Bachelor’s Thesis on

Determinants of Cultural Diversity Training Effectiveness

submitted by

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Abstract

This bachelor thesis is a literature review that aims to identify the factors that determine the effectiveness of cultural diversity training.

The first chapter of this literature review is an introduction to diversity training and the importance of implementing it effectively in multicultural organizations. Moreover, the purpose and the general structure of this thesis are also explained in this chapter.

The second chapter represents the theoretical framework on which the entire thesis is based on. In this section the relevant terminology for the understanding of the concept of cultural diversity training and its effectiveness is defined.

The third chapter is a synthesis of the main empirical and non empirical researches regarding diversity training conducted in the past that represents the current state of the investigation from which is necessary to start for research progress.

In the forth chapter the methodology used for the process of writing this literature review and the approach adopted are described.

The fifth chapter shows the results of the studies considered for this review and outlines the findings that are particularly relevant for answering the research question of this literature review.

The findings of this review, and therefore the factors that determine the effectiveness of cultural diversity training, are discussed in the sixth chapter of this thesis. Moreover, this section delineates the strengths and weaknesses of this review and gives other researchers recommendations for future investigation to promote a deeper understanding of the topic. Furthermore, the theoretical and practical implications of this research are also presented in this chapter.

The seven and last chapter represents a conclusion of this literature review.
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<tr>
<td>CDO</td>
<td>Chief Diversity Officer</td>
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<td>EEO</td>
<td>Equal Employment Opportunity</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resource</td>
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<td>IDI</td>
<td>Intercultural Development Inventory</td>
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<td>IDV</td>
<td>Individualism vs Collectivism</td>
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<td>IND</td>
<td>Indulgence vs Restraint</td>
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<td>LTO</td>
<td>Long term orientation vs short term normative orientation</td>
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<td>PDI</td>
<td>Power Distance</td>
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<td>SHRM</td>
<td>Society for Human Resource Management</td>
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<td>UAI</td>
<td>Uncertainty Avoidance Index</td>
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1. Introduction

Cultural diversity has become an important aspect of organizations as a consequence of globalization and demographic change. The complexity of managing a multicultural workforce and environment is becoming a big challenge. International organizations have the important responsibility to value and manage diversity to ensure positive individual interaction, reduce prejudice and discrimination among people with diverse cultural characteristics, and train them to work together respectfully and effectively (Pendry et al., 2007).

A common approach used by companies to manage diversity is the diversity training. Generally, diversity training is considered an approach that aims to increase awareness about the individual differences in the workplace and the way those diverse characteristics are able to either impede or intensify how employees accomplish their work duties together (Lindsey et al., 2014). Furthermore, diversity trainings provide the knowledge about the behavioural improvements necessary to work in a diverse workforce (Arthur et al., 2003).

Organizations have made great efforts to introduce diversity training programmes in order to better manage their multicultural workforce; however, not always they have obtained the desired results. The ineffectiveness of the implemented trainings perhaps indicates a failure in designing the specific training based on the organizational needs (Cocchiara et al., 2010).

If well structured, diversity training can represent the strategic tool which has the purpose to make an organization more competitive leading to business success (Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1999).

This bachelor thesis is a literature review that aims to collect and examine the most relevant findings from empirical and non-empirical researches, concerning diversity training, conducted up to the present.
The purpose of this review is also to identify the gaps and weaknesses that have been found in the existing literature analysed for this study, and give recommendations for future research in the field of cultural diversity training.

The methodology used for writing this thesis is a literature review and a deductive approach was employed to execute this research. It is, in fact, based on meaningful theories, findings and empirical studies conducted in the past by other researchers.

On one hand, this investigation has theoretical implications as it adds material to the existing theoretical framework and helps generating new theories. On the other hand, it also has practical implication since it gives instructions regarding the implementation of successful cultural diversity training that are particularly beneficial for Human Resources managers, diversity managers and anyone who is interested in diversity training.

The research question that this literature review intends to answer is: 

*What are the factors that determine effective cultural diversity training?*
2. Theory

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 Culture

Culture is a concept that is as old as the human existence. The anthropologist Tylor (1974) described culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

Culture is often illustrated with the image of an iceberg. Only the small tip of an iceberg appears visible over the water surface, while the biggest part is hidden under the water which misleads the perspective of the viewer. The same happens with culture, as the most essential elements necessary for its understanding are unseen (Schein, 2010).

The Iceberg-Model was first introduced by Sigmund Freud (1963) to describe the three levels of the human mind: the conscious (mental activities of which we are aware of), the preconscious (memory) and the unconscious (mental activities that unconsciously control our feelings, judgments and behaviours).

Several researchers subsequently adopted Freud’s iceberg model differentiating the visible and the unseen aspects of culture. One of them is the American psychologist Schein (2010) who defines a group’s culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (p.18).

Schein (2010) claims that a group’s culture consists of three levels: the artefacts (the characteristics that are easily visible and perceived by other individuals), the beliefs and values, and the basic assumptions (unconscious perceptions, thoughts and feelings). This model of culture could metaphorically be illustrated
like an iceberg where the tip represents the visible artefacts while the shared values and assumptions are hidden below the water surface and therefore not explicit to others (Schein, 2010).

Schein (2010) interprets the concept of culture from an organizational perspective. He emphasizes that organizations and its leaders will encounter growing intercultural challenges.

The Dutch social psychologist Hofstede (2001) defines culture as the “collective programming of mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (p. 9).

Hofstede distinguishes three levels of the human mind which he illustrates in the figure of a pyramid below:

![Fig. 1: Three Levels of uniqueness in Mental Programming (Hofstede, G., et al., 2010, p. 6)](image)

The bottom layer is the _Human Nature_ which represents the biological activities common to all human beings like laughing or crying which are inherited from one generation to another (Hofstede et al., 2010).

The central level, _Culture_, constitutes the activities shared by people belonging to the same group but that differentiate from other groups, such as the language, the perception of certain activities like eating or making love, or the physical space, also called proximity, that humans keep between each other to feel comfortable (Hofstede et al., 2010).
The top of the pyramid, the *Personality* layer, is the most exclusive level of the human programming and it represents the unique personality of each human being that is different from any other (Hofstede et al., 2010). Of all the three layers, the middle level is the only one that is specific to a group or category and that can be learned by individuals. This is the human mental programming level which Hofstede considers the representation of culture (Hofstede et al, 2010).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2000) describe culture as "the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas" (p. 6). They also argue that there exist significant cultural dissimilarities between countries and they have an impact on the way of doing business and managing organizations.

Each of the mentioned definition describes a different aspect of culture but to really understand what culture is, it is necessary to take all definitions together into account.

