

Exploring the unique contributions of different cultural groups in a hospital in the North West Province

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Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree *Magister Commercii* in
Industrial Psychology at the Potchefstroom Campus of the
North-West University

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May 2017



DECLARATION

I, Valeske Kelly, hereby declare that this mini-dissertation titled “Exploring the unique contributions of different cultural groups within hospitals in the North West Province”, is my own work and that the views and opinions expressed in this work are those of the author and relevant literature references as shown in the references.

I further declare that the content of this research will not be handed in for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Valeske Kelly', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Valeske Kelly

May 2017

COMMENTS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The editorial style as well as the referencing style of this mini-dissertation followed the guidelines as prescribed in the Publication Manual (6th ed.) of the American Psychological Association (APA). This practice is in line with the policy of the Industrial Psychology Programme of the North-West University (Potchefstroom) to use APA style in all scientific documents.
- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article and is in accordance with the guidelines of the South African Journal on Industrial Psychology (SAJIP).
- The research study is submitted in the form of three chapters, which include an introductory chapter, a research article and a concluding chapter.
- The research proposal was submitted to the North West University, Potchefstroom campus' Ethical committee and ethical clearance was received before the study was conducted.

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE



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ETHICAL CLEARANCE

This letter serves to confirm that the research project of Valeske Kelly, with the title **“Exploring the unique contributions of different cultural groups in a hospital in the North West province”** has undergone ethical review. The proposal was presented at a Faculty Research Meeting and accepted. The Faculty Research Meeting assigned the project number **EMSMHW16/05/19-01/02**. This acceptance deems the proposed research as being of minimal risk, granted that all requirements of anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent are met. This letter should form part of your dissertation manuscript submitted for examination purposes.

Yours sincerely

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DECLARATION FROM LANGAUGE EDITOR

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Dear Mr / Ms

Re: Language editing of dissertation: (Exploring the unique contributions of different cultural groups within hospitals in the North West Province)

I hereby declare that I language edited the above-mentioned dissertation by Ms Valeske Kelly (student number: 23441542).

Please feel free to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Kind regards



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SUMMARY

Title: Exploring the unique contributions of different cultural groups within hospitals in the North West Province

Keywords: Diversity, cultural diversity, awareness, appreciation of diversity, cultural groups, hospitals

Hospitals in South Africa are filled with staff and nurses from diverse cultural groups. This brings about a workforce with unique qualities and contributions. These qualities have, however, become the basis for conflict, separation, mistrust and communication barriers within the workplace. The unique quality that each individual contributes to the workplace is often misjudged as differences or annoying habits. Within the literature, it is evident that, although there is a big focus on diversity management in South African legislation in organisations, there is no specific attention directed towards the appreciation of diversity, and more specifically, cultural diversity.

Differences within cultures in the workplace should be viewed as an opportunity rather than a threat. By viewing diversity as an opportunity, it creates a space in the organisation for positive organisational change with beneficial properties such as improved productivity, creativity, work quality, commitment, trust and overall satisfaction. Research indicates that the strength of a work team can lie in its rich diversity, because diverse teams face more challenges in aligning their goals, establishing trust and relationships, communicating priorities, making decisions together and implementing actions. It is, therefore, essential that the South African workforce and legislation shift their focus from merely complying with the minimum requirements, to creating awareness and respect for cultural differences among people in the workplace, so that transformation can take place, and achieve great success with regard to diversity management.

The focus of this study is to explore how people perceive different cultures within their organisation and to investigate whether people are aware of the cultural contributions from their colleagues to the workplace. The researcher also aims to get an understanding of the employees' specific needs in terms of cultural diversity and whether they believe that an

awareness of different cultures and their contributions would spill over to foster an appreciation for these diversity aspects.

A qualitative research design from a social constructivist perspective was considered as the most suitable paradigm for the purpose of this study. Purposive sampling was utilised and participants' responses were obtained by means of one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. The population of the study comprised of participants (N = 16) from two different hospitals within the North West Province, actively involved in the care taking of patients. The responses obtained from the interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Themes and sub-themes were extracted from the data and direct quotations were added to substantiate the findings.

It became evident that the participants did not have a clear understanding of the meaning of culture, nor what it consists of. It was also found that even though some people were unaware of the unique cultural contributions that their colleagues bring to the organisation, they would indeed like to know and learn more about other cultures in order to work together better and to develop an appreciation for cultural contributions.

Finally, recommendations were made for future research and the contributions of the present study to Industrial/Organisational Psychology in practice.

OPSOMMING

Titel: 'n Ondersoek na die unieke bydraes van verskillende kulturele groepe binne hospitale in die Noordwes Provinsie

Sleutelwoorde: Diversiteit, kulturele diversiteit, bewustheid, waardering van diversiteit, kulturele groepe, hospitale

Hospitale in Suid-Afrika is gevul met personeellede en verpleërs vanuit diverse kulturele groepe. Dit lei tot 'n werkerskorps met unieke kwaliteite en bydraes. Hierdie kwaliteite het egter die basis geword vir konflik, skeiding, wantroue en kommunikasie-hindernisse in die werkplek. Die unieke kwaliteit wat elke individu bydra tot die werkplek word dikwels misgis as verskille of hinderlike gewoontes. Binne die literatuur is dit duidelik dat, hoewel daar 'n sterk fokus op diversiteitsbestuur in Suid-Afrikaanse wetgewing in organisasies is, is daar geen spesifieke aandag gerig op die waardering van diversiteit, en meer spesifiek, kulturele diversiteit nie.

Verskille binne kulture in die werkplek behoort as 'n geleentheid eerder as 'n bedreiging gesien te word. Deur diversiteit as 'n geleentheid te sien, word ruimte geskep in die organisasie vir positiewe organisasie-verandering met voordelige eienskappe soos verbeterde produktiwiteit, kreatiwiteit, vertroue en algehele tevredenheid. Navorsing toon dat die sterkpunt van 'n werkspan kan lê in sy ryk diversiteit, aangesien diverse spanne meer uitdagings in die gesig staar in die belyning van hul doelwitte, en daardeur die daarstelling van vertroue en verhoudings, die kommunikeer van prioriteite, die gesamentlike neem van besluite en die implementering van aksies. Dit is dus van uiterste belang dat die Suid-Afrikaanse werkerskorps en wetgewing hul fokus verskuif vanaf die blote voldoening aan die minimum vereistes, tot die daarstelling van bewustheid en respek vir kulturele verskille tussen mense in die werkplek sodat transformasie kan plaasvind en 'n groot mate van sukses behaal kan word ten opsigte van diversiteitsbestuur.

Die fokus van hierdie studie is om ondersoek in te stel oor hoe mense verskillende kulture binne hul organisasie ervaar, en om ondersoek in te stel of mense bewus is van die kulturele bydraes wat kan voortspruit vanuit hul kollegas tot die werkplek. Die navorser poog ook om 'n

beter begrip te bekom ten opsigte van die werknemers se spesifieke behoeftes in terme van die kulturele diversiteit en of hulle glo dat 'n bewustheid van verskillende kulture en hul bydraes kan oorspoel om 'n waardering vir hierdie diversiteitsaspekte kan kweek.

'm Kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp vanuit sosiale konstruktiewisme is as die mees toepaslike paradigma vir die doeleindes van hierdie studie geag. 'n Gerieflikheidsteekproef is gebruik aangesien deelnemers se response bekom is deur aangesig-tot-aangesig-, semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude. Die populasie van die studie het bestaan uit deelnemers (N = 16) vanuit twee hospitale in die Noordwes Provinsie wat aktief betrokke is in die versorging van pasiënte. Die response wat bekom is vanuit die onderhoude is getranskribeer en tematiese analise is gebruik om die data te analiseer. Temas en subtemas is vanuit die data onttrek en direkte aanhalings is ingevoeg om die bevindings te staaf.

Dit het duidelik geword dat die deelnemers nie 'n duidelike begrip van die betekenis van kultuur, of waaruit dit bestaan, gehad het nie. Daar is ook bevind dat hoewel sommige van die mense onbewus was van die unieke kulturele bydraes wat hul kollegas tot die organisasie kan voeg, hulle inderdaad graag meer wil weet en leer oor ander kulture om sodoende beter saam te werk en om 'n waardering vir kulturele bydraes te ontwikkel.

Ter opsomming is aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing gemaak, sowel as die bydraes van die huidige studie tot Bedryf-/Organisasiesielkunde in praktyk.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This study aspires to explore the unique contributions that people from different cultural groups provide to the organisation, especially in the nursing environment. This chapter includes the problem statement, the research objectives, both general and specific objectives, where after the research methodology is explained and the chapter overview was given. Some of the key words utilised in the study include *diversity*, *cultural diversity*, *cultural groups*, *awareness*, *appreciation of diversity*, *nurses*.

1.1 Problem statement

South Africa, often referred to as the ‘Rainbow Nation’, is known for its diversity. With 11 official languages, South Africa is home to a fascinating mix of citizens, all of them with unique variables to distinguish them. These diversity variables, however, have become the basis for conflict, separation, mistrust and communication barriers (Jandt, 2013). This has led to an ongoing conundrum, not only for the society, but also in the South African workplace: managing diversity effectively in the workplace.

O’Mara (1994:115) defined diversity as “race, gender, age, language, physical characteristics, disability, sexual orientation, economic status, parental status, education, geographic origin, profession, lifestyle, religion, position in the company hierarchy, and any other difference.” Cultural diversity, on the other hand, can be described as the affiliation of people in a social system with different group associations and may also form cultural identities in which people with a membership to a group share certain values, norms and traditions (Cox, 1993). Having a culturally diverse society and workplace are inevitable, especially in South Africa. This mix of various cultural groups in organisations may be seen as an opportunity.

By viewing diversity as an opportunity, it creates a space in the organisation for positive organisational change (Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2006) with beneficial properties such as improved productivity, creativity, work quality, commitment, trust and overall satisfaction (e.g. Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein & Grant, 2005; Stevens, Plaut & Sanchez-Burks, 2008). According to Me Jopie de Beer of JVR Africa (De Beer, 2016), the strength of a work team can lie in its rich diversity, because diverse teams face more challenges in aligning their

goals, establishing trust and relationships, communicating priorities, making decisions together and implementing actions. Diversity in teams within an organisation will surely assist employees in developing flexibility, improving negotiating skills, developing an open mind and ensuring continuous learning. By optimising the strengths that diversity brings about, nurses in hospitals would be able to work together in making complex decisions where varied interests are brought to the table and allowing for new knowledge to be developed (Gardner, 2005). The South African government has acknowledged the fact that diversity is important and, as a result, legal requirements pertaining to diversity in South Africa have been put in place and are a good indication of the readiness of our government to address diversity management in the country for the improvement of South Africa in the social and economic spectrum (Ocholla, 2002).

