Disabled friendly accessibility and work environment
 Flexible working hours and workplaces
 Gender-friendly and inclusive language
 Offer of Diversity trainings
 Having confession-independent prayer rooms
 Health management and preventive care
 Job rotation
 Life-long learning
 Offer of mentoring/buddy programs
 Offer of language classes for non-native speakers
 Other, please specify
-

19. How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints?

	Not at all important	Somewhat unimportant	Neutral	Somewhat important	Very important
Searching and informing about an employer (e.g.: social media, career webpages, recruiting events) *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruitment and selection process (e.g.: application process, job interviews) *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Onboarding (e.g.: company networks, events) *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training and career development (e.g.: salary, promotion) *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Performance evaluation and feedback *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Which of the following should be the main tasks of Diversity Management in organizations? (maximum 3 options) *

- Creation of a workplace environment based on equity and inclusion
- Establish a corporate strategy and structures for Diversity Management
- Ensure to follow binding legislation or recommendations towards Diversity
- Integrate Diversity in target agreement and controlling
- Implement practical measures and benefits for employees
- Promote Diversity competence
- Strengthen Diversity-oriented and inclusive communication
- Support of Diversity-oriented Human Resource Management

21. Which characteristics do you think differentiate you the most from other people in an organization? In case you are already working in an organization, take this one as reference. (multiple options possible) *

- Age
- Appearance
- Caring role (e.g.: childcare, care of relatives, etc.)
- Educational background
- Ethnicity
- Language
- Leisure activities
- Mental and physical abilities
- Migration experience
- Personality characteristics
- Religion
- Other, please specify _____
- None of them

22. Are you confronted with any disadvantages because of these differences? *

- Yes
- No
- I cannot tell

23. Which disadvantages are you confronted with? (keywords or full sentences) *

24. Please indicate your age: *

- 26
- 25
- 24
- 23
- 22
- 21
- 20
- 19
- 18
- 17

25. Please indicate your gender: *

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to disclose

26. Please indicate your current status: *

- Employed
- Gap Year/Sabbatical
- Motherhood/Parental leave
- Pupil
- Self-employed
- Student and not working
- Student and working
- Trainee/Intern
- Unemployed
- Other

27. If you are currently working, please indicate your field of work:

- Agriculture, Nature, Environment
- Art, Culture, Design
- Construction, Architecture, Surveying
- Economy, Administration
- Electrical
- Engineering, Technology fields
- Health
- IT, Computers
- Production, Manufacturing
- Media
- Metal, Mechanical Engineering
- Natural Sciences
- Service
- Social, Pedagogy
- Traffic, Logistics
- Other

28. If you are currently studying, please indicate your field of study:

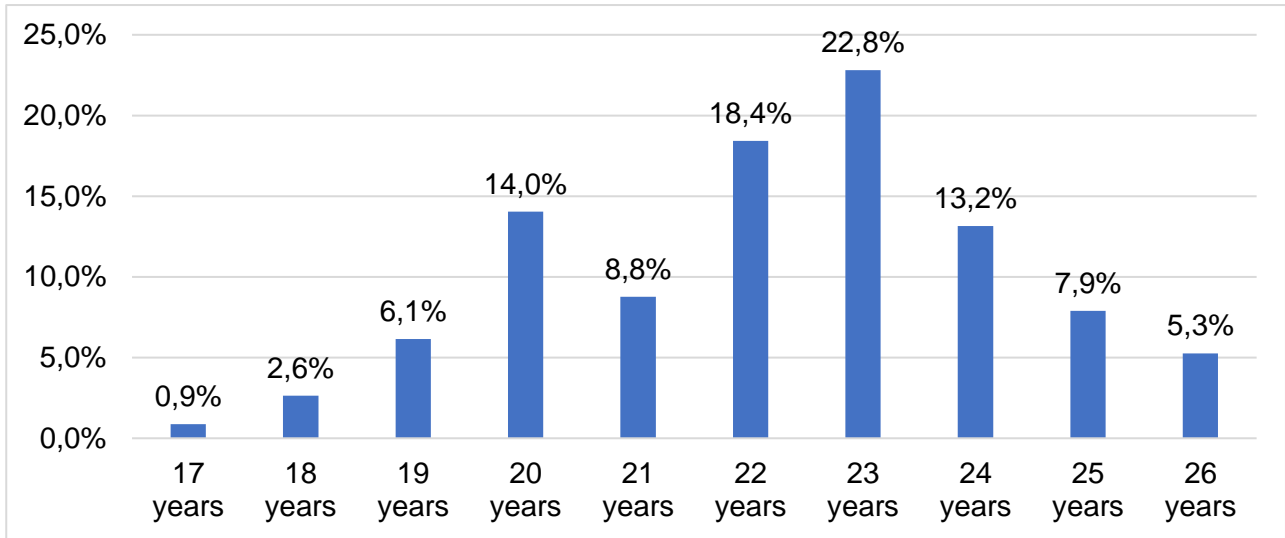
- Agricultural, Forestry Sciences
- Art, Music, Design
- Economics, Law
- Engineering
- Linguistics, Cultural Studies
- Mathematics, Natural Sciences
- Medicine, Health Sciences
- Public Administration
- Social Sciences
- Teacher training
- Other

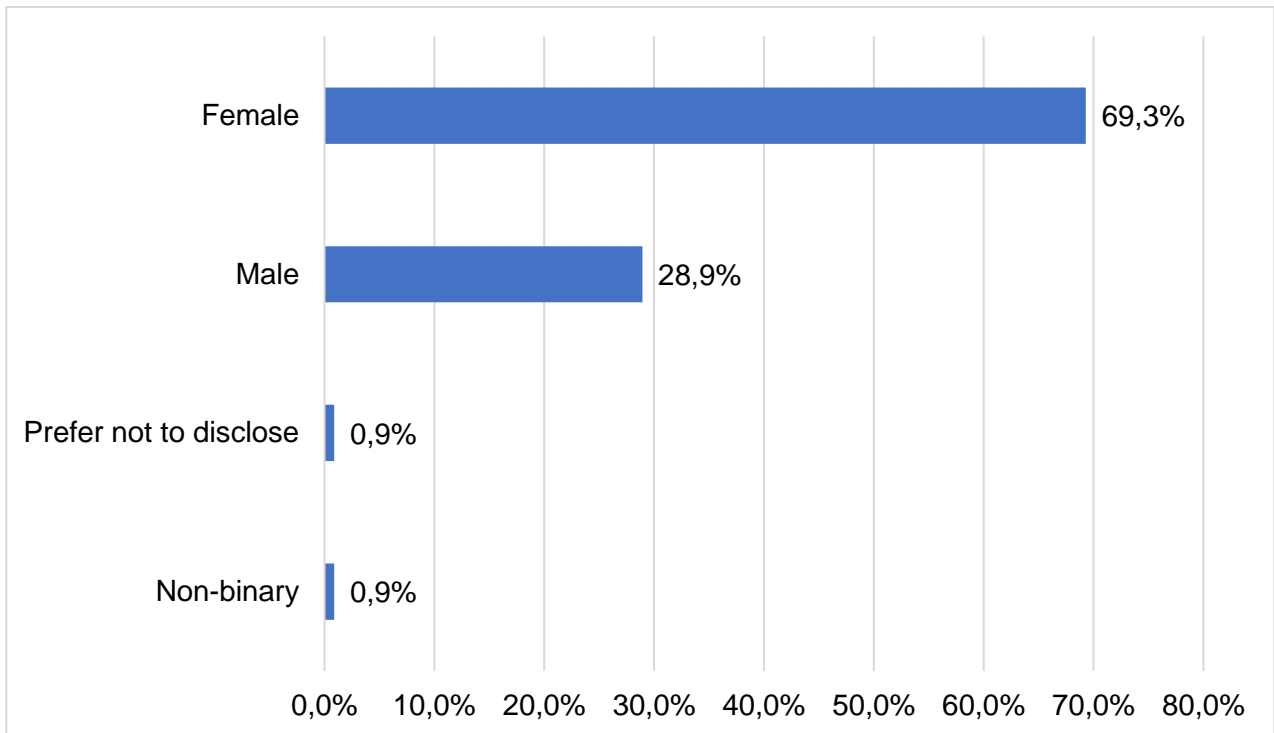
29. Please indicate your (primarily) nationality: *