### 2.1.2 National Culture

Hofstede is considered the pioneer in cross-cultural researches as he conducted surveys and interviews on people’s behaviour in 70 different companies all around the world in the early 70's, while he worked as manager of personnel research at IBM International. From the data collected, Hofstede (2010) deducted that it is necessary to differentiate national and organizational culture. He distinguishes six dimensions of national culture:

1. Power Distance (PDI)
2. Individualism versus collectivism (IDV)
3. Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
4. Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)
5. Long term Orientation versus short term normative orientation (LTO)
6. Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)

The Power Distance is the extent to which the less influential individuals accept the difference of power unequally distributed in the society. In societies with high power distance individuals tolerate a hierarchical structure of the society; instead, populations with a low power distance try to equally distribute power among the members of the society (Hofstede et al, 2010).

Individualistic societies are characterised by people that tend to look after themselves and their closest family members. In collectivist communities, by contrast, the care and protection is extended to all members of that community (Hofstede et al, 2010).

Masculinity represents groups whose core values are competition, achievement, heroism and material reward for success. Feminine societies, instead, are in favour of cooperation, humility, quality of life and concern for the weaker (Hofstede et al, 2010).

Uncertainty Avoidance Index represents the extent to which a society does not tolerate the uncertainty of the future. Countries with high UAI tend to be inflexible with unconventional behaviours and have a fixed set of conduct. Societies with low UAI are more tolerant and relaxed (Hofstede et al, 2010).

Societies that tend to be conservative and keep past traditions instead to open to changes are those that score low in the LTO dimension. By contrast, countries that score high support changes and deal with the challenges of the present to prepare for the future (Hofstede et al, 2010).

Indulgent societies encourage life enjoyment, while restraint societies prevent the fulfilment of those necessities (Hofstede et al, 2010).
Hofstede defines organisational culture “as the way in which members of an organisation relate to each other, their work and the outside world in comparison to other organisations” (Hofstede et al, 2010).

Hofstede (1984) claims that the national culture affects the organizational culture and the way of managing the business and the people. It can be deducted that, since organizations’ workforce is becoming more culturally diverse, firms should adjust their corporate culture to ensure a working setting in which everyone’s own culture is accepted (Adler and Gundersen, 2008).

2.1.3 Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity refers to the presence and interaction of people who have different cultural backgrounds, attitudes, traditions and customs within the same society as result of international migration (UNESCO). Within an organizational framework, cultural diversity is referred to a mixture of cultural dissimilarities that characterise the workforce (Prasad et al., 1997).

The profitability of a company is conditioned by cultural diversity (Adler and Gundersen, 2008) and sometimes this can compromise the achievement of desired results due to misinterpretations or cultural clashes (Granovetter, 2005).

According to Cox (1991), a firm that simply includes several culturally diverse groups is considered a plural firm, meanwhile when a firm appreciates the value of its workforce diversity it is considered a multicultural organization. Indeed, a well managed culturally diverse organization has the potential to benefit from improved decision making, creativity and innovation as result of the individual’s distinct perspectives that will constitute the organization’s competitive advantage (Cox and Blake, 1991).
On the contrary, companies that do not value cultural diversity and do not manage it efficiently experience a competitive disadvantage represented by increased turnover, conflicts between individuals and communication failure (Cox, 1991). The first step to achieve the advantages of cultural diversity is to make all individuals of an organization aware of the cultural differences among them (Cox and Blake, 1991).

The most frequently used technique to effectively manage diversity and to promote a bias-free work environment is the adoption of diversity training that has the purpose to deliver awareness of cultural differences and to guide individuals to implement the appropriate attitudes towards those differences (Cox and Blake, 1991).

2.1.4 Diversity Training

Organizations have a different understanding of diversity training depending on their perception of diversity. In line with Pendry et al. (2007) diversity training is a combination of initiatives that has the purpose to promote favourable relationships among culturally diverse groups, minimize prejudice and discrimination, and reinforce the individuals’ skills, knowledge and motivation to cooperate together. Differently from any other training, diversity training confronts different perceptions of the world and is concerned with people’s emotional and personal problems (Hanover and Cellar, 1998). Some firms implement diversity training as an effective strategy to attract and maintain customers and productive employees, keeping a high enthusiasm and encourage comprehension and harmony among workers (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999).

The reasons why organizations decide to implement a diversity training program are multiple and differ from firm to firm. The results of a literature review
conducted by Cocchiara et al. (2010), confirm that some of the most frequent reasons why companies conduct diversity training are the following: achieve success and stay competitive in the global business context; improve leadership skills needed to increase a diverse workforce and manage diversity-related issues; enhance consciousness of personal feelings concerning diversity; promote leadership development and management effectiveness.

A Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) study conducted by Hite and McDonald (2006) shows that, of all the HR and training executives that they interviewed, 43% incorporated diversity awareness training as part of their diversity and inclusion initiative and 32% provided cross-cultural training. Although many studies confirm that diversity training is beneficial and increasingly adopted by organizations, sometimes it is considered ineffective. When trainers or companies are not aware of the factors that determine an effective diversity training there is the risk that they perform an inadequate training that manifests unfavourable effects (Hemphill and Haines, 1997).

Kalev et al. (2006) led a research and concluded that most employers use diversity training programs only to avoid responsibility in case of discrimination lawsuits, this also explains why most of the times participating to such training is mandatory for employees and managers. She also found that mandatory training creates a backlash against diversity and often bias is activated rather than reduced.

Cocchiara et al. (2010) confirm that many studies show that diversity training is unsuccessful because it only covers legal aspects without delivering the appropriate comprehension of the diversity-related issues and because the importance of such issues is not recognized by senior leadership, thus many firms consider it only a waste of time and other organization’s resources. However, diversity training remains the most supported approach used by organizations to manage their diversity. In line with Lai and Kleiner (2001) “Diversity training is a must” considering the development of more diverse organizational human resources. Arthur et al. (2003) support this position
believing that diversity training is the most effective way to improve the efficiency, skills and behaviours of the workers. Pendry et al. (2007) claim that one-third of training managers considered diversity training as absolutely necessary to integrate minority groups in the organization.

Although very contradictory opinions are discussed regarding the usefulness of diversity training among organizations, this paper defines the factors that determine the effectiveness of diversity training with the support of previously conducted studies.

2.2 Diversity Training Goals

Firms set different goals and have different organizational cultures. However, in line with Cocchiara et al. (2010), to make a diversity training effective it is necessary to first determine goals and then to measure the obtained results to establish if the desired objectives have been achieved. Diversity training experts claim that there are four categories of goals that should be achieved: first, the training itself: a comfortable environment where members can talk confidently about delicate topics; second, individual goals: participants are aware of differences and are able to value them; third, organizational goals: better relationships among and between employees and customers; finally, societal goals: reduction of social inequalities (Gutier et al., 2000).