In South Africa, as part of legislation and policies such as the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, 2003 (Act No. 53 of 2003) and the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998), diversity management incentives have to be in place as required by law within South Africa. The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (Act No. 53 of 2003) was implemented to facilitate broad-based black economic empowerment by promoting the participation of black people in the economy and providing them with a fair chance to own and manage existing and new organisations, giving them access to skills training, infrastructure and participation in economic activities. The purpose of the Employment Equity Act (Act No. 55 of 1998) is to achieve equity in the workplace through the implementation of affirmative action measures to offer previously disadvantaged designated groups a fair chance in all occupational levels available in the South African workforce and also eliminating unfair discrimination by treating everyone fairly. Many organisations have diversity management incentives in place; however, it goes far beyond merely complying with regulations. Unfortunately, the focus of South African legislation is primarily to comply with the minimum requirements and not necessarily on the appreciation of diversity in the workplace, and therefore the major void currently in South Africa.

An appreciation of diversity is the art of acknowledging, accepting and utilising cultural differences (Taylor, 2012), but it is often the case that diversity is not managed for the right moral or social reasons, but rather as a strategy for the business of corporate survival, viewing it as merely another ‘resource to be managed’. Therefore, the organisation considers diversity management as a strategy just like any other business strategy: to increase competitive

advantage and to make a profit (Thomas, 1992). Therefore, if organisations continue this approach, by ignoring the importance of diversity and focusing merely on the statutory requirements, it loses sight of the real benefits diversity can bring about, leaving the organisation with devastating consequences. Within the South African context, legislation is promulgated to address diversity, as mentioned above; however, none of this legislation adheres to the essential matter of cultural diversity. One of the greatest challenges in the transformation to well-managed diversity is the awareness and respect for cultural differences among people in the workplace, and without it, no transformation agenda will achieve success (Zulu & Parumasur, 2009). Without cultural awareness and the skills needed to successfully interact with people of diverse cultural backgrounds, operations and production in a company can be held back and slowed down at a great cost to the organisation as well as the community. By converting to a more proactive and flexible approach, organisations can become culturally competent and thereby also restructure themselves frequently in anticipation of unpredictable and continuously changing environments (Carter, 2003; Richard *et al.*, 2003; Hogan, 2012). According to Schweizer (2014), South African companies are deprived of managing diversity effectively. He added that diversity management is not only about providing equal chances for everyone, but also about forming behaviours to work together in making the company more successful by respecting, accepting and positively interacting with each other; with the ideal being a better atmosphere in the workplace, together with increased productivity (Schweizer, 2014).

In early research done by Jackson and Holvino (in Foster, Jackson, Cross, Jackson & Hardiman, 1988), they have developed a model that describes the developmental stages that an organisation goes through in its transformation to a multicultural organisation. The three stages can be identified as:

- Mono-cultural, which can be characterised as the exclusion of minority groups or women.
- Non-discriminatory, which can be characterised by the desire to eliminate unfair discrimination, but not really making any effort in changing the organisational culture as a whole.
- Multicultural, which indicates that the organisation has become, or is in the process of becoming, diverse, which reflects their interest and awareness of their culturally diverse workforce. The organisation also ensures that all forms of discrimination are eliminated and that no group has an advantage above another.

Organisations that really put in a conscious effort to not only accommodate diversity but also improve the quality of the employees' work life are the ones that will reap the benefits simply because they will make the most use of their most treasured resource, namely their employees. Cooperrider and Sekerka (2006), in their theory of organisational change, were of the opinion that diversity has the prospect of creating possibilities and organisational awareness if it is viewed as an opportunity rather than a threat and will, therefore, cultivate positive organisational transformation. Research done specifically on nurses and the importance of collaboration indicated that nurses find affirming communication among each other, such as the acknowledgement and understanding of ideas and efforts, as most important. It can, therefore, be argued that nurses can strengthen their collaboration with each other by learning more about the different cultural groups of their fellow nurses, as well as the differences in their communication repertoire (Gardner, 2005). The need to foster an organisational environment that is open and receptive to become aware of the cultural differences within their workforce is now greater than ever (Stevens, Plaut & Sanchez-Burks, 2008) and will ultimately develop an appreciation of diversity.

Different cultural backgrounds can encourage creativity and may have a positive effect on the success and productivity of a company. The famous HR consultant, D Clutterbuck (2002:54), pointed out that, on the one hand, diversity can be seen as a means of correcting the past and bettering the imbalances, and, on the other hand, it can be seen as the enhancing of an employee or group of employees within a specific organisation with the aim of aiding the organisation and its specific goals. Stevens, Plaut and Sanchez-Burks (2008) argued that organisations need an alternative, all-inclusive approach to stimulate positive change, without having to face resistance from nonminority or minority employees in the organisation. They, therefore, developed the AIM (All Inclusive Multiculturalism) model, accentuating that diversity includes all employees and is not only aware of the importance of the differences between the diverse groups, but also acknowledges them. The AIM approach goes further than the multicultural approach by creating an appreciation of diversity in the work life of an individual, by firstly appreciating themselves and others. Researchers on this subject are of the opinion that one of the key components in the construction of an all-inclusive organisational climate is achieved by concentrating on the development of relationships that are authentic, meaningful, resilient, durable, confident and supporting, among others (e.g. Davidson & James, 2006; Thomas & Ely, 1996) and thereby also eliminating stereotyping that is associated with diversity. It can be seen as critical actions to engage in for mutually beneficial relationships to

develop among culturally diverse nurses by making time and effort to listen to, and observe fellow nurses to better recognise their values, ideals, goals and ways of communicating (Gardner, 2005). With an appreciation of diversity and the open climate that is created, employees will be able to make use of their full potential in a work environment that allows for open communication and learning, moving past discrimination or social categorisation (Spreitzer *et al.*, 2005).

From the above problem statement, it is clear that strategies need to be in place to foster a working environment where diversity is appreciated. The same is true within the South African context where we have a very diverse workforce; however, it seems as if the diversity we are confronted with creates conflict, rather than an appreciation for diversity. One possible reason for this absence of appreciation might be that people are unaware of the unique contributions that individuals from different cultures may contribute to the organisation. It can be argued that one cannot appreciate diversity if one does not know what to appreciate about another individual. A look at the social identity theory might provide an explanation for this dispassionate behaviour. The social identity theory assumes that every person shows some form of group behaviour in his/her personal strive to gain positive self-esteem and self-development (Abrams & Hogg, 1988). This type of group behaviour can be seen where the categorisation to one group (in-group) makes people discriminate against groups other than their own (out-group) and favour their in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Adopting this mentality could be one of the main reasons why people do not recognise the positive contributions that people from other groups can offer the organisation. People from one cultural group can form stereotypes about other groups, simply as a way to feel part of a group, but without even acknowledging what that group could contribute positively to the environment. An organisation can only foster a culture where diversity is appreciated if the organisation becomes aware of the unique contributions that people from different cultural groups can add to the workplace. Although numerous studies have been conducted on workplace diversity and many organisations have attempted to initiate diversity initiatives, this is still a gap left unfilled by a significant amount of research on workplace diversity.

In line with the above, the following research questions have emerged:

- How are diversity management and appreciation of diversity conceptualised in the literature?
- What are the unique contributions individuals believe their own cultural group can contribute to the organisation?
- What, according to one cultural group, can another cultural group contribute to the organisation?
- Would, according to employees, an awareness of the unique contributions from individuals from different cultural groups contribute to an appreciation of diversity in the workplace?
- What recommendations can be made for future research?

1.2 Expected contribution of the study

1.2.1 Contributions to the individual

The study made the sample group, being nurses, aware of the unique differences in cultural groups, and how this awareness may foster an appreciation of diversity. An appreciation for diversity has the potential to reduce conflict and enable people to be more understanding of one another, not only in the workplace, but also in the day-to-day life of any person. By having an appreciation of the uniqueness of each cultural group within the organisation, individuals are more likely to be open and receptive towards each other, developing meaningful relationships because of the mutual appreciation developed for each other as a person with similarities as well as differences. The awareness also facilitates interactions and relationships with greater respect and value for one another.

1.2.2 Contribution to the organisation

Practically, the study explored and described how a person experiences and perceives diversity in the workplace, as well as the contributions they believe that people from different cultures add to the workplace. The study discovered the extent to which people are aware of the unique contributions that people from different cultures bring to the organisation. By becoming aware, the organisation can start to cultivate an appreciation of diversity. This may offer a solution to many problems, such as discrimination, conflict and stereotyping within an organisation by

acknowledging the need to develop an appreciation of diversity. Organisations gained more information on how to successfully manage and benefit from the cultural diversity within the company, which, in turn, has a positive effect on the performance and the productivity of employees within such a company. Organisations will also be able to utilise the full potential of their employees optimally, should they become aware of the unique contributions that each cultural group within the organisation can contribute to the organisation.

1.2.3 Contribution to Industrial/Organisational Psychology literature

Because little to no research on this specific topic has been conducted in South Africa, this study adds immense value to the present diversity management incentives in organisations and contributes to the present theoretical literature available on the subject matter.

1.3 Research objectives

The research objectives are divided into a general objective with specific objectives

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of this research study was to explore the unique contributions of different cultural groups within the nursing environment in South Africa.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this research are:

- to examine how diversity management and appreciation of diversity was conceptualised in the literature;
- to explore the unique contributions individuals believe their own cultural group can contribute to the organisation;
- to investigate what, according to one cultural group, another cultural group can contribute to the organisation;
- to investigate whether an awareness of the unique contributions from individuals from different cultural groups contributed to an appreciation of diversity in the workplace; and
- to make recommendations for future research and practice.

1.4 Research design

1.4.1 **Research approach**

A qualitative research approach was utilised in this study. Qualitative research requires interpretive approaches and naturalistic observations where the researcher is more interested in understanding, rather than explaining (De Vos *et al.*, 2011), and to understand the phenomena from the perspective of an insider, or as one of the participants (Struwig & Stead, 2001). In order to understand the perspectives of individuals in the workplace, and their understanding of diversity and what the unique contributions of the different cultural groups can add to the organisation, social constructivism, together with a critical approach, was considered as the most suitable paradigm for this study.

Kim (2010) described social constructivism as a perspective where the context and culture of a situation are the key aspects of developing an understanding of what is really happening in the world. Social constructivism is based on three primary assumptions regarding knowledge, reality and learning. Social constructivists believe that reality, knowledge and learning are all results of human activity and their interactions with each other as well as the environment they find themselves in. Knowledge and learning are viewed as a social process, and meaning is created through their engagement with one another in social activities (Kim, 2010).