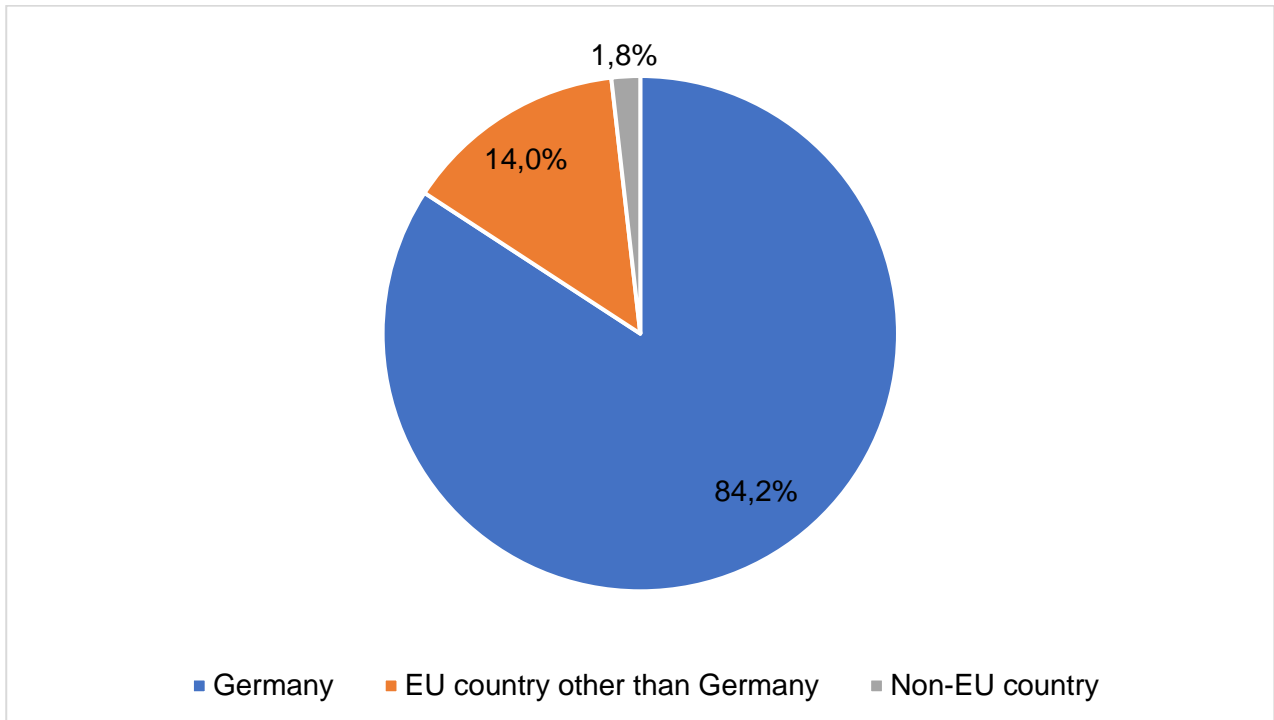
- German
 - Finnish
 - Slovenian
 - Other, please specify
-

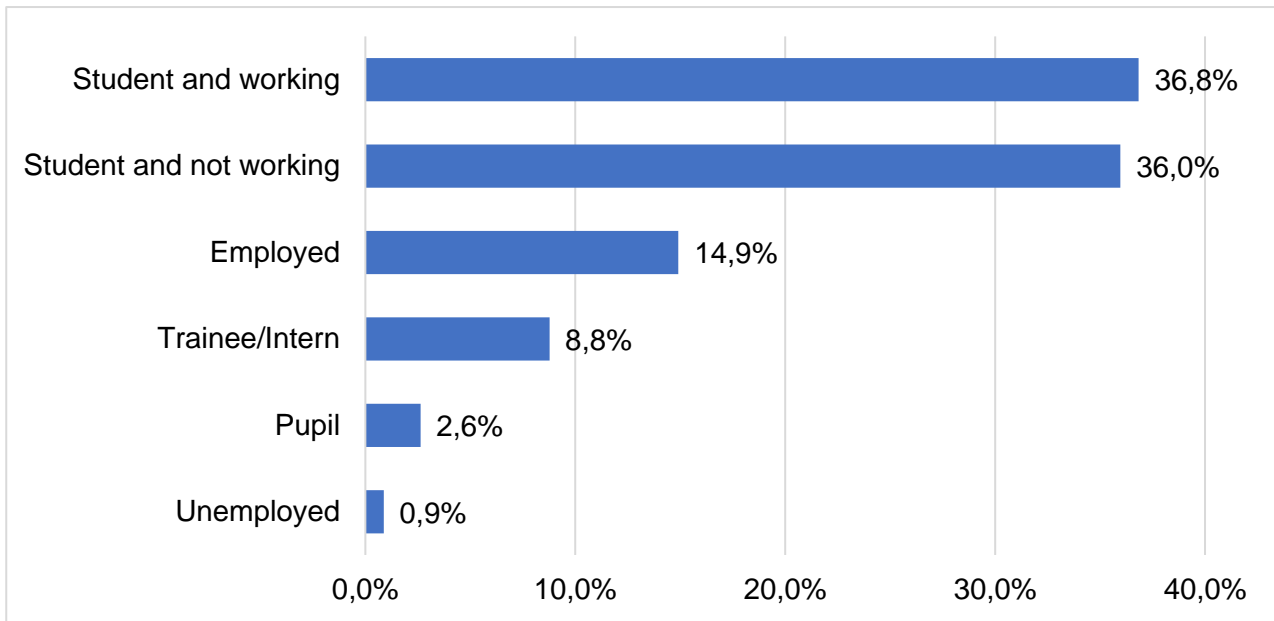
30. Please indicate your current country of residence: *

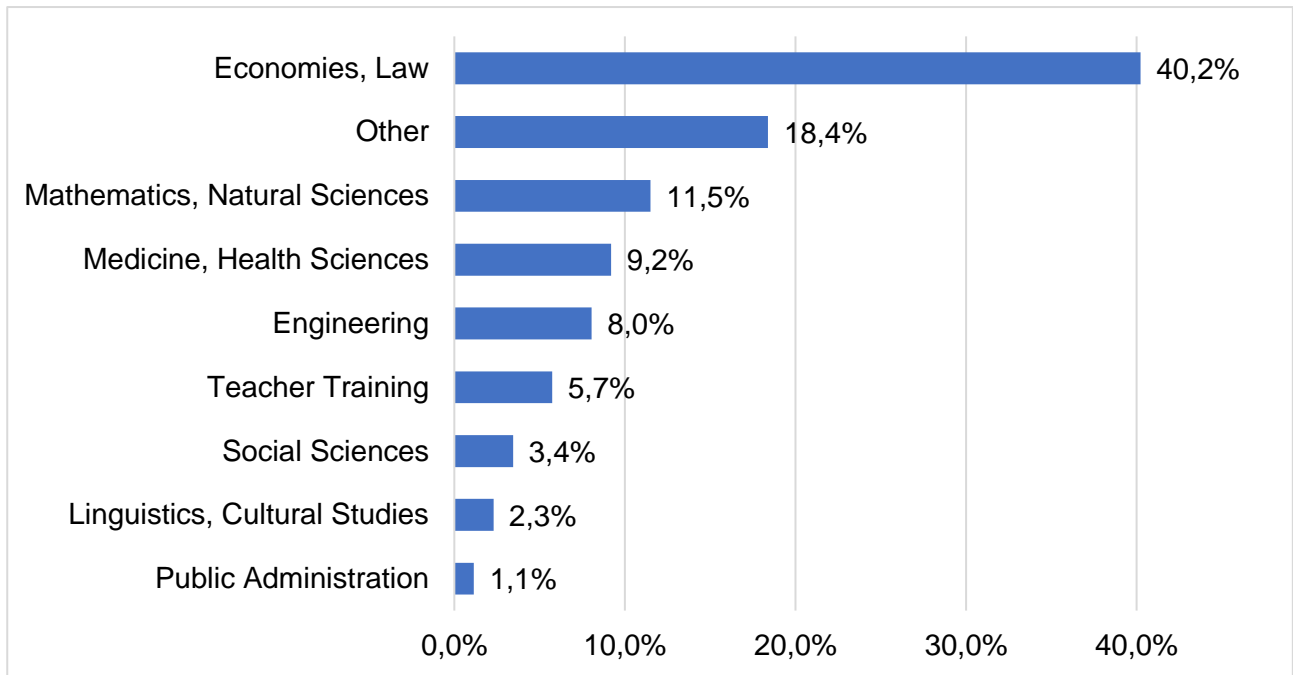
- Germany
 - Finland
 - Slovenia
 - Other, please specify
-