Curtis and Dreachslin (2008) agree and claim that the following goals have to be reached at the individual, team and organizational level:

1. develop a work environment where all employees are concerned about prejudice and discrimination;
2. support employees to be aware of their own biases and create an approach to handle them;
3. make everyone realize that diversity is a valuable advantage to enhance employee and organizational performance.

In line with Simons (1992), the achievement of diversity training goals promotes the wellbeing of everyone; firstly, employees are more satisfied with a more positive work and social environment (Combs and Luthans, 2007); secondly, well managed diverse workforce result more productive and are more likely to generate innovative ideas (Williams and O’Reilly, 1998); finally, the reduction of turnover, the improvement of the information’s coordination and a decrease of EEO legal actions contribute to the firm’s competitive advantage.

It can be concluded that all organizations that provide diversity training have the common objective to embrace the opportunity to create a work environment in which diverse employees work efficiently and contribute to the organization and the own success.

2.3 Diversity training methods

The results of a study which investigated diversity training effects on trainees show that the success of diversity training depends on the method used to educate participants and their motivation and level of empathy. (Lindsey et al., 2014).

Kulik and Roberson (2008) argue that, although it is true that diversity trainings succeed to create cultural differences awareness after training, there is still an inconsistent effectiveness regarding behavioural changes towards certain minority groups.

In line with Bezrukova et al. (2012), participants have different characteristics and therefore react differently to diversity training inputs. This is an important aspect that influences the diversity training outcome, thus it should be considered when designing a training.
In scope to experiment if one method is more effective than others, 118 participants where distributed among three different diversity training approaches: perspective taking, goal setting and stereotype discrediting (Lindsey et al., 2014).

The first method, perspective taking, consists of observing the point of view of others and recognize that it differs from ours (Todd et al. 2012). With this method, individuals become aware of the categorization that they make to distinguish the in-group to which they belong from out-groups characterized by different social elements (Hogg and Terry, 2000). The result of this categorization, indeed, is that people are possibly induced to generate prejudice and bias towards out-groups (Lindsey et al. 2014); thus, this diversity training method aims to minimize the tendency to create bias towards individuals of a different group and moderate the classification of an “us versus them” barrier (Galisnky et al. 2005). A few researchers confirm this theoretical assumption. One study demonstrated that members of one group reacted more positively towards people of another group after they became aware of the different perspective (Batson et al. 1997). Another study conducted by Parker and Axtell (2001), confirmed that taking a different viewpoint results more collaborative behaviours at work.

The second method is the goal setting which consists of establishing diversity-related objectives which are specific, challenging and achievable (Locke et al. 1981). This method is believed to increase the effectiveness of a diversity training not just immediately after but also in the long term (Latham, 1997).

Finally, the third diversity training method is the stereotype discrediting that consists in discrediting a group’s common stereotypes. This approach is based on the theoretical belief that disproving the own perspective promotes a behavioural change (Janis and King, 1954). Some researchers do not agree with this theoretical framework. Bohner and Dickel (2011) argue that strong behaviours, such as stereotyping, are not likely to change. Therefore, the discrediting stereotype method does not convert but rather suppresses the stereotyping attitude. This probably results in a reduction of prejudice in the
short-term but would not prove to be an effective method over time (Macrae et al., 1994). According to Crandall and Eshleman (2003), the tendency of individuals to elaborate reasons to defend their prejudices invalidate the attempt to suppress the stereotype attitude. This theory is supported by Legault et al. (2011) who claims that the repression of such behaviours in diversity training enhances the manifestation of prejudices towards others.

Cocchiara et al. (2010) suggest a four-factors method to ensure diversity is successfully supported in organizations. This method is called A.G.E.M. and includes the following four elements: Approach, Goals, Executive Commitment, and Mandatory Attendance.

The “Approach” consists of two components: one specific person in charge of setting diversity-related goals and evaluating development, such as a CDO (Chief Diversity Officer); and the use of training followed by its assessment to increase trainees' awareness of the own prejudicial behaviours and to indicate the correct attitudes to decrease stereotyping and bias. Another important step before designing diversity training is a needs assessment which helps to recognize the organization’s issues and determine the way to meet the set objectives (Arthur et al., 2003).

The second element of the method suggested by Cocchiara et al. (2010) is “Goals”. Indeed, after having determined the approach to meet the organizational objectives, it is necessary to set the diversity training goals. This step helps managers and diversity trainers to assess whether or not the wished results have been reached.

The third factor of this method is “Executive Commitment”. According to Cocchiara et al. (2010) the main weakness of diversity training is that managers do not adequately support diversity. It is crucial that top executives are aware of the change necessary to promote diversity and know where and for whom the changes should take place. Indeed, executives have the potential to create inclusive and diversity-friendly work conditions through their decisions. HR managers are accountable for setting the results that need to be met after diversity training is conducted and should consist of awareness, knowledge and
skills (Connerley and Pedersen, 2005). The active engagement of executives in diversity training is a signal that diversity is an important concern for the organization and that everyone should be involved in the process of valuation of diversity.

The fourth and last element of the A.G.E.M. method is “Mandatory Attendance”. Kruger and Dunning (2009)’s study show that unskilled people are not able to acknowledge the lack of abilities thus can not improve. Kulik et al. (2007) agree with this line and claim that less skilled people are unaware of their status therefore are also unable to deliberately change their condition. Diversity training participants that have low diversity-related skills do not recognize the advantage of participating to such training (Kulik et al., 2007). According to the study by Rynes and Rosen (1995) that shows that mandatory attendance results in more successful diversity training outcomes, Cocchiara et al. (2010) recommend that obligatory attendance is a precondition to ensure effective diversity training.

2.4 Effectiveness of Cultural Diversity Training

Although it is difficult to define what an effective cultural diversity training looks like due to differences that characterise the organizations that introduce this program, it is possible to outline the factors that affect the meaning of this concept. Some of the factors that differ uniquely from firm to firm are history and diversity needs (Cocchiara et al., 2010), the actual purpose and the quality of the training, the organization’s understanding of the concept of diversity (Wentling and Palmas-Rivas, 1999), and the circumstantial differences like the firm’s size, resources and the national culture (Hite and McDonald, 2006).

According to the results of a study conducted by Cocchiara et al. (2010), the ability to estimate the effectiveness of a diversity training depends on the establishment of measurements criteria before the training is performed.
Without diversity training assessments it is not possible to determine the effectiveness of diversity training (Anand and Winters, 2008). Although there is not a specific way to make cultural diversity trainings effective, Cocchiara et al (2010) demonstrate a few practical approaches to accomplish a successful training.

The first approach is to support changes of employees’ behaviours by measuring after training achievements. The second is to implement customized and inclusive diversity training. To be effective, diversity training should be permanent and part of the organizational strategy. Moreover, it should satisfy particular needs and include everyone. The third practice is to make sure that the participants are able to implement learnings to their profession (Cocchiara et al., 2010).