The constructivism approach, as one of the paradigms, was appropriate for this specific study because the researcher had aimed to understand the experiences from the participants' point of view and did this by involving the participants throughout the process, and thereby also made them aware of the realities of the world in which they work and live (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

The social constructivism method was applied by means of interviews with various participants who were involved in the phenomena (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

1.4.2 **Research strategy**

This study also included features of a descriptive case study, specifically to produce detailed descriptions of the particular phenomena that were studied in the case (Thomas, 2004).

Furthermore, Yin (2003) states that a descriptive case study attempts to investigate, describe, understand and evaluate a specific phenomenon. In this study, the researcher attempted to describe and understand the complexity of diversity in the workplace. Furthermore, in order for the researcher to identify with the lives of the participants, some form of case study had to be carried out (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

1.4.3 Research method

The research method consisted of the literature review, research setting, entrée and establishing researcher roles, sampling, as well as the research procedure and data-collection methods. Furthermore, the research method entails recording of the data, the strategies that were used to ensure data quality and integrity as well as ethical considerations.

1.4.3.1 Literature review

A complete literature review regarding diversity, cultural diversity in the workplace and the development of an appreciation for diversity was compiled. Articles published between 1979 and 2014 that were applicable to the study were accessed by means of the following databases: APA PsycArticles; EBSCOhost; Emerald; Metacrawler; Proquest; SACat; SAePublications; Science Direct; ProQuest and Nexus. The following journals were explored due to their relevance to the current topic: SA Journal of Industrial Psychology, The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Journal of Organization Science, Human Resource Management, Training and Development Journal, Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology. Keywords that were used during literature searches are: Diversity, cultural diversity, awareness, appreciation of diversity, cultural groups, and nurses.

1.4.3.2 Research setting

The population of the research study comprised nurses in the North West Province, South Africa, actively involved in the care taking of patients and working in hospitals with a diverse workforce. Due to the long working hours and different shifts, the interviews had to take place where it was most convenient for the participants, i.e. their workplace. It was conducted individually, in a private office with a time that was convenient to their schedule. Arrangements were made beforehand with the nurses, managers and supervisors to ensure that the interviews

were conducted at a time that suited them, without their work being jeopardised. The interview only commenced after the contents of the study were explained to the participant and each had signed an informed consent form.

1.4.3.3 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

Initially, the researcher gained ethical clearance from the North-West University to conduct the research, whereby the following project number was obtained: EMSMHW16/05/19-01/02. The researcher gained access to the group of participants by submitting a request to the hospital manager where a meeting had been set up to discuss the expectations from both parties as well as the context of the study. The researcher gained an assurance of participation from the nurses by giving out a letter stipulating the purpose of the research as well as confidentiality (Addendum A). When a potential participant displayed her willingness to participate in the study, the researcher arranged an interview date, time and location accordingly.

The role of the researcher during the interview process was that of an active interviewer, who encouraged the participant being interviewed to talk openly and comfortably about her thoughts, experience, feelings and perceptions (Ritchie & Lewis, 2005). During the interviewing phase of this study, the researcher asked the participants questions regarding their views on cultural diversity while accounting for her biases through reflective practices and trained subjectivity. After the interviewing phase had been completed, the researcher assumed the role of data analyst and thereafter she took the role of a report writer.

1.4.3.4 Sampling

The study utilised a purposive non-probability voluntary sampling method. This method was chosen as it had best assisted the researcher in reaching the objectives of this study. Purposive sampling is a technique that is used to opt for certain candidates to participate in the study, based on a specific purpose, instead of choosing random people (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). Participants who matched the purpose and criteria for the research project were selected for the study. Purposive sampling was carried out by contacting the hospital and requesting a list of all their nurses, including registered nurses and caretakers.

The population of this study comprised female nurses from different ethnic and language groups in the North West Province. The reason for only using female nurses was to keep the population as homogeneous as possible, with as little variability as possible. All of the different nursing levels, including staff nurses, midwives, advanced nurses and clinical nurses were included in the population; therefore, all employees actively involved in the nursing of patients. The sample size was determined by the number of participants who were available and willing to participate in the study and data was collected until data saturation had been reached. The sample consisted of 16 participants from different language and ethnic groups.

Table 1 provides a classification of the cultural groups that had taken part in the study (Els, in process). These cultural groups are also the most prominent groups in the North West Province.

Table 1

Cultural classification of participants

Language	Ethnicity
Afrikaans	White
Setswana	Black
isiXhosa	Black

1.4.3.5 Data collection methods

Semi-structured interviews were used as a method to collect the data in this study. Semi-structured interviews were used mostly because they leave room for flexibility and to enable the researcher to get a clear understanding of the participants' perceptions about a specific topic (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). With the semi-structured interviews, the researcher had a fixed set of questions; however, the interview was allowed take its own direction, which allowed for probing questions in order to get a fuller picture (Fylan, 2005). The interview questions were compiled to be open-ended, which allowed participants to respond openly, telling their story as they had wished to. The one-on-one, semi-structured method was also the most appropriate method to obtain a detailed understanding of more sensitive topics (Fylan, 2005). The researcher followed the guidelines of Miles and Gilbert (2005) to not underestimate the importance of planning that is required to do a semi-structured interview and to form a research schedule.

The interviews were scheduled for approximately 30 minutes, and they were conducted at a scheduled time that was determined based on the convenience for the participants. The interviews were tape recorded, with the informed consent obtained from the participants to do so. The participants were also asked to complete a form regarding biographical information.

The following interview questions formed part of the interview schedule:

1. To which cultural group would you say you belong?
2. What do you think are the unique contributions of your own cultural group to the hospital?
3. What do you believe are the unique contributions that white Afrikaans/ white English/ coloured Afrikaans/ black Setswana nurses, make to this hospital?
4. Would you like to know what the unique contributions of the cultural groups in this hospital are and how would you like to be informed about it?
5. Do you think, if you have an awareness of these different contributions of the different cultural groups in the hospital, you would develop an appreciation for them?

The context of the interview was explained to the participants, where after permission had been obtained prior to the interview for the researcher to use their answers for research purposes and to record the conversation. The participants were requested to put their cell phones on silent to avoid distractions during the interview.

1.4.3.6 Recording of data

The detailed responses of participants were captured using an electronic voice recorder. By explaining to the participants that a voice recorder would be used during the interview to capture their exact responses to the interview questions, they were put at ease and their consent was obtained. Beforehand, the researcher had tested the voice recorder to ensure that it records loud and clear and how long the battery would last. Each interview was transcribed in an Excel sheet for further analysis and interviews were then carefully compared to the voice recordings to verify that the researcher had indeed transcribed it accurately. All the voice recordings of the interviews, as well as the transcribed interviews, were saved on a password-protected computer so that the confidentiality of the data stayed protected. Backup copies of the electronic files were also made.

1.4.3.7 Data analyses

Once all the interviews had been transcribed on an Excel spreadsheet, the data was analysed by means of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis can be described as a technique for classifying, analysing and reporting themes within the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where the evolving themes become the groupings for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The themes captured something that was considered as significant in the data and showed some kind of pattern and/or meaningfulness in the dataset.

Using thematic analysis as a tool was particularly valuable for its flexibility in which it was able to provide a full and detailed insight into the participant's experience. This method also offered a more convenient form of analysis, as it did not require detailed theoretical knowledge such as the grounded theory or other approaches, but could rather be used within different theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Marks and Yardley (2004) provided a guide to outline the six phases of thematic analysis:

- *The first phase involved the researcher familiarising herself with the data.* Here, the researcher read through the transcribed data to ensure that it was transcribed correctly and combined all of the data in one Excel spreadsheet.
- *Phase two consisted of the production of primary codes from the data.* The coding process was determined by the interview questions out of which the researcher identified categories that became apparent.
- *Phase three involved the sorting and combining of different codes into themes.* During the analysing phase of the research project, it became apparent that the data contained valuable and rich information and therefore subthemes were created.
- *In phase four, the themes were reviewed and refined so that the themes cohered together with clear distinctions between them.* In this phase, the researcher, together with the supervisor, reviewed and evaluated the categories and themes extensively in order to determine whether they represented the overall themes correctly, but moreover the research objectives.

- *Phase five entailed the defining of themes and determining which aspect of the data was captured in each theme.* In this phase, the themes were named to reflect the true content of the data. In the section where the findings were discussed, the researcher provided the reader with direct responses from the participants to substantiate the findings.
- *Phase six involved the final analysis and the write-up of the report.* During the reporting of the data, the researcher set aside her own beliefs, perceptions and assumptions, and reported as truthfully and accurately as possible from the perspective of the participants. The analysis of the data was reported in dissertation format. Each category is presented in paragraph format as well as tables with its subsequent themes and sub-themes. Direct quotations were used to substantiate the findings.

It was of key importance that, prior to the interviews, the researcher had a clear understanding of her own cultural beliefs and prejudices and how they may affect the participants if the researcher did not behave in an objective manner. In the research process, great consideration had to be given to behave as neutrally and objectively as possible to ensure that the researcher does not influence the participants with her own values and beliefs (Creswell, 2009).

1.4.3.8 Reporting style

The interviews conducted during the study were transcribed, whereby themes and sub-themes were extracted from the data. The themes and sub-themes were presented in the form of paragraphs and tables and results were substantiated with direct quotations from the original interviews, which made it more comprehensible to the reader. The report also adopted an approach where clarity and simplicity were depicted, with detailed descriptions so that the reader is able to relate to his/her own experiences (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

1.4.3.9 Strategies employed to ensure quality data

When it comes to ensuring the quality of data, Flick (2009) explained that the researcher adapts a “how to” approach, by constantly evaluating how to assess what you are doing and how to actively demonstrate the quality of your qualitative research. The quality of data should be of great importance to any researcher and the researcher should devote much care into the process

of analysing data and applying the phases as described” (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Lincoln and Guba (1999) offered four important strategies to ensure quality research. These criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability were applied in this study as follows:

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the degree in which a subject has been identified and described correctly (Lincoln & Guba, 1999). To achieve full credibility, the researcher had to steer clear of personal bias and subjectivity and aimed to be objective at all times during the research process. To ensure credibility, the researcher made the following provisions: (1) implemented a well-established research method, (2) became familiar with the culture of the hospital environment, (3) ensured honesty by establishing rapport and emphasising that it is a safe environment where the participants can talk freely and openly, and (4) by constantly evaluating responses during data analysis.

Transferability in qualitative research refers to the extent in which the researcher can transfer the findings of the research from one case to another. This study intended to report on the contexts within which the research occurs, by describing the salient features in depth to ensure transferability. The researcher ensured that the results can be understood within the context of the hospital and its environment.

Dependability refers to the accuracy of the qualitative research by looking at the way in which it is logically completed, designed and reviewed (Lincoln & Guba, 1999; De Vos *et al.*, 2011). This study fully explained the theoretical stance, the research method and processes, as well as the fundamental logic throughout the study to promote the dependability of the research.