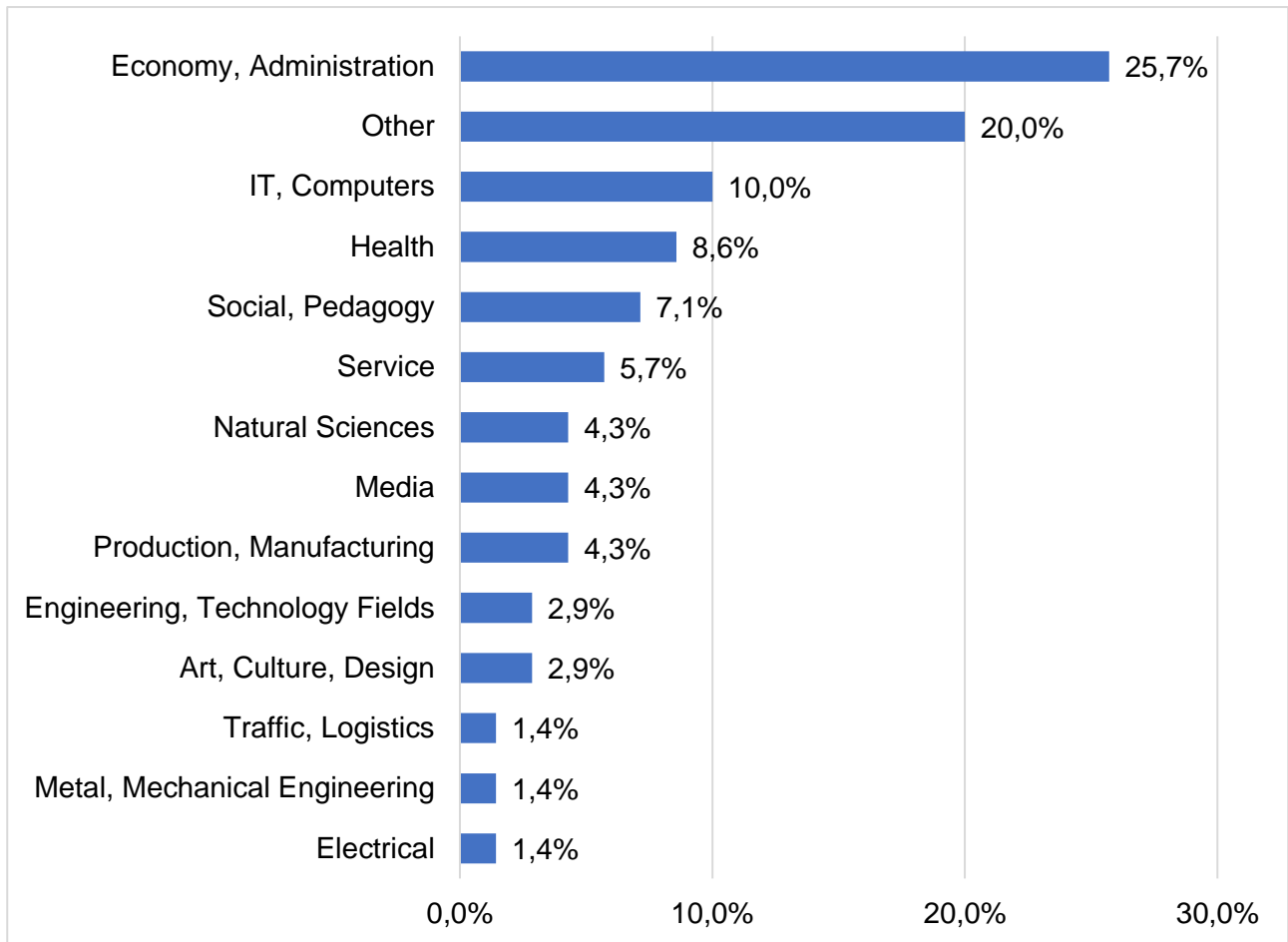
Appendix 2. Respondents' age distribution (n=114)

Appendix 3. Respondents' gender distribution (n=114)

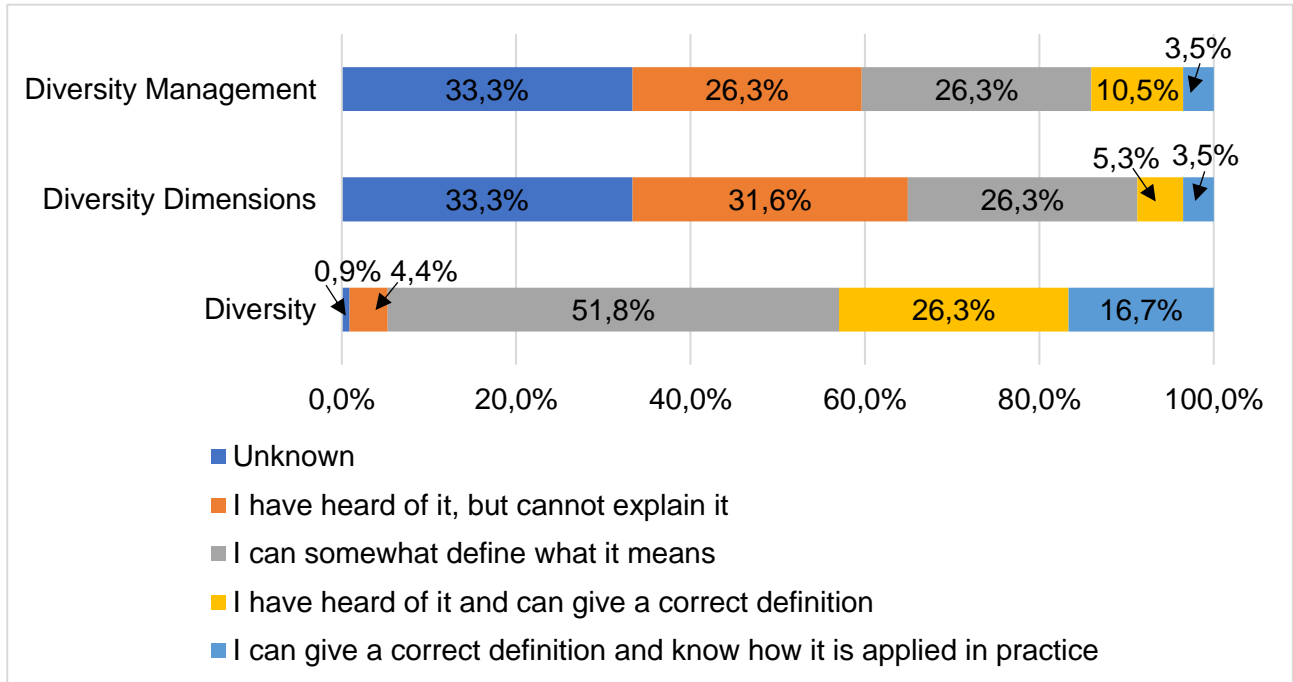
Appendix 4. Respondents' country of residence distribution (n=114)

Appendix 5. Current status of respondents (n=114)

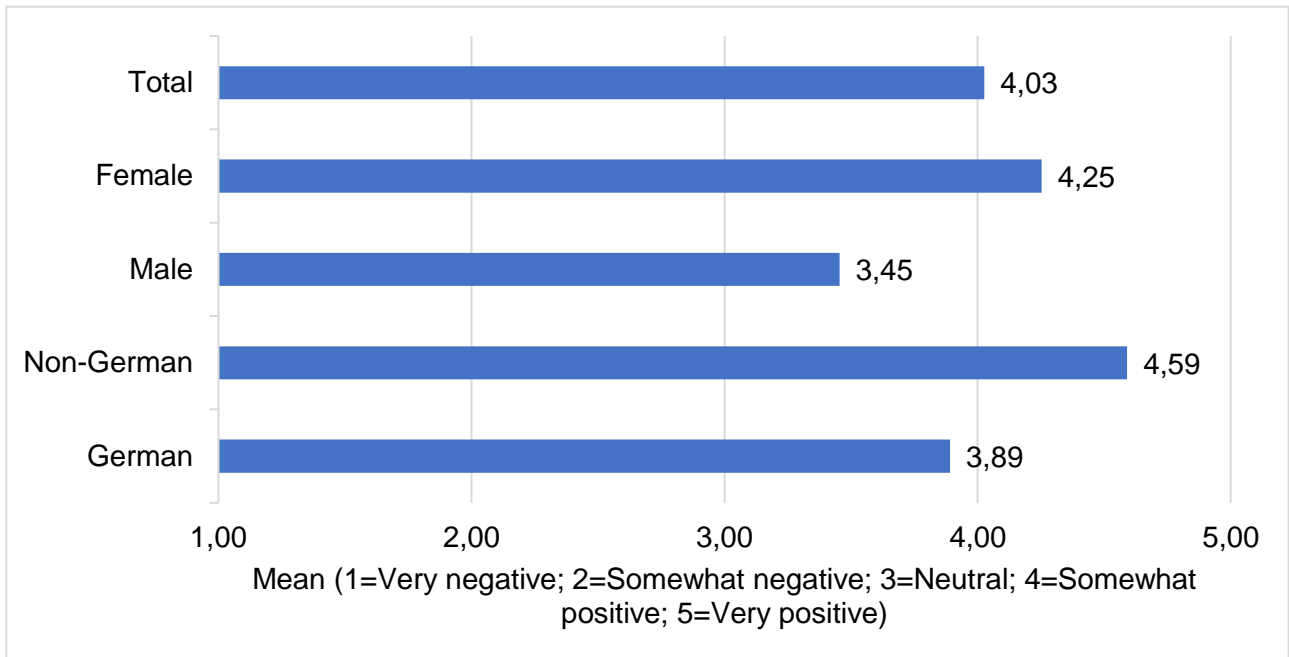
Appendix 6. Respondents' field of study (n=87)