A study that involved 150 firms argues that 62% of employees transfer the training knowledge immediately, 44% applies it after six months and 34% after up to one year after training (Saks and Belcourt, 2006). However, these studies refer to training in general and there are no significant numbers about cultural diversity training particularly.

In this paper diversity training is considered effective when the training outcomes meet the desired objectives set before the training was designed and conducted. The achievement of the established goals after diversity training takes place affects the organization productivity and the trainees’ morale which is considered a condition of competitive advantage for the organization. Despite the purpose and the established goals that may vary among organizations, every cultural diversity training has to aim to create an environment in which every individual is equally treated and valued regardless of the cultural background and beliefs.
3. Prior Empirical Studies

3.1 I. Study: Rynes and Rosen

Rynes and Rosen (1995) conducted a study in which they surveyed 785 human resource executives about diversity-related matters in their companies in order to analyse the elements related to the adoption of diversity training and to the training effectiveness perceived. This empirical research tried to investigate the reasons that differentiate organizations that implement diversity training from those that do not and the factors that make some trainings more effective than others. The study is based on the assumption of twelve hypotheses that are either accepted or refused according to the outcome of the questionnaire findings.

The first two hypotheses assume that large firms are generally more likely to introduce trainings as a tool to incorporate organizational values and that bigger companies are expected to have a specific figure designed to plan, organize and assess training effort, such as a human resource professional (Rynes and Rosen, 1995).

The third hypothesis assumes that diversity training is more likely to be found in firms characterized by a diverse management and that have encountered a workforce diversity growth.

According to Morrison (1992)’s study of the 16 organizations that managed diversity excellently, executives agreed that diversity training is not only a mechanism to increase fairness but especially a way to reach competitive advantage as it helps organizational goals - such as cost reduction, productivity growth, turnover and absenteeism decrease, employees enthusiasm - to be effectively achieved. From here, Rynes and Rosen (1995) create the fourth assumption according to which diversity initiatives are more likely to take place in firms where executives believe that the cost, productivity, and public relations are positively related to well managed diversity and furthermore encourage diversity programs.
Morrison (1992) found, with her study, that some organizations adopt also other strategies for supporting diversity such as fast-track programs for minorities, family leave, job-sharing, flexitime, telecommuting and second language courses. Consequently, Rynes and Rosen hypothesize that diversity training is more likely to take place in companies that already implement programs and strategies to support diversity.
These are hypotheses that concern the probability of adoption of diversity training.

The following assumptions relate to the factors that determine training success, which is affected by the training characteristics such as content and length, and the environment in which the knowledge transfer takes place (Rynes and Rosen, 1995).
Rynes and Rosen (1995) speculate that the type of attendance, mandatory or voluntary, affects the success of the diversity training. They assume that mandatory attendance and the presence of not only managers but all employees determine positive results of a diversity training. They also theorize that more success is achieved when a larger budget is devoted to the implementation of diversity training as symbolic sign that a high level of importance is allocated to it. Moreover, more financial resources materially available allows longer and more elaborated trainings, deeper needs assessment, and after training evaluations (Rynes and Rosen, 1995).
Changing inappropriate behaviours associated with prejudice and assumptions about different others can not be effectuated through a single, short training (Rynes and Rosen, 1995). Morrison (1992) sustains that short initiatives are more negative than no initiative at all and that diversity training that just reveals improper biases and behaviours generates side effects like resentment and defensiveness. In line with this, Rynes and Rosen (1995) speculate that the success is positively related to the duration of the diversity training.

A precondition that affects the effectiveness of diversity training is the evaluation that assesses the strengths, shortcomings, and effects of the programme which is necessary to improve the content and the impact on
participants (Goldstein, 1991). It is expected, therefore, that training will have more positive results if not only immediate evaluations to assess the trainees’ motivation during training are conducted but also long-term assessments to determine if training content is applied to the job (Rynes and Rosen, 1995).

Together with evaluation, also the content determines the success of the training (Rynes and Rosen, 1995). Generally, the main goal of diversity training is to raise individuals’ consciousness of the prejudices towards different others and awareness of their own beliefs and perspective (Morrison, 1992). Nevertheless, some argue that simply increasing awareness is not enough to reduce diversity-related issues and improve behaviours hence the result of such content-limited trainings is not as desired (Rynes and Rosen, 1995). The assumption is that a deeper analysis of a more comprehensive set of topics would affect the outcome of diversity training positively (Rynes and Rosen, 1995).

Another essential condition for the success of diversity training is the overall work environment that allows the application of the knowledge acquired during the training (Morrison, 1992). The hypothesis here is that diversity training is expected to have favourable results when the organization’s top management sustains diversity, when also other programs and policies are implemented and when diversity efforts are rewarded (Rynes and Rosen, 1995). Finally, companies that adopt a general definition of diversity not addressing it to a specific group are more likely to ensure an effective outcome from diversity training (Rynes and Rosen, 1995).

3.2 II. Study: Wentling and Palma-Rivas

Wentling and Palma-Rivas (1999) conducted an empirical study in which they interviewed 12 diversity experts with the purpose to deliver to human resource managers and generally decision makers important findings about the
components of effective diversity training. The study identified ten important elements that any person in charge of the diversity training design should take into consideration for the success of the training and are the following:

1) top management commitment and support: executives represent an example for others to understand that diversity is essential to the organization and connected to the achievements of business objectives. They should communicate the reasons for implementing diversity training, be open to listen and acknowledge employees’ diversity-related matters and provide a strategy to manage diversity;

2) in order to have successful results, diversity training should be included as part of the organizational strategic plan;

3) before implementing diversity training, organizations should assess specific needs to be able to determine the problems that the training should focus on instead of wasting time and resources on irrelevant issues;

4) the choice of a trainer is crucial to the effectiveness of the diversity training: trainers should be qualified at both professional/academic and personal/interpersonal levels. Professional/academic skills are needs assessment, evaluation, programme development, group dynamics, social psychology, cultural change, organizational behaviour, and historical diversity issues. The personal/interpersonal skills include communication skills, presentation skills, ability to understand others’ and their own diversity issues, ability to handle conflict and hostility remaining neutral, be open-minded and empathetic, respect differences and be committed to diversity, sensitive to individual differences and organizational needs, have a considerable experience in dealing with diversity;

5) to increase its success, diversity training needs to be connected to other programmes such as leadership training, team building or total quality management;
6) diversity training should have mandatory attendance for all employees so that everyone is aware of the diversity issues and how they effect the organization;

7) diversity training has to include every single individual to avoid the establishment of a “us-versus-them” feeling. Trainers should educate individuals in an all-inclusive environment where all employees feel secure to share their attitudes and feelings;

8) from the really beginning trainers should create a trustful and confidential environment and should set rules such as “respect others’ opinions and differences” or “keep conversations confidential”;

9) accountability is another important element and includes: create a connection between diversity goals and performance evaluation, consider diversity when determining promotions and manager's compensation, incorporation of diversity in the firm’s mission statement, reward employees that make diversity efforts;

10) evaluation of the training outcomes is crucial for determining effectiveness. Long term assessments are more beneficial as they determine if improvements in attitude and behaviour have changed the way people cooperate and accomplish their job. Only the assessment of training’s strengths, weakness and effects allows training designers to improve and ensure training success (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999).