Finally, **conformability** in qualitative research refers to the notion of objectivity. The capability of the findings of the study being confirmed by another researcher who will co-code the data to ensure conformability of the study. In this study, the researcher aimed to improve conformability by firstly using self-reflection and self-knowledge to ensure that she stayed impartial and objective throughout the study, and secondly, she made sure that she was accurately reporting the participants’ responses by making use of a co-coder to interpret results.

1.4.3.10 Ethical considerations

The basis for any research should be ethical considerations. Qualitative research is normally conducted in the environments where participants commence their everyday lives (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Any research, therefore, that involves interactions with people can create various ethical issues for the researcher. Such issues include voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality, consent and being informed about the research objective (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Another important ethical consideration for this study was for the researcher to not impose on the time, space or personal lives of the participants (Lichtman, 2009), inevitably because they already work long and stressful hours.

In this study, every possible precaution was taken to ensure confidentiality and to respect the privacy of the participants. Names and details of the participants were not available to anyone other than the researcher, and in the transcribed report their names were not included, to protect their privacy. All of the above issues were also concluded in a consent form that was given to each participant, asking for their informed and voluntary consent to partake in the study. Participants were made aware that they did not have to feel pressured to answer any question that made them in any way feel uncomfortable and that they had the right to leave the interview if they wished to do so at any given time.

Specific consent regarding the use of a tape recorder was included in the informed consent document, which had to be signed prior to each interview. The privacy and confidentiality of participants were protected at all times, and the participants' information was stored securely with limited access.

1.5 Overview of chapters

The chapters in this research proposal are presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction.

Chapter 2: Research article.

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

1.6 Chapter summary

This chapter comprised of a discussion of the problem statement with the research objectives, as well as the contributions this study has made. The research method followed by the chapter overview was explained in full detail.

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CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXPLORING THE UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DIFFERENT CULTURAL GROUPS WITHIN HOSPITALS IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Abstract

Orientation: With a culturally diverse workforce, South African organisations have an obligation to adhere to legal requirements pertaining to the diversity regulations of government legislation. Managing diversity in an organisation, however, goes far beyond only complying with minimum requirements. If it is not managed for the right moral and social reasons, South African organisations are facing a major gap in the transformation to an all-inclusive multicultural organisation where cultural differences are not only understood and accepted, but also appreciated. It is, however, unclear whether South African employees are aware of the contributions people from other cultures can bring to the workplace. There is a belief that the more diverse the workforce, the more they can contribute to an organisation; however, it is a domain that is still vague due to little empirical research conducted on it.

Research purpose: The general aim of this study was to explore whether people are aware of the contributions that other cultural groups can bring to the workplace, whether they would like to find out what the contributions are (if they do not know) and to discover whether this awareness would lead to an appreciation of cultural diversity.

Motivation for the study: The study was motivated by the fact that most South African organisations have diversity management incentives in place, but none of these initiatives focus on culture and the appreciation thereof. Little is known about cultural contributions in the workplace and whether it is a vital element of the success of an organisation.

Research design, approach, and method: A qualitative research design with the purposive sampling of 16 participants formed part of the study ($N = 16$). Participants in this study consisted of nurses from two hospitals in the North West Province. Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted to gather data for the study. Interviews were then transcribed and analysed by means of a thematic analysis.

Main findings: It was found that most participants understood that their cultural group consists of their ethnicity together with their language groups. Little was known regarding the contributions that people from cultures, other than the participant's own culture, can bring to the workplace. Lastly, it was indicated by participants that they would like to be made aware

of these contributions and that this awareness would ultimately develop an appreciation of cultural diversity.

Practical/managerial implications: The lack of well-defined cultural diversity incentives is what causes the big concern as to whether diversity is managed in the right way. It is evident that there is confusion with regard to culture, what it comprises, how it can bring opportunities and better understanding if an awareness of the unique contributions is made, which will, in turn, foster a greater appreciation. The first step, however, is to get buy-in from management, to shift the focus to the cultural contributions and how this can be utilised as strength in any organisation. The benefits of viewing diversity as an opportunity rather than a threat are immense, but it should be managed and promoted in the right manner.

Contribution: This study adds to the body of knowledge and current literature on the research topic. There are limited studies to date that have empirically focused on cultural contributions as the main focus of diversity management. There is also little evidence of current research that suggests that diversity in organisations is managed in the correct manner. This study aims to fill that gap and makes it clear to the individual, organisation and industrial/organisational psychology of how important cultural contributions in the workplace are, and how an appreciation of diversity can be fostered.

Keywords: Diversity, cultural diversity, awareness, appreciation of diversity, cultural groups, hospitals

Introduction

With the rich cultural diversity encompassed in South Africa and the multicultural South African workforce, there is a widely-accepted belief that the more diverse the workforce, the more people can contribute to the workplace. However, very little empirical research has been conducted to substantiate this claim.

Optimising, maintaining and absorbing the full potential of employees in all organisations across South Africa remains one of the core challenges for organisations (Cilliers, 2007). Since the first democratic election in 1994, organisations across the country have realised that diversity is a complex phenomenon and it has become the basis for mistrust, separation (Jandt, 2013), frustration, misunderstanding, conflict and increased turnover if it is not managed

correctly (Pretorius, Cilliers & May, 2012). Organisations throughout the country have therefore put diversity management incentives and programmes into place with the goal of positive organisational change and retaining the full potential of all employees from the various cultural groups (Coetzee, 2015). However, an isolated approach to managing diversity by merely complying with minimum legal requirements is destined for failure (Pretorius *et al.*, 2012) since these interventions do not foster, accept or utilise cultural differences (Taylor, 2012). Therefore, the appreciation of diversity, and especially cultural diversity, in the workplace up to now, has not yet acquired the attention it should have.

Research has shown that diversity in the workplace can have a competitive advantage if managed correctly, but diversity by itself cannot lead to a competitive edge (Pretorius *et al.*, 2012). According to Dr Linda Human (2005), due to the complex nature of diversity, if not competently managed, it can lead to extreme implications for organisations. These implications typically have costs involved in terms of decreased production, ineffective communication, absenteeism, insignificant use of resources, lack of commitment and low morale (Human, 2005; Pretorius *et al.*, 2012). It is, therefore, crucial that organisations start gaining a competitive advantage by managing diversity effectively and thereby reaping the benefits instead of constantly undergoing misfortunes or success hindrances as a result of poor diversity management.

From the above, it is clear that strategies need to be in place to foster a working environment where diversity is appreciated. This is especially true within the South African context where we have an extremely diverse workforce, but it seems as if the diversity we face in South Africa is still seen by many as a threat, as opposed to the opportunity that it really could be if managed correctly. According to Pretorius *et al.* (2012), there is a great need to gain a deeper understanding of diversity and this understanding and awareness can only develop if organisations take the unconcealed (overt) and the concealed (covert) behavioural dynamics of diversity into consideration, together with rational and irrational forces. Diversity should therefore not be treated as a rational and prudent occurrence, as it is socially constructed and affiliative in nature. By viewing cultural diversity in an explorative and dynamic manner to gain a more comprehensive understanding would help organisations in managing diversity more effectively, which would, in turn, lead to employee engagement (Coetzee, 2016). The issue at hand, however, is still concerned with how managers can manage culturally diverse teams to make the most of the unique contributions of employees from diverse backgrounds,

benefiting the organisation and to decrease the destruction caused by poorly managed diverse teams (Ely, 2004). However, the question remains how an organisation can take advantage of the unique contributions of the employees from culturally diverse backgrounds if there is a lacking knowledge regarding these possible contributions from their employees. The potential value-add of this research, therefore, is to create an awareness of the existence of unique cultural dynamics between work groups and how these different cultural groups can bring their own unique contributions to the workplace to enhance effectiveness. Such an awareness of the unique contributions of diverse employees may result in an appreciation for the uniqueness of each cultural group and the contributions they can bring to the workplace.

Literature review

Diversity and diversity management

South Africa is a country known for its rich diversity with an alluring mix of traditions, cultures, languages, morals and beliefs. Diversity has many operational definitions that make the existing literature on diversity confusing (Cilliers, 2007). The multifaceted definition of diversity, as proposed by Williams and O'Reilly (1998:81), states that diversity is "any attribute that another person may use to detect individual differences". According to Arredondo (1996), diversity is defined as the vicinity of people with different and subjectively experienced identities based on inborn (i.e. gender, ethnicity, age, physical traits etc.) and learnt (i.e. mental capacity, education, religious beliefs, work experience etc.) attributes in one social system. The interaction between one's inborn (primary) and learnt (secondary) attributes creates a way for an individual to shape values, morals, beliefs, priorities and interpersonal behaviour (Holvino, 2003). With a specific focus on cultural diversity, Cox (1994) described culture as the affiliation of people in a social system with different group associations and may also form cultural identities in which people with a membership to a group share certain values, norms and traditions. Therefore, it implies that culture is not inherited, but rather adopted from the environment in which one grows up. In this study, diversity refers to the distribution of attributes among interdependent individuals from culturally diverse groups that have a direct relevance to work. Because these values, attributes and behaviours of one's cultural identity develop over time, it is bound to influence one's behaviour, which is associated with conflict

between diverse others (Jackson, Joshi & Erhardt, 2003). This conflict between culturally diverse groups can simply be ascribed to the vast amount of research stating that people that belong to the same group tend to dislike dissimilar others and this is likely to have negative consequences for affective work relationships comprising commitment, cohesion and satisfaction (Jackson *et al.*, 2003). These negative consequences can, however, be diminished and even be turned around to positive outcomes, if they are managed correctly.

Diversity management can be defined as methods and systems used to manage change in an organisation and to eliminate oppression and injustice based on any human differences (Cilliers, 2007). Diversity management aims to improve the effectiveness and well-being of an organisation by sustaining a value and respect for human differences, social righteousness, pro-action, humility, authenticity, community, social participation, effectiveness and learning (Cilliers, 2007; Human, 2005).

After the apartheid regime had been averted in 1994, the South African government also recognised the importance of attending to the management of diversity (Pretorius *et al.*, 2012), especially considering the diverse workforce in South Africa. South African organisations also became aware of the differences between employees and how these can cause intense emotions and conflict if not dealt with correctly (Pretorius *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, many diversity programmes were designed and presented with the objective of creating opportunities for everyone in the South African rainbow nation as a way of celebrating diversity (Thompson, 2001). Furthermore, legislation on employment equity and affirmative action brought in a form of co-operation with organisations for emotional and economic survival (Cilliers & Stone, 2005). However, the traditional approaches to diversity management, up until today, tend to focus more on facilitating an awareness of differences and ensuring that non-discriminative policies are in place and adhered to, rather than focusing on attitudinal and behavioural change at individual level (Pretorius *et al.*, 2012). These approaches to diversity implemented in organisations often fail because of a poor understanding of the underlying behavioural dynamics of cultural diversity such as cognitive understanding and emotional intelligence (understanding emotions; Watts, 2009). Consequently, the need is therefore to obtain a deeper and thorough understanding of cultural diversity and how the differences and similarities between cultural groups in the workplace can contribute to an all-inclusive multicultural workplace.