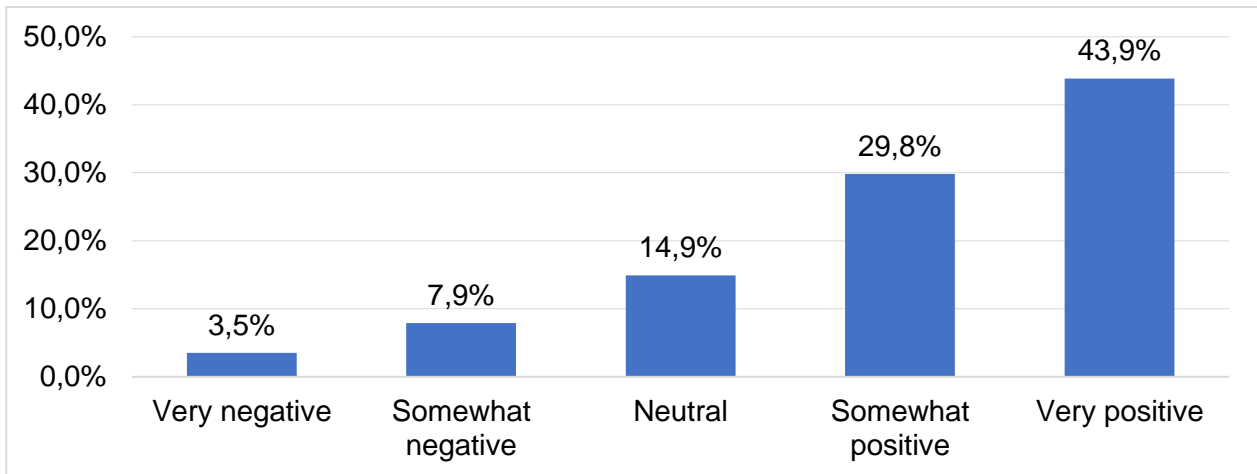
Appendix 7. Respondents' field of work (n=70)

Appendix 8. Respondents' familiarity with the terms 'Diversity Management', 'Diversity Dimensions', and 'Diversity' (n=114)

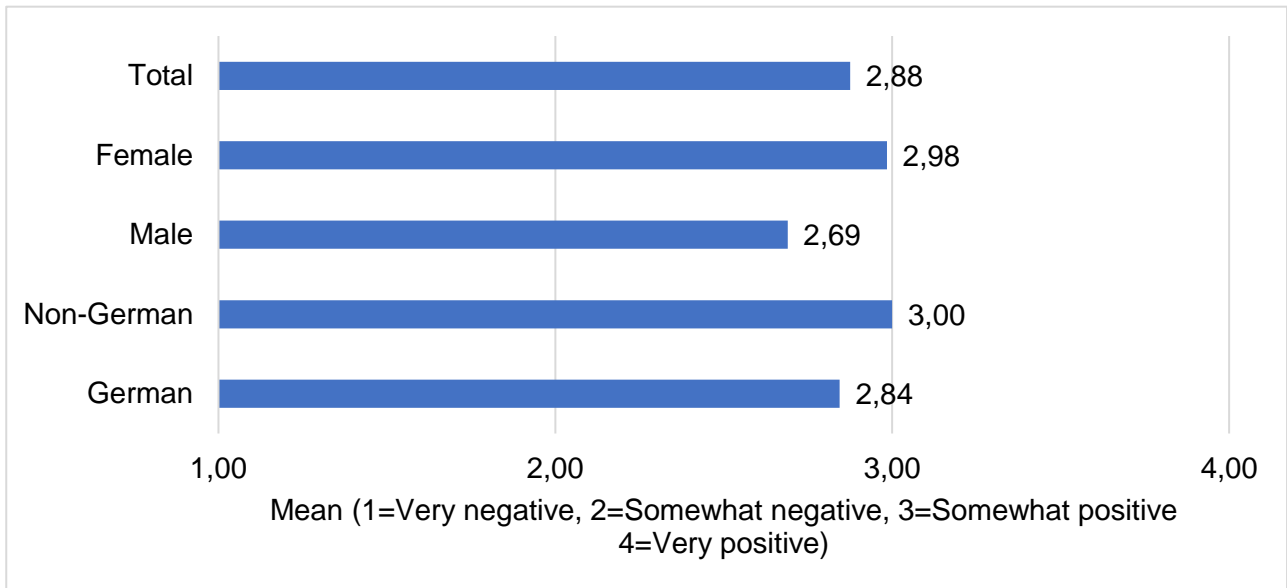


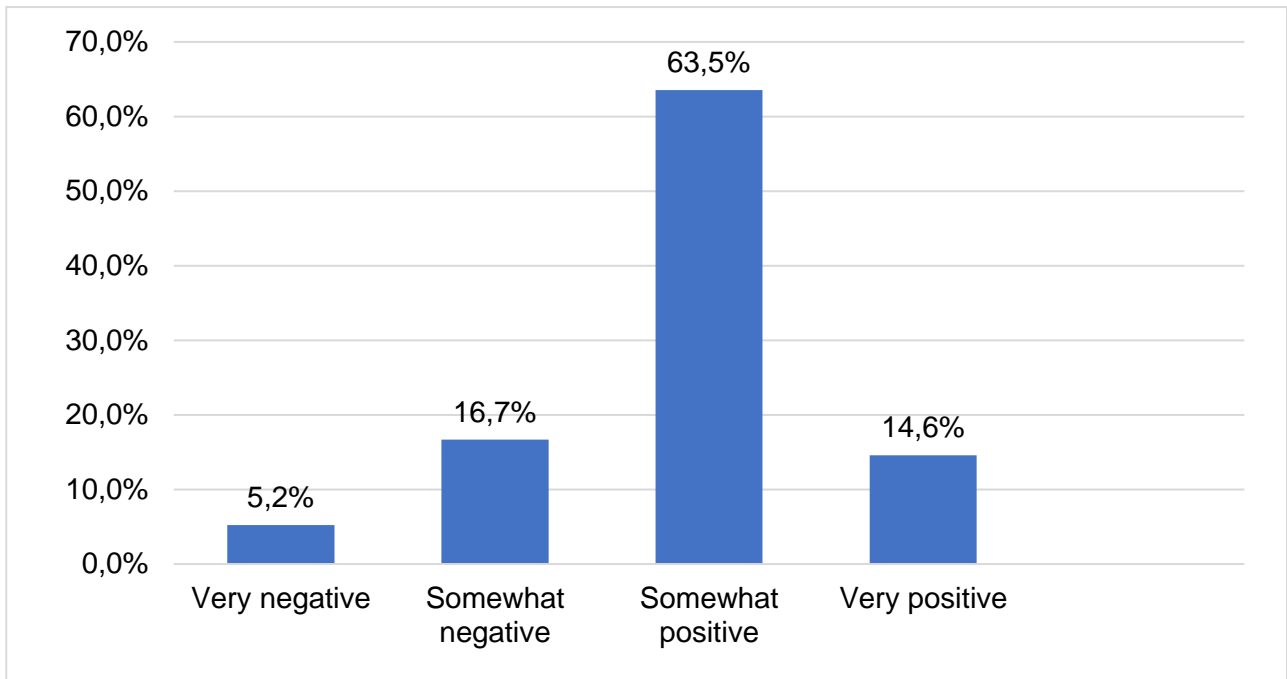
Appendix 9. Mean distribution of personal attitude toward diversity in the workplace (n'Total'=114; n'Female'=79; n'Male'=33; n'Non-German'=22; n'German'=92)



Appendix 10. Personal attitude toward diversity in the workplace (n=114)

Appendix 11. Mean distribution of personal experience toward diversity (n'Total'=96; n'Female'=65; n'Male'=29; n'Non-German'=19; n'German'=77)



Appendix 12. Personal experience toward diversity in the workplace (n=96)

Appendix 13. Hypothesis Test: Personal attitude toward diversity across gender

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. ^{a,b}	Decision
1	The distribution of 7_How would you assess your personal ATTITUDE towards Diversity in the workplace? is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.007	Reject the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