3.3 III. Study: Holladay et al.

Holladay et al. (2003) conducted an empirical study to analyse if the framing of diversity training and the gender have a correlation with the attitudes of the participants. In scope of this research 160 adults were asked to read the
description of a diversity training programme and to answer questions regarding their feelings about the initiative.

Three characteristics of framing – focus, title and assignments – were merged to create eight different course descriptions each with a different condition. For instance, one description had a traditional title, narrow focus, and remedial assignment; another instead, had a traditional title, a broad focus and remedial assignment, and so on. They believed that the design of a training has an impact on the effects the training will have on the participants.

The frame is a tool that addresses people’s focus on some important elements of a message and can therefore affect the success of the training (Quiñones and Ehrenstein, 1997). Trainees’ attitudes, expectations and motivation affect the success of training, in fact trainees with more desire to learn show a better post-training performance and participate to diversity practices such as conversation about employees’ cultural differences (Holladay et al., 2003).

The figure below illustrates how framing and gender influence pretraining attitudes and subsequent training outcome:

![Theoretical model of the influence of framing and gender on pretraining attitudes and subsequent training outcome. Holladay et al. (2003)](image)

One way to manipulate the trainees’ perception of the diversity training is done through the instructions given prior to the training concerning the programme content (Quiñones and Ehrenstein, 1997).
Creating a diversity training that has a broad content focus makes all trainees feel supported and respected by the organization and this is the first step to ensure that the diversity training outcome will enhance organizational progress and development (Arredondo, 1996).

Another way to affect employees’ attitude before training is done through the diversity training title. Arredondo (1996) argues that the word diversity is often negatively associated with racial differences thus calling the initiative “diversity training” can deliver a negative feeling. In fact, some organizations have used titles such as “cross cultural awareness” or “working together” or “valuating differences” to name their diversity training programme (Holladay, 2003) to decrease any risk of backlash towards it.

The last but not the least way to influence the success of diversity training is the trainees’ assignment to a specific training level (Quiñones and Ehrenstein, 1997). In line with a research by Quiñones (1995), some participants were informed that they performed worse than standards and therefore they were assigned to a remedial training level, while other trainees were notified that they performed better than standards thus they were allocated to an advanced training level; actually the training had the same content they were just labelled differently. The study shows that the course title affected the level of motivation of the participants and therefore the degree of knowledge acquired after training.

The result of this study demonstrates that a negative pretraining attitude causes a low employee’s performance after training (Quiñones, 1995). Holladay et al. (2003) research shows that besides the framing of diversity training (content, title and assignment), also the gender of trainees is associated with the effectiveness of the diversity training. Women are more encouraged to accept diversity training initiatives that support minority groups because they think that it will indirectly decrease the gender discrimination at work from which they suffer (Holladay et al., 2003). Men instead, often do not agree that diversity training helps the organization if positive results are encountered so they generate a backlash effect (Burke and Black, 1997).
To conclude, participants’ pretraining attitudes towards diversity training and the factors that determine them are very significant for the design of a successful diversity training.

3.4 IV. Study: Bezrukova et al.

Bezrukova et al. (2012) investigated and analysed 178 empirical and non empirical reports concerning diversity training conducted in universities and in organizations. Their review discovered some interesting findings about the training context (such as the setting, the approach and the attendance requirements), about the design (being the focus, the type and the method of instruction) and about the different attributes of training participants (Bezrukova et al., 2012).

According to Bezrukova et al.’s investigation, diversity training is performed in educational settings, like universities, with the purpose to make students ready to be part of a multicultural environment by delivering them the necessary understanding, perception and ability to interact in an intercultural context.

One example of the effect of diversity training programs in an educational setting is represented by the experimental study made by Pedersen (2010). He examined and compared the results of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) made before and after the students spent a year studying overseas, in England. Some of these students participated to a diversity training and intercultural awareness programme while some just went abroad without taking part to the diversity training. As result Pedersen (2010) identified that the students who were educated about intercultural differences scored differently in the pre- and post - IDI test, while those students who did not attend any training about diversity, presented the same IDI results before and after the experience abroad. Pedersen deduced that it is essential for students who study abroad for a certain period to participate to a diversity training which educates them about cultural differences and increases awareness about the different perspectives
they may encounter in a different cultural context, like a country (Pedersen, 2010).

Bezrukova et al. (2012) also deducted from the review that diversity training is implemented by several organizations with the scope to create a work environment that embraces everyone’s culture and where all employees feel integrated first in the workplace and then in the society they live in. This review led Bezrukova et al. (2012) to distinguish two diversity training approaches named “stand-alone” and “integrated” diversity training. The first approach refers to a single implementation of diversity training regarding a specific topic or subject, while the second comprises a wide range of topics and objectives and is a component of the organizational strategic plan to encourage diversity (Bezrukova et al., 2012).

Regarding the attendance requirement, diversity training can be either mandatory or voluntary. However, according to (Bezrukova et al., 2012), mandatory attendance is necessary to make sure that the entire workforce has at least some basic knowledge regarding cultural diversity and how to face its challenges.

Another distinction is made on the basis of the diversity training focus that can be group specific or inclusive. Some trainings prioritize topics and stereotypes that are specific to one group, while other diversity trainings are designed to incorporate all elements of diversity to make every participant feel included and appreciate the value of the diversity training (Bezrukova et al., 2012).

Two types of diversity training have been recognized by this review: one type, called “awareness training”, aims to make trainees conscious of the cultural differences and the issues that derive from this diversity such as a wrong interpretation or attitude towards diverse others; the other type is called “behaviour-based training” and aims to encourage trainees to observe and change inappropriate attitude towards other’s different perceptions or behaviours (Bezrukova et al., 2012).
This review also differentiates diversity training in terms of method: some trainings apply only a single method, such as presentation or video, or simulative exercise; other trainings, instead, employ a broad range of educative approaches as it seems to have a more positive effect on the overall result of the diversity training (Bezrukova et al., 2012). Indeed, most of the studies reviewed apply many different educational methods at the same time. Bezrukova’s investigation demonstrates that the outcome of the diversity training is influenced by the attributes of the training participants.