Many researchers have predicted that cultural diversity, as a result of cultural differences, would improve creative problem-solving and bring about positive outcomes for groups working together (Ely & Thomas, 2001). It can be argued that culturally diverse work groups also have the potential to generate information from a wider range of perspectives, compared to more homogeneous groups. Work teams are more effective in solving complex and non-routine problems when they are composed of members with a variety of viewpoints (Chi, Huang & Lin, 2009). However, simply having a culturally diverse workforce does not necessarily predict that work outcomes would be positive (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). By devoting time and resources to cultural diversity initiatives, it will show that the organisation wants to promote the awareness and appreciation of the unique cultural contributions of employees from their different backgrounds. This will demonstrate that cultural diversity is a business imperative and beneficial to the bottom line (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). The problem therefore arises when people find it difficult to understand and accept these differences and also not knowing how to use this diversity as an advantage to their work groups and the company as a whole (Leininger, 2002).

Diversity within an organisation will surely assist employees in developing flexibility, improve negotiating skills, develop an open mind and ensure continuous learning if it is facilitated by management. By optimising the strengths that diversity brings about, employees would be able to work together in making complex decisions where varied interests are brought to the table and allowing for new knowledge to be developed (Gardner, 2005). According to Chi, Huang and Lin (2009), diverse teams' motivation and abilities to carry out tasks can be strengthened by implementing team-oriented HR management practices that are practices that are designed to promote the functioning within a team and also improve team members' knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs), such as training, job design, feedback systems, participation programmes and rewards. In this way, the organisation will not only benefit from the innovation of their culturally diverse teams, but also lessen the disadvantages of the so-called "double-edged sword" (Jehn & Bezrukova, 2004; Cabrales, Medina, Lavado & Cabrera, 2008). Employees in this kind of environment are more encouraged to embrace individual and cultural differences and consider cultural diversity to be a valuable asset to their team (Ely, 2004). According to Jayne and Dipboye (2004), there are three basic requirements that should be a part of the business case for diversity, namely:

1. To get the best talent necessitates the organisation to reach out and take full advantage of the increasingly diverse labour pool that the people in the country are providing.
2. Demographic and cultural differences unleash creativity, innovation and improved problem-solving in a group, which, in turn, improves the competitive advantage of an organisation.
3. The economy and legislation require that organisations must have a diverse workforce in order to deal effectively with the increasingly diverse client base.

Cultural awareness and appreciation of diversity in the nursing environment

It is inevitable that people from all organisational domains have to continuously acquire new knowledge and practices to function well in a fast-changing multicultural world. The same holds true for the nursing environment where nurses are expected to provide “culturally congruent care” (Leininger, 2002). Leininger (2002) proposed that nurses need to have the ability to provide comprehensive care in a variety of ways that match a variety of different cultures, needs and situations. The cultural care theory, based specifically on nurses, suggests that nurses need an in-depth knowledge of culture because the caretaking of patients has different meanings within diverse cultural contexts (Leininger, 2002). Nurses have to be sensitive towards the cultures of their patients and attentive to the way in which they take care of the culturally different. Research has shown that, when work groups are combined with divergent or dissimilar people, it is often the case that it is preconceived with negative organisational outcomes. People working with diverse others in some cases show lower commitment to the organisation, less satisfaction, perceive more discrimination and show a variety of other negative behaviour and attitudes (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). It is unavoidable that diversity is complex, and that positive outcomes can only come to the fore when the culturally diverse workforce is managed effectively, including a variety of amendments to current rules and regulations (Zulu & Parumasur, 2009). The same holds true for the nursing environment where nurses are expected to work closely together with their colleagues when caring for patients. Therefore, building relationships to encourage support among nurses working together is essential.

Working in collaboration with one another and offering support to each other, it might help nurses to cope with these stressors they face on a daily basis. Other research done specifically on nurses and the importance of collaboration indicated that nurses find affirming

communication among each other, such as the acknowledgement and understanding of ideas and efforts, extremely important. It can, therefore, be argued that nurses can strengthen their collaboration with each other by learning more about the different cultural groups of their fellow nurses, as well as the differences in their communication repertoire (Gardner, 2005). By learning about cultural differences and how they can be used to their full beneficial potential, it will inspire individuals to form high-quality relationships between diverse others and integrate an appreciation of diversity in their work- and personal lives (Stevens *et al.*, 2008). The formation of high-quality relationships will ultimately form the foundation in developing an all-inclusive multicultural work environment (Davidson & James, 2006). In this all-inclusive multicultural environment, the appreciation of differences will ultimately be the key to better work relationships. By encouraging this approach towards cultural diversity in the workplace, it is a way of decreasing conflict and resistance by allowing all to feel respected and included in the organisation (Stevens *et al.*, 2008). If employees feel valued, included and respected, organisational commitment, trust, internal motivation and satisfaction will serve as the backdrop against which employees interact with each other and in which everyday business will be conducted (Stevens *et al.*, 2008).

Moving towards an all-inclusive working environment

In early research done by Jackson and Holvino (in Foster, Jackson, Cross, Jackson & Hardiman, 1988), they have developed a model that describes the developmental stages that an organisation goes through in its transformation to a multicultural organisation. The three stages can be identified as the mono-cultural stage, which can be characterised as the exclusion of minority groups or women; the non-discriminatory stage, which can be characterised by the desire to eliminate unfair discrimination, but not really making any effort in changing the organisational culture as a whole; and lastly, the multicultural stage, which indicates that the organisation has become, or is in the process of becoming diverse, which reflects their interest in and awareness of their culturally diverse workforce. Despite the conscious efforts that organisations put in to accommodate diversity, it may not always be accepted by all employees as it may come across that it does not apply to them or may not benefit them as minority or nonminority groups (Verkuyten, 2005). Stevens, Plaut and Sanchez-Burks (2008), for that reason, argued that organisations need an alternative, all-inclusive approach to stimulate positive change, without having to face resistance from nonminority or minority employees in the organisation and most importantly, an approach that includes all employees. They had

therefore developed the AIM (All Inclusive Multiculturalism) model, accentuating that diversity includes all employees and is not only aware of the importance of the differences between the diverse groups, but also acknowledges them and promotes their uniqueness.

This AIM approach builds on and expands the multicultural approach of Jackson and Havino by creating an appreciation of diversity in the work life of an individual, by firstly appreciating themselves and others. An appreciation of diversity is the talent of acknowledging, accepting and utilising cultural differences (Taylor, 2012). Researchers on this topic suggest that one of the key components in the construction of an all-inclusive organisational climate is achieved by concentrating on the development of relationships that are authentic, meaningful, resilient, durable, confident and supporting among diverse others (e.g. Davidson & James, 2006; Thomas & Ely, 1996) and thereby also eliminating stereotyping that is associated with diversity. An all-inclusive approach to diversity allows for all groups with different cultural diversity backgrounds to flourish by fully developing and maintaining workplace identities that are important to them by reducing perceptions made about the social identities of different groups and rather affirm social identities (Stevens *et al.*, 2008). For nurses to engage in and progress to mutually beneficial relationships, Gardner (2005) recommended that critical actions need to be taken by making time and effort to listen to, and observe fellow nurses to better recognise their values, ideals, goals, and ways of communicating. The fundamental basis for developing an all-inclusive workplace starts with focusing on forming meaningful, high-quality relationships with diverse others. These relationships should bring about the encouragement of ongoing learning, positive affect, a craving for understanding differences, support for one another, authentic care and longevity (Davidson & James, 2006). With an appreciation of diversity and the open climate that is created, employees will be able to make use of their full potential in a work environment that allows for open communication and learning, moving past discrimination, stereotyping and social categorisation (e.g. Davidson & James, 2006; Spreitzer *et al.*, 2005). Researchers such as Jayne and Dipboye (2004) as well as Stevens *et al.* (2008) proposed ways in which an all-inclusive multicultural (AIM) work environment can be fostered in organisations as well as how it will influence individual and organisational functioning.

Language and communication. All-inclusive language and word choices should be used in the organisation's diversity documents, policies and initiatives that portray the inclusion of all employees equally (Plaut & Markus, 2007). *Structural change.* Fundamental to the AIM

approach is the inclusion of both minority and nonminority involvement in leadership. Units that are specifically responsible for diversity management initiatives should reflect this inclusion that they want to endorse. *Cross-cultural coaching, mentoring and social network initiatives as a way to practice AIM. Get buy-in and commitment from senior management.* In order to foster an all-inclusive workplace that encourages employees to feel included and valued (Stevens *et al.*, 2008), while simultaneously benefiting the organisation, ongoing and reliable leadership is compulsory (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). *Run an in-depth needs analysis.* Any organisation must understand that there is no one best way to manage diversity. In order for a diversity management initiative to be successful, it has to be tailored to the organisation's specific context and cultures that the organisation consists of. This ensures that all issues related to cultural diversity in a specific organisation are identified accurately and that the right interventions will be compiled, tailored specifically for an organisation's needs. *Focus groups, surveys, voluntary interviews* or exit interviews can be useful tools in uncovering underlying issues due to cultural differences; things that do not come up in meetings. *Link a well-defined diversity strategy with a well-defined business case.* For significant change to take place in an organisation, the employees must understand and embrace the business case for change. Together with all of the aforementioned benefits that diversity in the workplace brings about, the business case has to be tailored to the unique challenges that the organisation is facing in order for it to resonate with the employees. *Give weight to team-building and group training.* To make full use of the strengths that individual members can bring to a team necessitates understanding and knowledge of the unique contributions that each member can make to a group. Diverse groups tend to perform better because, with time, group members develop a deeper, more intense level of interpersonal understanding for another, far beyond demographic or cultural characteristics.