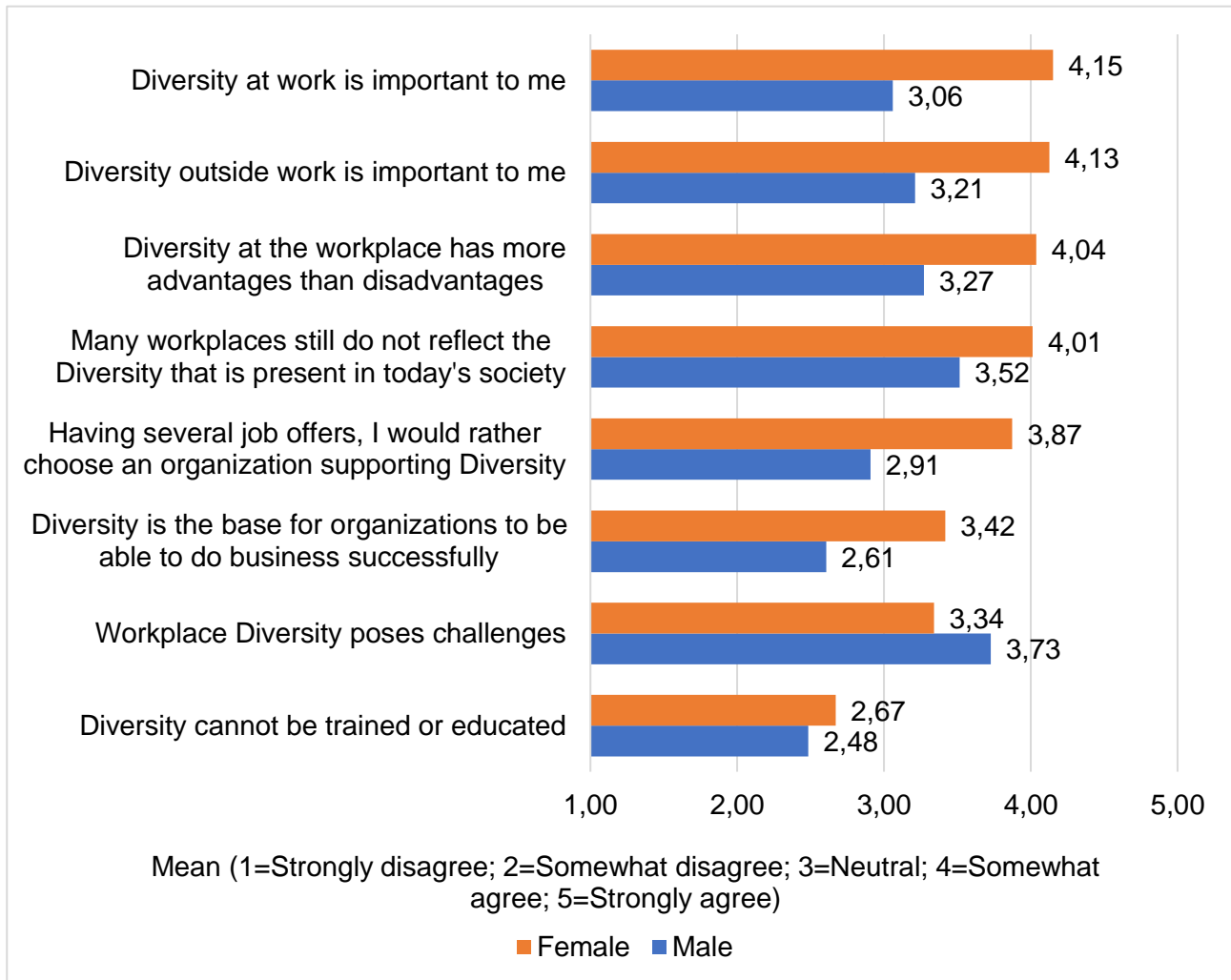
Appendix 14. Hypothesis Test: Personal attitude towards diversity across nationality

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. ^{a,b}	Decision
1	The distribution of 7_How would you assess your personal ATTITUDE towards Diversity in the workplace? is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.006	Reject the null hypothesis.

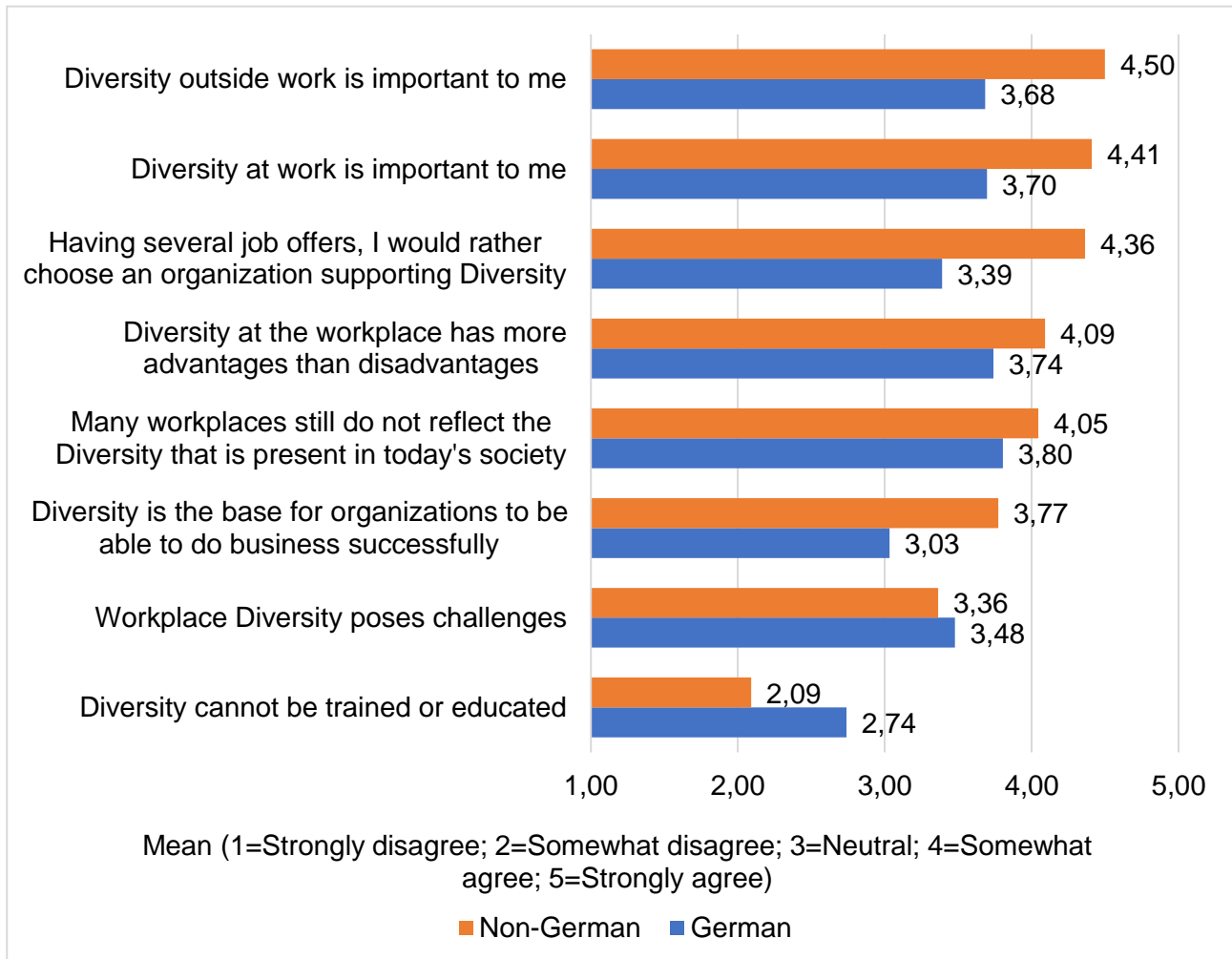
a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

**Appendix 15. Mean distribution of personal ratings of diversity statements across gender
(n'Female'=79; n'Male'=33)**



Appendix 16. Mean distribution of personal ratings of diversity statements across nationality (n'Non-German'=22; n'German'=92)



Appendix 17. Hypothesis Test: Different distribution on personal ratings of diversity statements across gender

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. ^{a,b}	Decision
1	The distribution of 9a_Please rate the following statements: Diversity at work is important to me is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender:.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of 9b_Please rate the following statements: Diversity outside work is important to me is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender:.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of 9c_Please rate the following statements: Diversity at the workplace has more advantages than disadvantages is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender:.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.004	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of 9d_Please rate the following statements: Diversity cannot be trained or educated is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender:.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.210	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of 9e_Please rate the following statements: Diversity is the base for organizations to be able to do business successfully is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender:.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.007	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of 9f_Please rate the following statements: Having several job offers, I would rather choose an organization supporting Diversity is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender:.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
7	The distribution of 9g_Please rate the following statements: Many workplaces still do not reflect the Diversity that is present in today's society is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender:.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.101	Retain the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of 9h_Please rate the following statements: Workplace Diversity poses challenges is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender:.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.151	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