3.5 V. Study: Lindsey et al.

Lindsey et al. (2014) conducted an experimental study to prove that the method used to provide diversity training, the trainees’ motivation and level of empathy impact the effectiveness of diversity training. This is one of the first studies that analyses the feedback of participants who had randomly been assigned to one of the three interactive trainings that used different methods. The three methods, as previously described, are perspective taking, goal setting and stereotype discrediting. This study hypothesizes that perspective taking and goal setting methods will result in more positive diversity related behaviours than the stereotype discrediting method (Lindsey et al., 2014).

In line with Bezrukova et al. (2012) diversity training aims to enhance the motivation of people with different backgrounds to cooperate with each other. People who try to engage in supportive behaviours towards different others without any prejudice can be driven by two types of motivation: internal motivation that is one responds without prejudice because believes in social equality (Plant and Devine, 1998); external motivation that means that one reacts with no prejudice because of external restriction like rules and regulations that prohibit any manifestation of discrimination (Plant and Devine, 1998). Legault et al. (2011) argues that motivational intervention can reduce but also, in some cases, increase prejudice - for instance in the case of external
Internal motivation is the product of two of the diversity training methods described. Indeed, when people set specific goals, for example to judge others without bias, they are internally motivated to achieve those goals. Also, after people take the perspective of a group with different beliefs, they are internally motivated to positively change behaviour towards that group as effect of having perceived the reasons of the different attitudes (Lindsey et al., 2014).

In line with this theory, this research hypothesizes that internal motivation to approach others without bias will help the diversity training method to have a favourable effect on diversity related behaviours (Lindsey et al., 2014).

Bezrukova (2012) suggests that trainees’ individual differences are a significant factor that is often not taken into consideration by diversity experts when designing a diversity training.

Empathy is defined as something that enables the ability to perceive the feelings of others and it is demonstrated that it is negatively associated with bias (Bäckström and Björklund, 2007). According to Bäckström and Björklund’s theory, people with low empathy manifest more prejudice than people with a high degree of empathy. The latter are more conscious of the others’ necessities and in line with their inner motivation to promote social equality, they do not express feeling of prejudice (Bäckström and Björklund, 2007).

Accordingly, a diversity training would not be as advantageous for them as for low empathetic individuals who need to be encouraged to promote awareness towards different others through diversity training efforts (Lindsey et al., 2014).

The study of Madera et al (2011) demonstrates that taking perspective method induces individuals to increase the empathy level thus is more profitable for people low in empathy. The last hypothesis of this research is that empathy acts as intermediary in diversity training affecting positively the internal motivation to behave without prejudice of only people who are low in empathy (Lindsey et al., 2014).
The figure below illustrates Lindsey et al. (2014)’ model of hypotheses, according to which the diversity training method influences the diversity-related results with the assistance of the participants’ internal motivation to behave without bias which is controlled by the level of empathy of the trainees.

Fig. 3: Model of hypotheses (Lindsey et al. 2012)
4. Research Methodology

The methodology used for this thesis to answer the research question is a literature review and is based on relevant literature and empirical studies that have been conducted in the past by other researchers. In line with Baker (2000), to write a literature review it is necessary to take a particular approach made of different steps. The activities needed to prepare a review, according to Granello (2001), are associated with the “taxonomy of the cognitive domain” of Benjamin Bloom, which identifies the following six steps of the process of thinking: remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating.

The first step of creating a literature review, in Bloom’s taxonomy called “remembering”, is the identification, collection and reading of the studies, literature, articles and books’ chapters that seem to be pertinent to the research’s purpose (Granello, 2001). For this research, scientific articles were mainly found on databases such as Google Scholar, Wiley Online Library, internet sources, journals and books. In scope to obtain literature related to this study, keywords such as “diversity”, “cultural diversity”, “cultural diversity training”, “intercultural training”, “multicultural workforce management”, “effectiveness of diversity training” were used during the research process.

The second stage is the comprehension, or “understanding”, of the data and information gathered during the research (Granello, 2001). For this review, it was important at this point to take notes and keep record of the content of each single study read.

During the third step, called in Bloom’s taxonomy “applying”, the researcher tries to find a link between the publications and the research question that needs to be answered (Granello, 2001). From all the material selected during the literature research only the most relevant content pertinent to the topic of this review was taken in consideration.
At this point, in the fourth stage, it is necessary to “analyse” the information acquired and divide it in different parts and create a link between those parts (Granello, 2001). This stage was essential for developing a preliminary structure of the content of this thesis.

The fifth phase is “evaluating” and consists in the estimation of the quality of the information resulted from the investigation (Granello, 2001). Each of the studies and published writings used for this literature review has contributed enormously to the research’s outcome; however, also some limitations have been noticed.

The last stage of the Bloom’s taxonomy is “creating” that, in terms of doing a scientific writing, consists in the actual writing of the literature review including original understanding and interpretation of published work (Granello, 2001). This literature review synthesizes, compares and contrasts the concepts of previous conducted studies. Moreover, this work attempts to recognize the gaps found during the analysis phase and addresses them to future researchers.

In line with Saunders et al. (2009), a researcher can adopt one of the two different approaches: deductive or inductive. A research conducted by using a deductive approach is based on the analysis and evaluation of existing theoretical framework and its purpose is to prove its reliability. A researcher that uses an inductive approach conducts interviews and survey in order to collect primary data which will be investigated in scope of developing a new theory (Saunders et al., 2009).

For writing this literature review a deductive approach was adopted as it is based on theories, findings and empirical data that have been determined in past published works and studies.
5. Results

The study conducted by Rynes and Rosen (1995) demonstrates that most of the trainings are a stand alone training to which only 10% of the entire training budget is allocated. Moreover, most of HR professionals (84%) evaluate the feedbacks of diversity trainees only directly after the training and only a minority conducts assessments long after the training occurs. The answers of the 785 respondents of this research contained a mixture of feelings about success: more than half perceived neutral or mixed results, about the 20% perceived the diversity training as very ineffective. However, about one-third of the respondents observed very positive results. These findings show that diversity training is more likely to be effective when organizations have a diverse executive board, when diversity-related issues receive attention and support by the management, when rewards are offered as recognition of diversity-supporting efforts, when a specific person is responsible for managing diversity and collect long-term evaluations and finally, when training attendance is mandatory.

The results of the research by Wentling and Palma-Rivas (1999) determine the components of an effective diversity training. The only element on which all respondents agreed is the management’s commitment and support. The 67% of the interviewed answered that for a diversity training to be effective it is necessary to recognize particular needs and to set training goals to meet those needs. The 58% agreed that to have success, it is crucial to carefully choose a trainer who should have both professional and interpersonal skills, and that the diversity training should not be the only initiative aimed to deal with diversity but it should be integrated with other diversity-related programmes. The 50% of respondents agreed that mandatory attendance, accountability and after-training evaluations are conditions to ensure the success of the diversity training.