Even though the above-mentioned actions to foster an all-inclusive multicultural environment may yield an array of benefits, there are some general implications that influence or prevent organisations from embracing diversity initiatives. Two concepts that may provide an explanation to the indispensable fact that there are some barriers that prevent people from embracing cultural diversity are the phenomenon of ethnocentrism and the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The social identity theory holds the basic assumption that people view themselves in a positive way and that every person shows some form of inter-group belonging behaviour in their

personal strive to gain positive self-esteem and self-development (Abrams & Hogg, 1988). In order to achieve this goal of positive self-esteem, people identify themselves with a group of people who are similar to themselves to form identity groups in order reduce the anxiety that stems from diversity and the fear of the unknown (Coetzee, 2015). This type of group behaviour can be seen where the categorisation to one group (in-group) makes people differentiate and often discriminate against groups other than their own (out-group) and favour their in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and thereby create a space for stereotyping, projection and bias that may result in conflict between identity groups (Coetzee, 2015). Adopting this mentality could be one of the main reasons why people do not recognise the positive contributions that people from other groups can offer to the organisation. People from one cultural group can form stereotypes about the other groups, simply as a way to feel part of a group, but without even acknowledging what that group could contribute positively to the environment. However, Coetzee (2007) explains that by starting to appreciate diversity and crossing the boundaries of identity groups, people will start to explore the similarities and gain an understanding of the differences between groups. What this means is that eventually different cultural groups will have discovered that destructive diversity dynamics (as it used to be in the past), can be replaced by constructive dynamics that enable people from different groups to cross diversity boundaries and explore groups other than their own. This may ultimately enable people from different groups to develop a better understanding and trust for one another (Coetzee, 2007). When people start getting acquainted with each other, learning and asking open questions about groups other than their own, they form a sense of compassion for people from other groups, which leads to a desire to include everyone in a group – whether social or in a work environment (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2012).

According to LeVine and Campbell's (1972), early research done on the construct defines ethnocentrism as an attitude that is derived from the values of one's own cultural upbringing and background that are applied to a specific cultural context. Ethnocentrism is the assumption that one's own culture and way of life are superior to all others and believes that all unfamiliar cultural characteristics are inferior when compared to the in-group's (to which one belongs) values (Mounsey, 2007). According to Mounsey (2007:12), "symbols defining one's own cultural, ethnic or national in-group become objects of pride and veneration whereas cultural or historical symbols of out-groups (all other groups) become objects arousing hatred and negativity". Ethnocentrism, in some cases, can lead to discrimination, interpersonal conflict and the deliberate destruction of a group different from one's own. Stereotyping also links

closely with ethnocentrism as it is an assumption that all members of a group are alike. It is a way of making sense of the world without putting much thought into it (Thompson & Cuseo, 2009).

From the above arguments, it becomes clear that an organisation can only foster a culture where diversity is appreciated if the organisation becomes aware of the unique contributions that people from different cultural groups can add to the workplace. Cultural relativity is a newly presented term that suggests that even though members from different cultural groups have different backgrounds, values, beliefs and other differences, they are equally valued and worthy of respect (Thompson & Cuseo, 2009). When an organisation comes to terms with this and fosters a climate where cultural differences are valued and respected, it will be an organisation well on its way to appreciate cultural diversity.

Research purpose and objectives

General objective

The general objective of this research was to explore the unique contributions of different cultural groups within the nursing environment in South Africa.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this research are:

- To examine how diversity management and appreciation of diversity were conceptualised in the literature.
- To investigate what, according to one cultural group, another cultural group can contribute to the organisation.
- To explore the unique contributions individuals believe their own cultural group can contribute to the organisation.
- To investigate whether an awareness of the unique contributions from individuals from different cultural groups would contribute to an appreciation of diversity in the workplace.
- To make recommendations for future research.

This division will be followed by a literature study. Thereafter, the methodology that was utilised in the study will be explained, followed by the findings of the study. The findings will be discussed and the paper will be concluded by identifying the limitations and making recommendations for future research

Research design

Research approach

The research design that was utilised in this study was qualitative in nature. The reason for using this approach is because qualitative research requires interpretive approaches and realistic observations where the researcher is more interested in understanding, rather than explaining (De Vos *et al.*, 2011) and understanding the experience of the individual (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2012). For the researcher to gain an understanding of the perspectives of nurses in their work and their understanding of diversity and what the unique contributions of the different cultural groups can add to the organisation, social constructivism was considered as the most suitable paradigm for this study.

The social constructivism paradigm sees reality as a socially constructed phenomenon and postulates that meaning originates on a social, rather than an individual level (Oosthuizen, 2009). It is a perspective where the context of a situation is key in understanding what it is that is happening in the world (Kim, 2012). This approach was useful in this study because the researcher could get an understanding of culture and the cultural contributions from the nurses' point of view. The researcher was also made aware, by the participants, of the reality of the environment in which they work in (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

This approach was particularly useful in the study because in order to ascertain how the participants understand cultural diversity in the workplace, the researcher had to place herself in the participants' work environment, which allowed her to gain an understanding of the participants' perception of culture and diversity. This approach also challenged participants in

the study to change their outlooks and be more adaptive towards a positive transformation in the workplace

The social constructivism method was applied by means of interviews (De Vos *et al.*, 2011) with the various participants, from different cultural groups, who were involved in the study.

Research strategy

During the current study, together with the qualitative approach, the research strategy took the form of a qualitative survey, primarily for exploratory purposes. A qualitative survey, as the research strategy, necessitates the gathering of information from individuals within a particular context for the purpose of constructing descriptors of the attributes of a larger population of which the entities are members (Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer & Tourangeau, 2011). The researcher's main interest was to explore the cultural diversity of the population, which in this case were female nurses from different cultural backgrounds, and to gain an understanding of the way in which the participants define culture, what they believe their unique cultural contributions to the organisation is, what they believe colleagues from other cultures contribute positively to the organisation, whether they think that an awareness of these contributions would develop an appreciation of cultural diversity and also how they would like to be made aware. . This type of survey establishes the meaningful variation within the population and is the most effective strategy to use for the exploration of experiences and meanings within a population (Jansen, 2010).

Research method

The research method comprises the literature review, research setting, entrée and establishing researcher roles, sampling, data collection methods, recording of data and a data analysis. It also focused on strategies that were employed to ensure data quality and integrity, reporting style and ethical considerations.

Research setting

The research setting involved two hospitals within the North West Province in South Africa with a population of nurses who are actively involved in the care taking of patients, working in hospitals within a diverse workforce. Since the physical environment and research setting can influence the results of the research study (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006), the participants were interviewed at a location that was most convenient for them, in this case at the hospitals where they are employed, during shift handovers. The interviews were conducted individually, in a private office that was at the disposal of the researcher, with a time that was convenient to their schedules. A safe and relaxed environment was created to build trust and rapport with the participants. The interview questions entailed a series of seven open-ended questions, based on the research questions.

Entrée and establishing researcher roles

The researcher obtained ethical approval from the North-West University to continue with the research project. Access to the participants was granted through a formal written letter that was sent to the superintendent of the hospitals, requesting access to conduct one-on-one interviews with nurses in the hospitals. After potential participants had displayed their willingness to participate, the researcher arranged for an interview date, time and location. Participants were informed about the nature and intention of the research project and the reasons for the interest in this phenomenon were explained to them. Participants were given an informed consent form (Appendix B), stating that the participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any given moment.

The role of the researcher during the interview process was that of an active interviewer, where she encouraged the participants that the interviews were conducted to talk openly and comfortably about their thoughts, feelings, experiences and perceptions (Ritchie & Lewis, 2005). During the interviewing phase of this study, the researcher had asked the participants questions regarding their views on cultural diversity, where she had to remain objective at all times. After the interviewing phase had been completed, the researcher took on the role of a data analyst and thereafter she had taken the role of a report writer.

Research participants and sampling methods

A purposive and non-probable voluntary sampling method was utilised in this research project. According to Teddlie and Yu (2007), purposive sampling is a technique that is used to opt for certain candidates to participate in the study, based on a specific purpose, instead of choosing random people. Participants who matched the purpose and criteria for the research project were selected for the study. The purpose was to explore the unique contributions of different cultural groups within the workplace. The population of this study comprised female nurses from different ethnic and language groups in the North West Province who were actively involved in the caretaking of patients. All of the different nursing levels, including staff nurses, midwives, advanced nurses and clinical nurses were included in the population; therefore, all employees who are actively involved in the nursing of patients. The reason for only using female nurses was to keep the population as homogeneous as possible, with as little variability as possible. The sample of participants included 16 participants who were actively involved in the caretaking of patients and data was collected until data saturation had been reached. The profile of participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 indicates that the sample consisted of 16 nurses in hospitals. From the participants, 11 were white Afrikaans-speaking, three were black Setswana-speaking, three black isiXhosa-speaking. The majority of the participants fell in the age categories between 24 and 37 years as well as 45 and 51 years while three participants fell in the age group of 59 to 65 years. All of the participants had qualifications in a nursing category, with most of them as registered and enrolled nurses and midwives. Two of the participants were enrolled as students with Pen II.

Table 1

Profile of participants (N=16)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	24-30 years	4	25%
	31-37 years	4	25%
	38-44 years	1	6%
	45-51 years	3	19%
	52-58 years	1	6%
	59-65 years	3	19%
Cultural group	White Afrikaans	11	69%
	Black Setswana	3	19%
	Black isiXhosa	2	13%
Nursing registration category	Registered nurse & midwives	7	44%
	Enrolled nurse	6	37.5%
	Care worker	1	6%
	Student nurses	2	13%

Data-collection methods

The data for the research project was collected by means of one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The researcher made use of semi-structured interviews as it leaves room for flexibility and probing questions and aids the researcher in getting a better understanding of the participants' opinions about a specific topic (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). With the use of the semi-structured interviews, the researcher had a fixed set of questions, but in certain cases the interview took its own direction, which allowed for probing questions for the researcher to obtain a detailed picture of the participants' viewpoints (Fylan, 2005). In the case of the present study, the view was how employees view cultural diversity in the workplace and how it affects the way in which the work is done and how colleagues work together in this regard. The interview questions were open-ended, which allowed for the participants to respond as openly

and honestly as they could, telling the interviewer about their perceptions and observations as they had wished to.

Each interview was conducted in either English or Afrikaans, depending on the participant's language preference. The interviews that were conducted in English were translated during the transcribing phase of the data analysis. The interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes, at a scheduled time that was determined at the convenience of the participants and the following questions were included in the interview schedule in order to reach the objective of the study: The following interview questions formed part of the interview schedule:

1. To which cultural group would you say you belong to?
2. Do you think that different cultural groups have an influence on the workplace and the way in which people do their work?
3. What do you think are the unique contributions of your own cultural group to the hospital?
4. What do you believe are the unique contributions that white Afrikaans/ white English/ coloured Afrikaans/ coloured English/ black Setswana nurses, make to this hospital?
5. Would you like to know what the unique contributions of the cultural groups in this hospital are? How would you like to be informed about it?
6. Do you think if you have an awareness of these different contributions of the different cultural groups in the hospital, you would develop an appreciation for them?