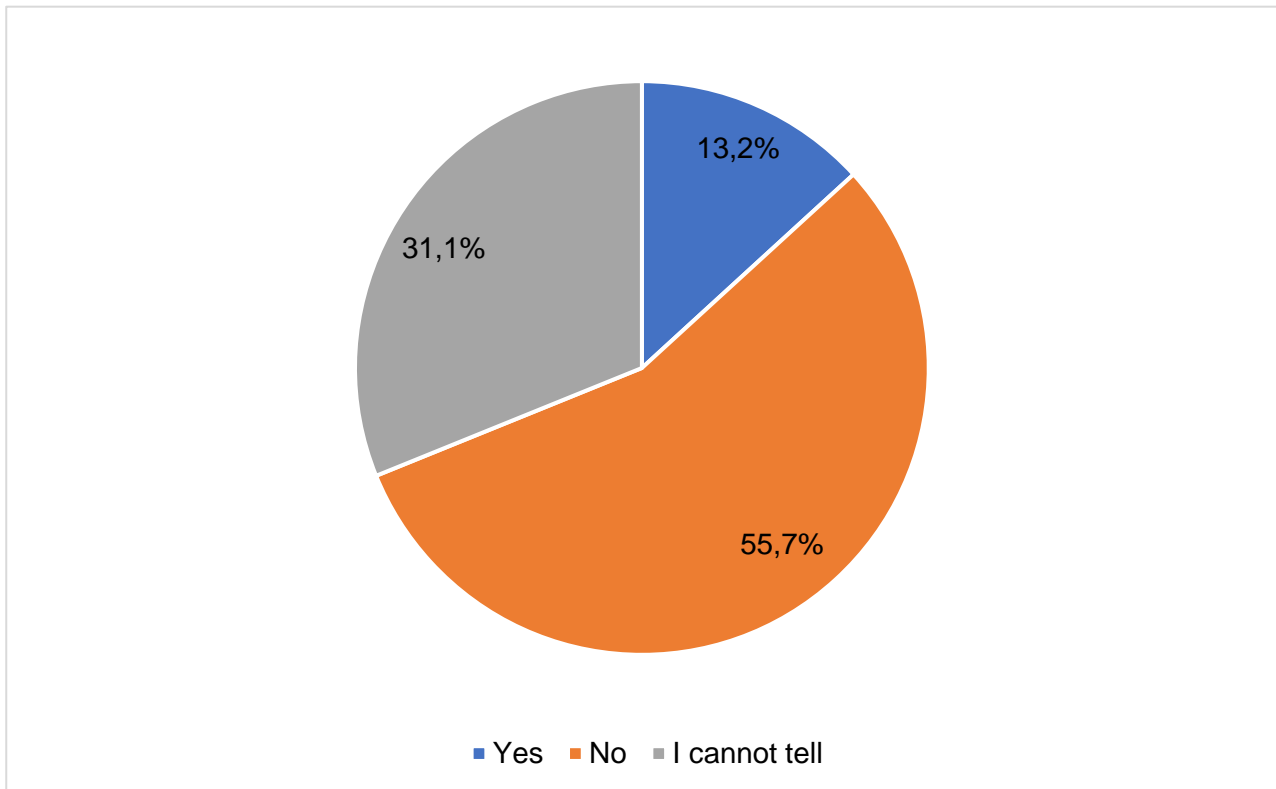
Appendix 18. Hypothesis Test: Different distribution on personal ratings of diversity statements across nationality

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. ^{a,b}	Decision
1	The distribution of 9a_Please rate the following statements: Diversity at work is important to me is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.008	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of 9b_Please rate the following statements: Diversity outside work is important to me is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.004	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of 9c_Please rate the following statements: Diversity at the workplace has more advantages than disadvantages is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.249	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of 9d_Please rate the following statements: Diversity cannot be trained or educated is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.015	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of 9e_Please rate the following statements: Diversity is the base for organizations to be able to do business successfully is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.005	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of 9f_Please rate the following statements: Having several job offers, I would rather choose an organization supporting Diversity is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
7	The distribution of 9g_Please rate the following statements: Many workplaces still do not reflect the Diversity that is present in today's society is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.352	Retain the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of 9h_Please rate the following statements: Workplace Diversity poses challenges is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.495	Retain the null hypothesis.

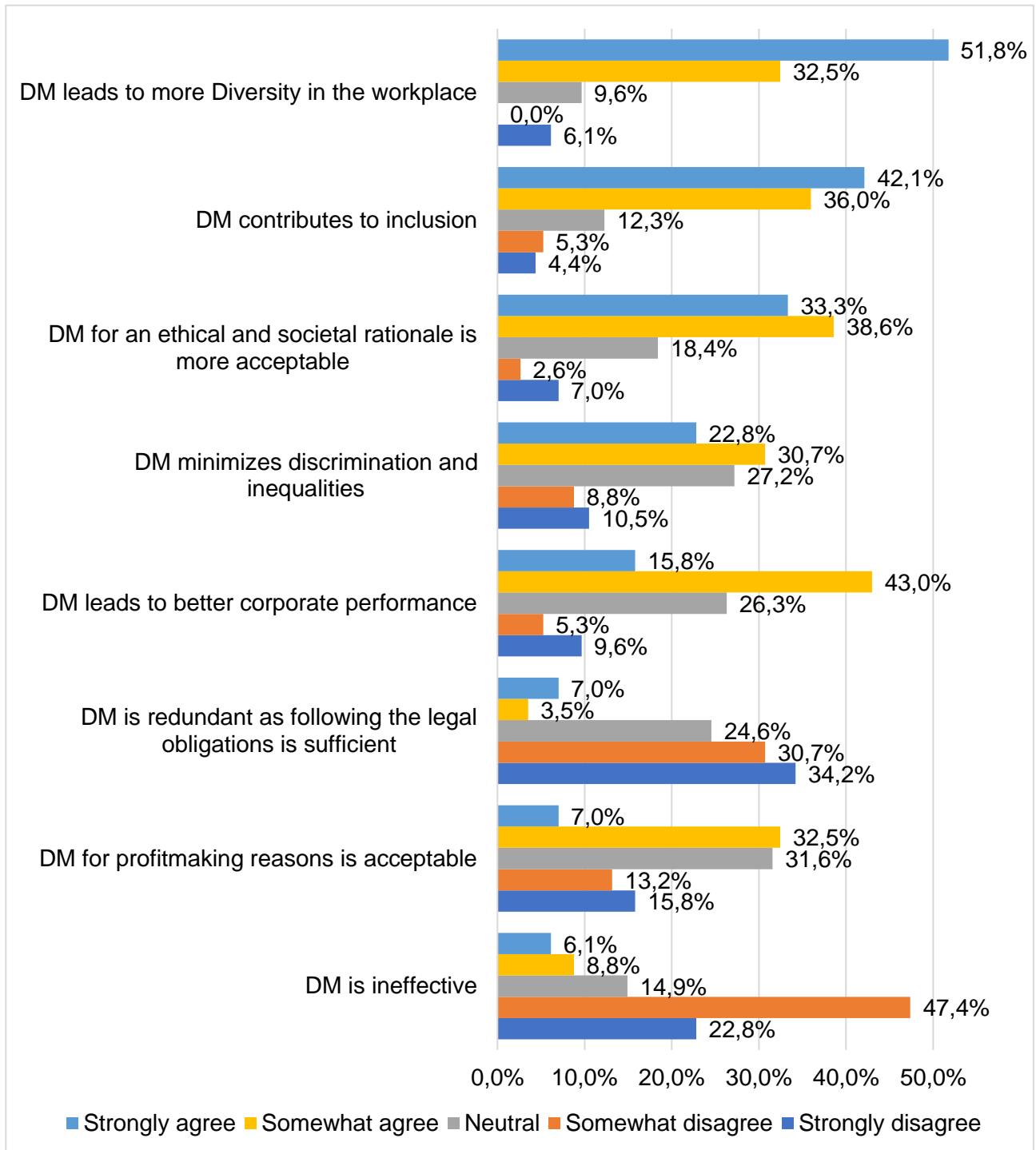
a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