The empirical research by Holladay et al. (2003) shows that the attitude of trainees towards diversity training is affected by the training framing (the training
title, content’s focus and the assignment of trainees to a specific diversity training programme) and the participants’ gender. The findings of this study demonstrate that title and the focus of diversity training influence the outcome the training has on participants; for example, when a diversity training has a traditional title and a broad focus trainees are less likely to react negatively and more likely to perceive the training as successful than when a training has a traditional title and a narrow focus. Moreover, the study’s results show that respondents react more positively to direct titles such as “diversity training”. This research also demonstrates that male respondents react more negatively to the diversity training initiatives and show more opposed attitude towards the beneficial effects of diversity training respect to female respondents. In line with the findings of this study, it is important to take into account the gender of trainees and to design diversity training with a broad focus to avoid backlashes and to include every participant’s concern.

The results of the literature review of 178 articles regarding the investigation of diversity training’s aspects conducted by Bezrukova et al. (2012) demonstrate that diversity training takes place in educational context as much as in the workplace. With regard to the training approach, the review proves that an integrated approach is considered to have more positive outcomes than stand-alone training. In line with this investigation, effectiveness has been found in both mandatory and voluntary examined studies. Concerning the diversity training design, training with inclusive focus seem to be more successful than group-specific training. In regards to the training type and method, this review suggests that trainings that are both awareness and behaviour (or skill-building) based and use more than just one method are the most effective diversity trainings.

This investigation also demonstrated that, although the different cultural attributes of the diversity training participants have been considered in some studies, they are not always taken into account when designing the training as factor that could influence the overall success of the training outcomes. Bezrukova et al. (2012) also notices that short-term evaluations of training effects are more frequent than long-term ones.
The findings of Lindsey et al. (2014) study show that each individual responds in a different way to diversity training according to the method used. Indeed, the research demonstrates that the success of the diversity training is determined by the training method and the level of empathy of the trainees. High empathy people are more sensitive to the needs of diverse others so they are internally motivated to show bias-free behaviours. Thus diversity training is more beneficial for low empathy people whose motivation to correct prejudicial behaviours needs to be stimulated. The most favourable method is proved to be the perspective taking as it stimulates the feeling of empathy of the trainees.
6. Discussion

The review of existing empirical and non-empirical studies permitted to assemble the important findings that are pertinent to the topic of this research and that answer the research question of this thesis. Each research read and analysed for this literature review put the focus on different aspects that have an impact on diversity training and determine its effectiveness. The collection of all these aspects represents the determinants of cultural diversity training effectiveness.

In this review the factors that determine the success of diversity training programmes are distinguished in three categories: factors that have to be considered and implemented before, during and after the cultural diversity training.

The pre-training stage is fundamental because it is the part in which the cultural diversity training is designed and special attention needs to be given to it to ensure successful outcomes.

The first relevant element for the training designer is to understand and analyse the organization’s specific needs in order to prepare an appropriate cultural diversity training (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999).

After becoming aware of the needs, it is necessary to set the goals on the organizational and personal level that should be achieved after the diversity training is conducted (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999; Cocchiara et al, 2010).

During the preparation of a cultural diversity training it is essential to consider the characteristics of the training participants (Bezrukova et al., 2012). For example, the cultural background and the origin of the individuals are to be taken into account as, according to Hofstede’s dimensions, each person is characterised by certain behaviours and attitudes that derive from the “collective level of human mental programming” (Hofstede, G. et al., 2010, p. 6).

Besides the cultural framework, individual attributes are also fundamental to understand the environment in which the diversity training is going to take place and the trainees’ gender is one of the important characteristics. Studies show
that male participants tend to react more negatively to diversity initiatives and do not believe in the beneficial effects of diversity training than women (Holladay et al., 2003).

Being aware of the cultural and individual traits of the training participants is important for determining the most suitable method and approach for the interested group. It is proven, in fact, that the reaction of individuals to particular methods and approaches used during the training depends on the level of internal motivation and empathy of the trainees (Lindsey et al., 2014). Furthermore, to promote positive outcomes, the trainer can influence the pretraining attitude of trainees with an accurate design of the training frame that includes the content and the title of a diversity training programme (Holladay et al., 2003).

Once the cultural diversity training is carefully prepared in scope of obtaining successful results, there are factors regarding the training itself that require attention as they impact the outcome of the overall diversity training. A cultural diversity training is considered effective when it is not just a short stand-alone training, instead when it is an integrated part of the organizational initiative to promote diversity (Cocchiara et al., 2010; Bezrukova et al., 2012). To be successful, diversity training should be just one initiative of a complex strategic plan that includes also other programs such as team building or leadership training (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999).

Cultural diversity training is also more likely to be effective when the top management shows a particular interest and support for diversity-related concerns and represents a good example for all employees with its participation and commitment to diversity training (Rynes and Rosen, 1995; Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999; Cocchiara et al., 2012). Moreover, all employees tend to respond more positively to diversity training when the organization allocates a large part of the financial resources to diversity initiatives and when the top executives reward employees for their diversity-related efforts (Rynes and Rosen, 1995).
Attendance is another factor that influences the success of the training. (Rynes and Rosen, 1995; Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999; Cocchiara et al., 2010; Bezrukova et al., 2012). Almost all researches have demonstrated that diversity training has more positive results when attendance is mandatory. One reason is that the obligation to participate is the evidence that the firm is motivated to create a bias-free and well managed diverse environment (Bezrukova et al., 2012); another reason is that people who lack diversity skills are the most unaware of their need to improve the ability to relate in a diverse context, consequently, they are not likely to voluntarily participate in a diversity training programme (Kulik et al. 2007).

Particular attention should be given to the focus and the type of a diversity training. An effective diversity training is never focused on a specific group or a particular issue, instead it includes each of the training’s participants (Rynes and Rosen, 1995; Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999; Bezrukova et al., 2012) and it focuses on a broad content that includes a wide range of topics in scope to make everyone able to actively participate and take advantage of the training (Rynes and Rosen, 1995; Holladay et al., 2003).

Regarding the type of training, successful cultural diversity training is based on both awareness and behaviour (Cox and Blake, 1991; Bezrukova et al., 2012). On one side, it is necessary to increase the trainees’ consciousness to recognise and tolerate cultural differences and, on the other side, it is important to demonstrate practically how to improve the wrong behaviours such as prejudices and bias towards different others (Cox and Blake, 1991; Bezrukova et al., 2012).

The methodology is also an important factor, in fact the use of not a singular but a mixture of techniques is the most efficient way to conduct a training (Bezrukova et al. 2012). However, the choice of the appropriate methods depends on the characteristics of the trainees, so it varies from training to training (Lindsey et al., 2014).