Recording of data

Each one of the participants were informed that a voice recorder will be used during the interview in order to capture their exact responses to the interview questions and all of the participants granted the researcher permission to voice record the content from the semi-structured interviews. By explaining to the participants the reason for the use of a voice recorder made them feel at ease with the proceedings. Each interview was transcribed in an Excel sheet, and interviews that were conducted in English were translated in this phase. By further analysing the data, the interviews were carefully compared to the voice recordings to make sure that the researcher had transcribed it accurately. All the voice recordings of the interviews together with the transcribed interviews were saved on a password protected computer so that

the confidentiality of the data stayed protected at all times. Backup copies of the electronic files were also made.

Data analysis

After the interviews had been transcribed onto an Excel spreadsheet, the data was analysed by means of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a technique that is used to classify, analyse and report on themes within a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013). It is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where the surfacing themes become the categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). A theme captures something that shows to be significant in the data and shows some kind of trend and meaningfulness in the dataset.

The use of thematic analysis in this study was valuable for the flexibility in which it provided the researcher with a detailed insight of the participant's experiences regarding cultural diversity in the workplace. This method does not require as detailed theoretical stances as other approaches, but can be used within different theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which makes it a more convenient form of analysis for this research purpose.

Guidelines proposed by Marks and Yardley (2004) and Braun and Clarke (2006) were used during the phases of the thematic analysis:

- The first phase involved the researcher familiarising herself with the data. During this phase, the researcher had translated and transcribed all of the interviews onto an Excel spreadsheet. The transcribed verbatim version was reviewed to eliminate errors and to allow the researcher to familiarise herself with the data.
- Phase two involved the production of primary codes from the data. The codes in this study represent categories that developed during the transcribing of the data, assisted by the interview questions.
- Phase three involves the sorting and combining of different codes into possible themes. Eight categories were identified during the data analysis. Main themes were created within each category. Each category with the identified themes as well as responses from participants were analysed and sub-themes were also created to describe the data

in detail. Co-coders assisted during this step to ensure that there is an adequate representation of each theme and their sub-themes.

- Phase four is where the themes are reviewed and refined so that the themes cohere together with clear distinctions between them. The themes and sub-themes were examined thoroughly and discussed with the researcher's supervisor in order to refine the themes. By reviewing the themes, it ensured that the researcher had identified themes correctly, supported by the collected data.
- Phase five entails the defining of themes and determining what aspect of the data is captured in each theme. Names were allocated to each theme and sub-theme that reflected the true content of the data. The content of the data was fully described by substantiating it with direct responses from the participants.
- Phase six involves the final analysis and the write-up of the report. The analysis of the data is reported in dissertation format. Each category is represented in a paragraph format with its subsequent themes and sub-themes. The findings are substantiated by direct quotations of the participants' responses.

It was essential that, prior to the interviews, the researcher had a clear understanding of her own cultural beliefs and how they might affect the participants, should the researcher not have behaved in an ethical and objective manner. In this research project, the researcher placed a strong emphasis on behaving as neutral and objective as possible so that she could not influence the participants with her own beliefs and values (Creswell, 2009).

Strategies to ensure quality data

Various strategies were used to ensure trustworthy data. Flick (2009) explained that the researcher becomes accustomed with a "how to" approach, by constantly evaluating how to assess what you are doing and how to actively demonstrate the quality of your qualitative research. In this study, the quality of the data was of great importance to the researcher and the researcher made sure that she devoted time and care into the process of analysing data and applying the phases as described (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

Four important strategies for ensuring quality research are offered by various researchers in the qualitative field. These criteria presented by Lincoln and Guba (1999) in conjunction with the

work of De Vos *et al.* (2011) were utilised in this study. The strategies that were considered to ensure quality data included credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the degree in which a subject has been identified and described accurately, from the perspectives of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1999), more commonly known as internal validity. To achieve full credibility, the researcher had to avoid personal bias and subjectivity, and aimed to be objective at all times during the research process. Co-coders also had to be used to ensure that the findings portrayed a true reflection of the participants' experiences (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

Transferability refers to the degree in which results can be applied and transferred to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1999). This study aimed to report on the context within which the research occurred. The salient features were also described in depth to ensure transferability.

Dependability refers to the accuracy and consistency of the qualitative research (De Vos *et al.*, 2011), by considering the way in which it is logically completed, designed and reviewed (Lincoln & Guba, 1999). The researcher ensured dependability by providing a clear description of the research procedure, data-collection method and data analysis.

Conformability refers to the notion of objectivity in qualitative research (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). In this study, the researcher had aimed to improve conformability by using self-reflection and self-knowledge to ensure that she refrained from bias and judgements and remained objective throughout the study. Secondly, the researcher made sure that she accurately reported the participants' responses by making use of a co-coder to interpret results.

Reporting style

Reporting in this study was done in a qualitative manner whereby the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the interviews were described. The themes and sub-themes were presented in the form of paragraphs and the results were substantiated with direct quotations from the original interviews. The report also adopted an approach in which clarity and simplicity are portrayed, together with detailed descriptions, so that the reader can relate it to their own experiences (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

Ethical considerations

Throughout the research project, the researcher had to adhere to certain ethical guidelines. The ethical considerations in this study were particularly important because qualitative research is normally done in the environments in which participants find themselves doing their day-to-day work or activities. Any research therefore that involves interaction with people in their environments can create various ethical concerns for the researcher. Such issues may include: voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality, consent, and being informed about the research objective (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). Another important ethical consideration for this study is for the researcher to not impose on the time, space or personal lives of the participants (Lichtman, 2009), due to the inevitable fact that they already work long and stressful hours.

In this study, every possible precaution was taken to ensure that confidentiality and the respect of the participants' privacy were looked after. Personal information about the participants was at no times available to anyone other than the researcher and in the transcribed report no names were included. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their information would be kept confidential. The researcher also assured the candidates that none of the information they give would be communicated to someone in the organisation that they work for and that the questions are framed for research purposes. All of the above-mentioned issues will also be concluded in consent forms that were given to the participants, asking for their informed and voluntary consent to partake in the study. Specific consent regarding the use of a tape recorder was also included in the informed consent document, which had to be understood and signed prior to each interview, before the researcher commenced with the interviews. The privacy and confidentiality of participants were protected at all times, and the participants' information was securely stored with limited access only for research purposes.

Throughout the research study, the researcher remained objective and culturally sensitive towards the participants by steering clear of personal biases or judgements during the data collection process. During the interviews, the researcher also paid attention to the non-verbal and verbal queues from participants to pick up any form of discomfort.

Findings

In the following section, important findings of the current study will be thoroughly discussed and put into contextual perspective. The results of the data analysis is described in a paragraph format, arranged into categories and sub-categories with direct quotations from the participants to support the findings. In some instances, the results will also be explained in table format with direct quotations from the participants to support the findings.

Identification of cultural groups

The participants were asked to describe the cultural group they believe they belong to. This question was asked to give the researcher more insight into what descriptors participants use to describe their cultural group. From the answers one can conclude that most of the participants understand culture as a combination of both their language and ethnicity.

Out of the 11 white Afrikaans participants, ten of them reported that their culture consists of their language and ethnicity, while one identified herself as an Afrikaans-speaking South African. There was one participant who indicated that the cultural group she belongs to consisted of her language and ethnicity. All three of the black Setswana participants reported that the cultural group they belong to consisted of their language only. Of the two black isiXhosa participants, one indicated that culture consists of language, ethnicity as well as gender, since she described herself as a black isiXhosa woman; whereas the other Xhosa participant indicated that the culture she belongs to is isiXhosa, thereby identifying a cultural group as the language one speaks. For the most part, language was used as the most common descriptor for a cultural group, which was a particularly interesting notion for the researcher.

The influence of different cultural groups in a nursing environment

All the participants were asked whether they believe that one's cultural background can influence the workplace and the way in which people do their work. From the results it seems that the majority of the participants recognised that culture does indeed influence the way in which work is done.

From the 16 participants, 14 confirmed that they do believe that a person's culture may influence the way in which they perform their work. Below are some of the responses of these participants; the quotations from the Afrikaans-speaking participants have been translated to English in brackets next to the direct Afrikaans quotation:

- “...*ons oortuigings is anders*”. [...we have different beliefs.]
- “...*die manier hoe jy groot gemaak is dra jy oor in jou werk*”. [...it's the way in which you were raised, and the way you were raised you transfer to the workplace.]
- “*Een kultuur kan byvoorbeeld 'n ding doen op 'n ander manier as wat jy gewoon is om dit te doen, en 'n ander kultuur kan weer sien dit wat jy doen en of iets leer of verbeter*”. (One culture can, for example, do something in a different way than what you are used to doing it, and another culture can see how you do things and learn or improve something.)
- “...*ons verskil almal en almal se uitkyk verskil*”. (...we're all different and everyone's outlook is different.)
- “...*if someone is very cultural it shows in their personality...the way in which we perceive things are not the same*”.
- “...*daar is 'n paar goed hoe verskillende kulture goed anders doen...sodra jy in die werksplek kom het mens baie goed al afgeleer en dan gaan jy die pasiënt behandel soos wat jy geleer is*”. (...there are a few things in which different cultural groups do things differently...when it comes to the workplace, there are many things that had to give and then you treat the patient the way in which you were trained.)

The three participants, who indicated that they do not believe that culture has an influence on the way work is done, pointed out that in this specific working environment the training nurses receive is standard and the work has to be done according to the hospital and their prescribed standards and procedures. Therefore, the way in which the work is performed must be done in the same specific way by everyone regardless of their culture, as one of the white Afrikaans participants stated: “...*as almal dieselfde opleiding kry dan werk almal dieselfde as wat ek en jy werk. Ons almal kry dieselfde opleiding, so die werk moet dieselfde gedoen word...*” [...if everyone receives the same training...the work has to be done the same way by everyone].

The unique contributions of cultural groups

For the purpose of this study, a cultural group comprises the combination of one's ethnic and language group. Consequently, cultural groups that were identified among the nurses participating in this study include black Setswana (3), black isiXhosa (2) and white Afrikaans (11). The results in this category were obtained by asking the participants a question regarding the unique contributions of their own cultural group in the workplace. Here, the researcher was interested in knowing whether the nurses were aware of the unique contributions of their own cultural groups and how these contributions add value to their workplace and role as a nurse.

In the findings below, the most descriptive responses are used to substantiate the findings.

It should also be noted that some of the participants focused on the differences in how nurses from different (other) cultural groups do their work, rather than the specific contributions from their cultures to the work.

Black Setswana (n = 3)

Of the three black Setswana participants, only one of them indicated that they believe there is a unique contribution from their own cultural group that they bring to the workplace, and that is the ability to accept responsibility. Of the participants who indicated that there is no contribution from their own culture to the workplace, one mentioned that it is more one's personality that has an impact on the way work is done. Both of these participants indicated that they are not fixed in the old cultural ways anymore and that they have modernised (*"I don't think that is really applicable anymore, because we are not in that old ways anymore, the way our parents raised us changed over generations and we are more modernised now. I don't know much about the ethics of my culture..."*).