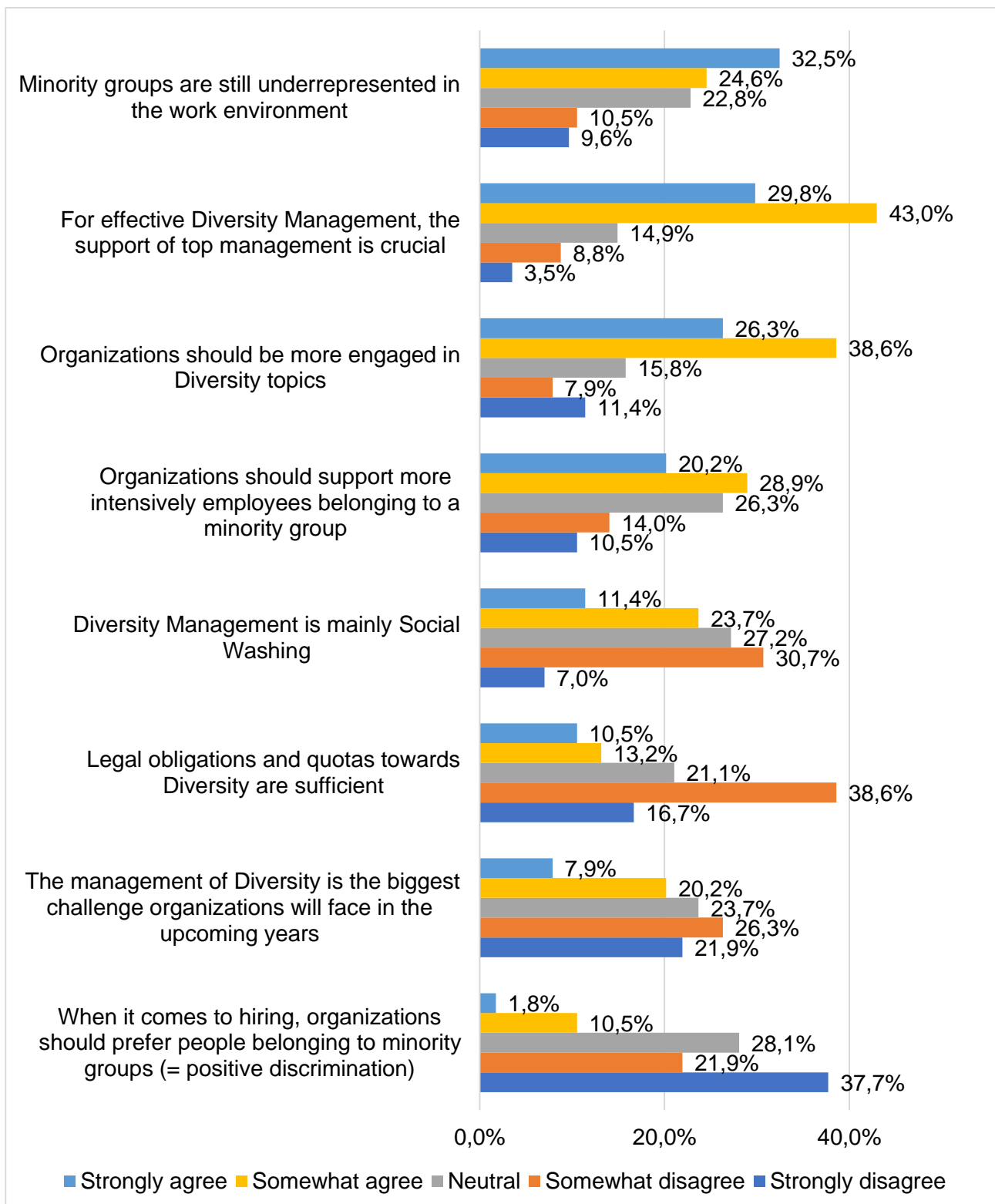
Appendix 19. Respondents' distribution of being confronted with disadvantages because of diversity characteristics differences (n=106)



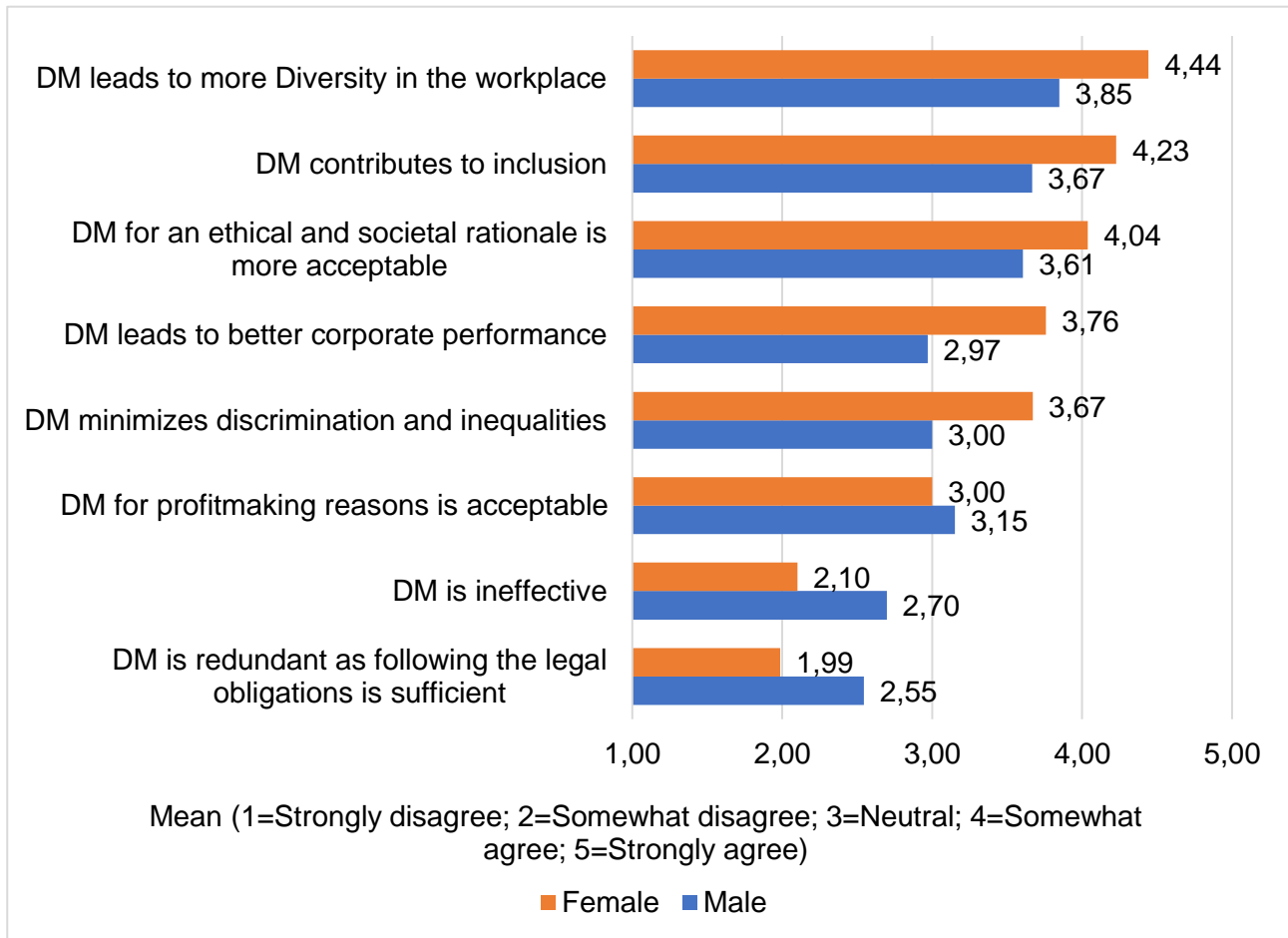
Appendix 20. Respondents' level of agreement on statements about diversity management in organizations (n=114)



Appendix 21. Respondents' level of agreement toward personal attitude statements (n=114)



Appendix 22. Respondents' mean distribution of the level of agreement on statements towards diversity management in organizations across gender (n=114)