The phase post-diversity training represents the evaluation of the cultural diversity training outcomes and it is a factor that plays a crucial role in the
success of the overall training as it determines if the pre-set goals have been achieved and it gives the trainer the opportunity to improve performance from time to time (Rynes and Rosen, 1995; Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999). Evaluation should be conducted on a short-term basis, to assess the immediate transfer of diversity training content, and also on a long-term basis to ensure that the knowledge acquired during the training is practically implemented in the workplace (Rynes and Rosen, 1995).

In order to ensure that all the previous factors are carefully considered and correctly implemented, it is essential that the entire cultural diversity training programme - from the design phase until the assessment of the training results – is led by a qualified trainer (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999). A successful cultural diversity training is conducted by a professional that is academically prepared and experienced in performing needs assessments and post training evaluations, confident with business terms, and prepared about social psychology, cultural change, organizational behaviour and diversity issues. Furthermore, the ideal trainer possesses the social skills (such as communication and presentation skills), is able to understand different cultures and solve diversity-related issues such as conflict and misunderstanding, is tolerant and compassionate about other cultures and respects every type of diversity (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999). Moreover, during the diversity training the trainer is responsible for creating an environment where everyone feels confident about sharing the own ideas and experiences; one way to achieve this condition is by initially implementing rules and regulations that avoid any kind of intolerant behaviour but instead encourage culturally diverse individuals to interact with each other respectfully (Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999).
6.1 Strengths

This literature review extracts and assembles the essential findings of previously conducted empirical studies concerning diversity training. Moreover, the research focuses on the cultural aspects of diversity, thus the findings are particularly important for diversity training that is designed for an intercultural environment.

This investigation contributes to the existing research material concerning diversity training by distinguishing the determinant factors of diversity training success in three categories: the pre-training stage factors, the in-training factors and the post-training phase factors. Despite most of the literature analysed for this review does not consider the trainer as a factor that influences the effectiveness of cultural diversity training, this paper recognises the crucial importance of a qualified and skilled trainer and focuses on some characteristics that determine this professional figure. This acknowledgment should be taken in consideration for future research to deepen the understanding and prove with empirical data the significance of this factor.

6.2 Limitations

During the research of published empirical and non-empirical studies for writing this literature review, numerous articles and academic works have been found regarding diversity training; however, the scarcity of empirical investigations concerning diversity training with focus exclusively on cultural differences has been identified.

One of the main factors that determines the success of diversity training is the evaluation of the training results. Nonetheless, the previous studies do not suggest an efficient way to assess the effectiveness of cultural diversity training.
Research recommends that diversity training results should be evaluate short after training but also in the long term to determine if the knowledge acquired during the diversity-related programmes is transferred into practice (Rynes and Rosen, 1995); yet, a limitation is that previous literature has omitted the procedure that should be used to measure the sustainability of cultural diversity training positive effects over time. This gap is address to future researchers that aim to improve the state of the investigation in cultural diversity training.

Another weakness of the literatures reviewed is that some empirical studies employed a relatively small sample, not sufficient to obtain statistical results that can be generalized for a larger population. Moreover, in Holladay’s study, people were asked to answer questions related to the description of several different diversity trainings but, although some interesting findings have been observed, these respondents were not the real participants of the diversity programme so the answers were based on feelings rather than on real reactions.

Also Rynes and Rosen’s empirical research presents some limitations in terms of respondents. In fact, the findings of this study were based on the survey’s answers of HR professionals that tend to be more favourable about diversity in the workplace and the implementation of diversity training to promote a diversity-friendly work environment. Further research should be done including also other employees of the organization in the survey.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

The absence of a theoretical framework and statistical work regarding specifically cultural diversity training, encountered while writing this thesis, can be considered as suggestion for future research. Further research is recommended to identify an efficient method to evaluate post training results in terms of immediate and long-term future.
It is also suggested to conduct broader surveys and questionnaires that include the top management’s but also the other members’ perspective. In terms of diversity training focus, researchers claim that it should not be specific to one group but it should include all participants’ cultural characteristics (Rynes and Rosen, 1995; Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 1999; Bezrukova et al. 2012). However, it can be argued that studies lack to explain the strategy to make everyone feel included in a cultural diversity training context, thus it can be taken into consideration for a future investigation.

As most of the existing studies focus the attention on diversity training generally, an interesting new approach could be to analyse what are the industries that are mostly affected by cultural diversity training and why those organizations that do not yet implement diversity-related initiatives, should consider to include them as part of their strategy to enhance diversity and competitive advantage.

An important factor that influences the success of diversity training are the characteristics of the participants and trainers should take them in consideration when designing the training plan; however, further research regarding this aspect of training could be beneficial to the overall research also to develop a mechanism, such as specific pre-training tests, to assess the attributes of the trainees in terms of personality - for example motivation and empathy level, cultural background, gender, etc. – and in terms of knowledge about diversity and ability to solve diversity-related issues.

6.4 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings of this literature review concerning the determinants of effective cultural diversity training have some theoretical and practical implications. Although this thesis is not based on primary empirical data obtained from a survey or questionnaire conducted to develop new findings to add to existing
theoretical framework, it provides new knowledge to be added to existing theory. Moreover, this review gives suggestions for future research in this field. In terms of practical implications, this literature review is beneficial for managers to understand the importance of the influence that diversity training has on a culturally diverse group if is correctly implemented. Furthermore, this thesis explains the steps that should be taken to implement diversity training and the factors that determine successful results.
7. Conclusion

The presence of diversity in organization is increasing considerably due to demographic changes and the effects of globalization. Diversity has the ability to create several positive effects representing the organization’s most valuable competitive advantage, if top executives recognize the importance of diversity and are well trained to manage the workforce’s cultural differences.

For a multinational company that contains culturally different individuals is necessary that all the members of the organization become aware of the differences that distinguish themselves.

The most common method used by corporations to ensure that employees acquire the necessary skills to work in a culturally diverse environment is through diversity training.

This literature review describes the factors that determine cultural diversity training effectiveness based on the most relevant results of previous empirical and non-empirical studies conducted by other researchers.

Moreover, this review suggests that the determinant factors of successful diversity training can be assembled in three categories.

The pre-training factors represent the elements - such as the needs assessments, the set goals that need to be achieved the characteristics of trainees - that are to important during the process of training design.

The in-training factors are the training components like the approach, the method, the type of training used on which is based the success of the training.

The post-training factors consist in the evaluation of diversity training results to understand if pre-set goals are achieved and whether the training needs improvements.

The large amount of sources available for this research is the evidence of the significant value of this topic. However, the limitations found in the literature analysed for this review show that further research is still needed.

This literature review represents the state of the research up to the present and provides recommendation for advancing future researches.
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Affidavit

I hereby declare that the presented Bachelor Thesis was(has been)
single-handedly written and completed by me. Furthermore, I
declare that only the sources and tools used in this Thesis and all
references and ideas from other authors have been correctly cited.

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Signature