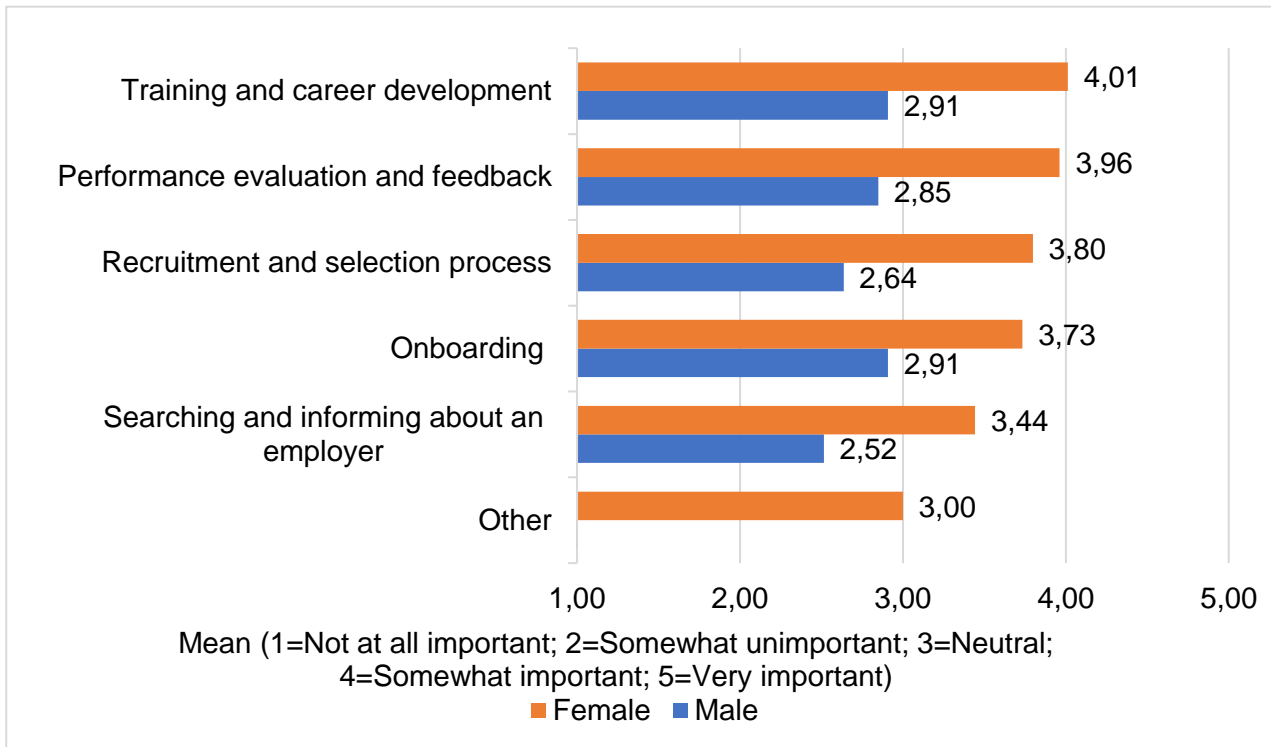
Appendix 23. Hypothesis Test: Differences in respondents' mean distribution of level of agreement on statements towards diversity management in organizations across gender

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. ^{a,b}	Decision
1	The distribution of 16a_Please rate: Diversity Management in organizations... - ...for profitmaking reasons is acceptable is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.293	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of 16b_Please rate: Diversity Management in organizations... - ...for an ethical and societal rationale is more acceptable is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.099	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of 16c_Please rate: Diversity Management in organizations... - ...leads to better corporate performance is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.003	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of 16d_Please rate: Diversity Management in organizations... - ...leads to more Diversity in the workplace is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.016	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of 16e_Please rate: Diversity Management in organizations... - ...contributes to inclusion is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.046	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of 16f_Please rate: Diversity Management in organizations... - ...minimizes discrimination and inequalities is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.010	Reject the null hypothesis.
7	The distribution of 16g_Please rate: Diversity Management in organizations... - ...is ineffective is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.013	Reject the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of 16h_Please rate: Diversity Management in organizations... - ...is redundant as following the legal obligations is sufficient is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.026	Reject the null hypothesis.

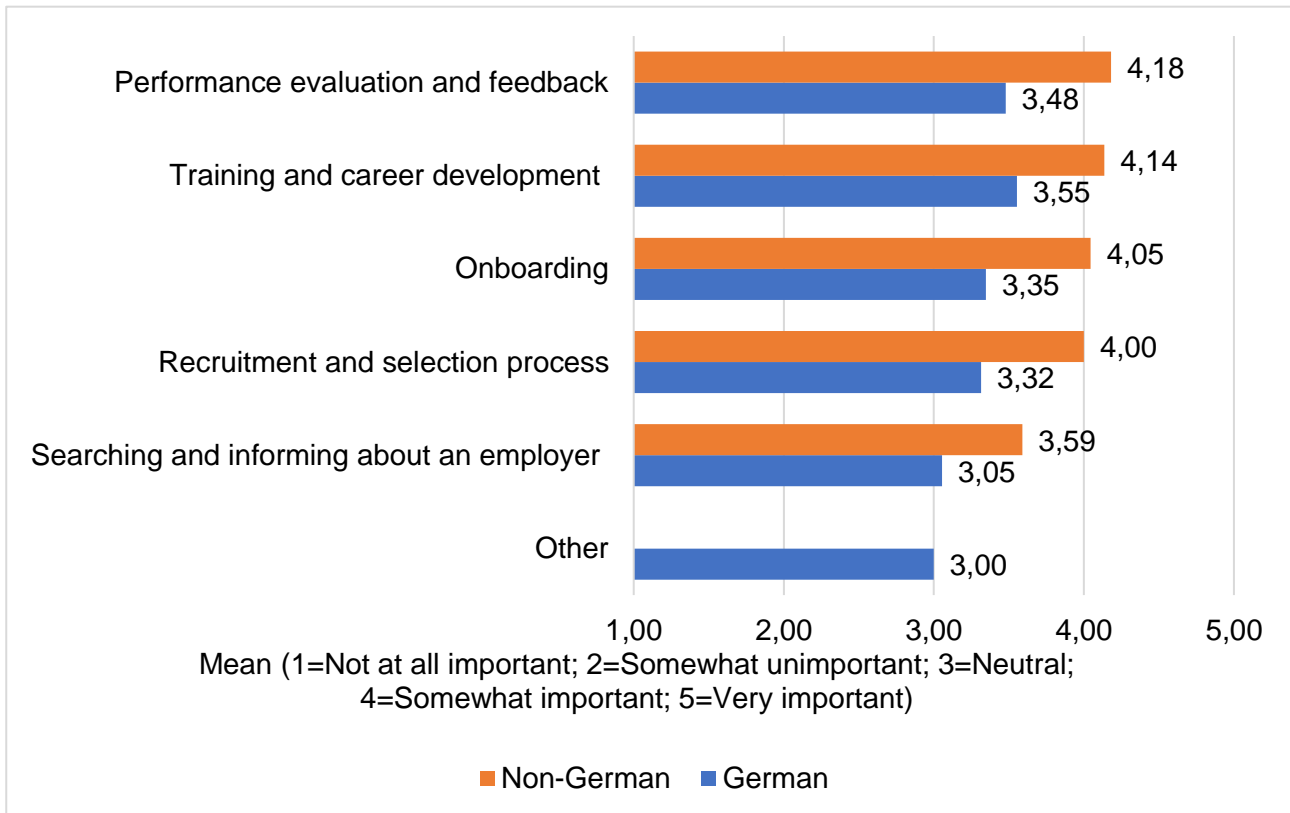
a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Appendix 24. Importance of diversity management at the respective touchpoints across gender (n'Female'=79; n'Male'=33)



Appendix 25. Importance of diversity management at the respective touchpoints across nationality (n'Non-German'=22; n'German'=92)



Appendix 26. Hypothesis Test: Differences in the importance of diversity management at the respective touchpoints across gender

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. ^{a,b}	Decision
1	The distribution of 19a_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Searching and informing about an employer (e.g.: social media, career webpages, recruiting events) is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.002	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of 19b_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Recruitment and selection process (e.g.: application process, job interviews) is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of 19c_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Onboarding (e.g.: company networks, events) is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.009	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of 19d_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Training and career development (e.g.: salary, promotion) is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.002	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of 19e_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Performance evaluation and feedback is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of 19f_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Other, please specify is the same across categories of 25_Please indicate your gender..	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	. ^c	Unable to compute.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

c. There is only one group with valid data.

Appendix 27. Hypothesis Test: Differences in the importance of diversity management at the respective touchpoints across nationality

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. ^{a,b}	Decision
1	The distribution of 19a_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Searching and informing about an employer (e.g.: social media, career webpages, recruiting events) is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.080	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of 19b_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Recruitment and selection process (e.g.: application process, job interviews) is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.032	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of 19c_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Onboarding (e.g.: company networks, events) is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.019	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of 19d_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Training and career development (e.g.: salary, promotion) is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.110	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of 19e_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Performance evaluation and feedback is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.034	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of 19f_How essential is Diversity Management for you at the respective touchpoints? - Other, please specify is the same across categories of nationality.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	. ^c	Unable to compute.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

c. At least one of the specified groups is empty.

Declaration of authorship of an academic paper with a partner university

I hereby declare that I have written this paper myself and used no other sources or resources than those indicated, have clearly marked verbatim quotations as such, and clearly indicated the source of all paraphrased references, and have observed the General Study and Examination Regulations of Reutlingen University for bachelor and master programmes, the specific regulations for study and examinations of my study programme, and the Regulations for Ensuring Good Academic Practice of Reutlingen University. This paper is also being presented, in accordance with the study and examination regulations of the study programme Bachelor of Business Administration in International Business to Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. Furthermore, neither this paper nor any part of this paper is a part of any other material presented for examination at this or any other institution.

Düsseldorf, 12.06.2023

Sabrina Kolb