Black isiXhosa (n = 2)

Both of the black isiXhosa participants indicated that their cultural group does indeed offer unique strengths to the workplace. The one participant indicated that their cultural group (black isiXhosa) has good leadership skills and the ability to solve conflict right away in a calm manner. This participant also mentioned how they were raised to be independent and assertive,

which are also things that spill over in their working environment (“*You must be strong, you must know how to stand up for yourself, you must know how to present yourself; so that is something we have been taught since we were young*”).

The other black isiXhosa participant mentioned that respect for others and respect for older people are something they have a high regard for in their culture and that they contribute to the workplace. The participant also explained how they can sometimes be misunderstood by white colleagues, who sometimes perceive the way in which they do things as disrespectful, for example “*When we keep quiet, the white sister for example will think that I’m stubborn, but according to my culture I must stand back, and maybe only in a few hours or days I can go and talk to her and explain. Because talking back in my culture is disrespectful*”.

White Afrikaans (n = 11)

Of the 11 white Afrikaans participants, ten of them pointed out that they do believe that they have unique contributions from their culture that they offer to the workplace. Five of the participants pointed out that the white Afrikaans culture has a caring nature when it comes to patient care, compared to other cultural groups (“...ons blanke mense het meer ’n omgee geaardheid”; [...us white people have more of a caring nature]. Another nurse stated that “...ons is geneig om beter te simpatiseer” [...we tend to sympathise better].

It was elaborated on that this caring nature is not only passed on in their care for patients, but also other aspects of the work. For example, one person mentioned that “...dink nie hulle het daai ding van omgee vir mekaar en ietsie spesiaal vir mekaar wil doen nie” [...don’t think they have that care for each other that they would want to do something special for another].

Six of the white Afrikaans participants emphasised the importance of their cultural influence on patient care, going above and beyond to ensure that the patient is comfortable and satisfied and will tend to every small detail with care. This also aligns with the reported caring nature of the white Afrikaans participants, as pointed out earlier. For example, one nurse mentioned that “...ek dink dit is iets van ons kultuurgroep, ons omgee, en ook ewe veel vir almal...” [...I think that is something of our cultural group, caring for each other, equally for everyone...], while another participant commented that “...ons let op die kleinste detail; soos om te kyk of die pasiënt gemaklik en tevrede is, al daai klein dingetjies waarop ons sal oplet, wat die ander

groepe dalk sal mis". [...with patient care, we tend to the smallest details; like checking if the patients are comfortable and satisfied, all of those small things we tend to, which other groups maybe overlook.]. It was also mentioned that the white Afrikaans nurses respect the privacy of the patients ("*...ons nogal geneig om meer vir die pasiënt sy/haar privaatheid te gee en dit te respekteer*"; [...we tend to give the patient more privacy and we respect his/her privacy.])

The interviews also revealed that the white Afrikaans nurses consider themselves to be responsible and conscientious when it comes to their work, ("*Ons is baie meer verantwoordelik...*" [We are more responsible...]) and that their work must be done in a precise manner, ("*As ons 'n ding doen, dan doen ons dit volledig, jy moet dit reg doen*". [Have to do things right from the start, without mistakes]). Part of the acceptance of responsibility for white Afrikaans employees is that they will go to work even if they are sick ("*ons sal siek gaan werk - ander sal in bel en sê hulle is siek en kan nie gaan werk nie. Ons doen dit nie sommer nie, ons het daai verantwoordelikheid beseft*" [...we will go to work even if we are sick – others will call in and say that they can't go to work. We don't easily do that, we accept that we have responsibilities]. Furthermore, it was suggested that the white, Afrikaans nurses are willing to invest additional effort in their work, and will do more than what is expected of them ("*...ekstra moeite wat ons in ons werk insit ...Daai ekstra myl wat ons gaan, ons sal ons werk doen, en dan daai bietjie ekstra, want dis hoe ons groot gemaak is, dis ook maar half uit ordentlikheid*". [...the extra effort we put into our work...that extra mile we will go, we will do our work and then a bit extra, because it is the way we were raised, it is also out of politeness]). This group is also willing to stay at work longer than others when it is required ("*...die opoffering wat ons maak, kyk ek sal byvoorbeeld bietjie langer bly om my werk klaar te maak*"; [...the sacrifices we make, like I would, for example stay longer at work in order to finish my work.]). .

Lastly, three of the white Afrikaans participants mentioned that the white Afrikaans cultural group in general is more considerate by speaking in a language that everyone in the group understands and when explaining something or giving a message to someone from another cultural group. They indicated that they make sure that the messages are carried out correctly, in a way that everyone understands, instead of attacking someone for not doing something right ("*Ons is baie rustiger, en probeer in 'n taal praat wat almal verstaan...*"; [We are calmer and are more considerate by speaking in a language that everyone understands...]; "*...meer versigtig met wat ons sê, ons sal seker maak die ander persoon verstaan wat jy sê, soos ons sal verduidelik en verduidelik...*") [...we are more careful with what we say, we will make sure

that the other person understands what you are saying, we will explain over and over...]. It was also mentioned by three participants that this cultural group is better at handling conflict and handles it in a calm and gracious manner, for example “...as jy konflik hanteer, hanteer jy dit met grasie en spring nie rond en maak 'n groot bohaai nie” [...we handle conflict with grace and don't jump around and make a scene].

Perceptions of the unique contributions of other cultural groups

The results of this category were obtained by asking the participants to elaborate on the contributions they believe their colleagues from different cultures bring about in the workplace. The researcher was interested to explore whether the participants were aware of, or oblivious to the positive contributions that their colleagues may convey to the workplace. Although participants were asked to comment specifically on the contributions, they had a tendency to focus more on the differences between different cultural groups, rather than on the contributions. An interesting observation in this study was that when nurses were asked this question “*what do you think are the contributions that the other cultural groups bring to the hospital?*” most of the white Afrikaans participants referred to the black Setswana and black isiXhosa nurses as their “black” colleagues, without distinguishing the differences between the separate cultural groups.

Black Setswana

Little information was found about the essence of the black Setswana culture, as most white Afrikaans participants referred to this group as a part of the “black cultures”. Two of the white Afrikaans participants, including a black isiXhosa participant, mentioned that the black Setswana group tends to speak louder because it is the way in which they were raised. A white Afrikaans participant did acknowledge that she believed this cultural group tends to “*praat hard oor die rede dat mense kan hoor daar word nie van hul geskinder nie*. [Speak loud so that others can hear that they are not being gossiped about].

One of the Setswana participants indicated that the Setswana group does not consider it rude to address someone in an informal way, but that it is also their way of doing and the way they were raised (“...*the way we communicate, that is the way we were raised*”). However, a white

Afrikaans participant indicated that in her culture such an informal address may be perceived as rude (“... *in die Afrikaanse kultuur is dit lelik om vir mekaar te sê "jy" en "jou", veral as dit 'n ouer persoon is, en in ons kultuur is dit anders, ons praat maar net en ons dink nie dat dit ongeskik is nie...*” [...in the Afrikaans culture it is rude to address each other as “jy” and “jou”, especially if it is to an older person, but in our culture it is different, we just talk to each other and we don’t think that it is rude...].

A statement made by one participant is that the black Setswana group will not necessarily start a close friendship in which they open up and talk freely about their emotions with someone from another cultural group. She explained that “...*they like to keep everything to themselves, in other words, they won't talk openly about problems or emotions etc.....very easy to guide...*”. This participant also added that the black Setswana group is “...*very easy to teach and will follow orders*”.

Black isiXhosa

As with the black Setswana group, it was again mentioned by two of the participants, one white Afrikaans and one black Setswana, that the black isiXhosa group tends to speak louder, as this is the way in which they were raised. Another contribution of this group was explained by a participant, that the black isiXhosa group, as part of the Nguni cultures, will “...*support each other and look out for each other, but if you are not their cultures they will not really start a friendship with you...*”.

Based on the information obtained from the interview it is inferred that some people from different cultural groups become more modernised and adaptive towards the environment they work and live in. Some participants do not even practise their culture of origin, whereas others are very true to their cultural ways of doing things. Either way, different cultures learn from each other when it comes to the workplace. One Setswana participant expressed it as “*I don't think that is really applicable anymore, because we are not in that old ways anymore, the way our parents raised us changed over generations and we are more modernised now. I don't know much about the ethics of my culture because I wasn't born again*”.

Black (isiXhosa/Setswana)

As mentioned earlier, the white Afrikaans participants found it difficult to distinguish between the different cultural groups, such as the black isiXhosa and black Setswana group, and therefore just referred to these colleagues as “black nurses”.

A central theme that emerged from the interviews is the valued role of black colleagues as a translator, to help the white Afrikaans nurses to explain something to a patient from a different language and convey the message in a way that helps the patient to understand and feel comfortable. It was mentioned by four white Afrikaans participants that fact that nurses from different black cultural groups are able to speak and understand various languages is highly valued and appreciated within the work context, for example “...*hulle regtig baie beteken in die vorm van 'n tolk, en nie noodwendig 'n suster nie, jy kan regtig enige een roep, en hulle is bereidwillig om te help*”. [...they contribute a great deal in the form of a translator, and not necessarily a nurse only, you can call any worker and they are always willing to help] and another participant indicated that “*Dit is regtig wat by hulle uitstaan, die verskeidenheid tale*” [That is something that really stands out, the different languages they are able to speak.].

It was also mentioned by two of the white Afrikaans participants that this ability of black nurses to speak and understand different languages enables them to take the lead in certain situations (“...*baie objektief en kan leiding neem...*”. [...very objective and can take the lead....]; “*Ons neem baie mense op...van alle groepe, so baie keer...kan ek hulle nie verstaan of hulle vir my nie, waar hulle my baie kan help...dan neem hulle eintlik die leiding*”. [We admit a lot of people...from all groups, so many times...I don’t understand them, or they don’t understand me, then they help me a lot...they actually take the lead then]).

Patient care of black nurses was another topic that was highlighted by six of the white Afrikaans participants. Two of them explained that because people from black cultural groups tend to take sick family members into their homes, and elderly family members are taken into their homes for them to take care of, they have this acquired ability to take care and sympathise with people, as one participant stated (“... *swart kultuurgroepe wat baie goed is met pasiëntsorg omdat hulle gewoon daaraan is om na hulle ma's en pa's en oumas en oupas te kyk in hul eie huis, so ja hulle is regtig goed in daai opsig*.” [...black cultural groups are very good with patient care because they are used to taking care of their parents and grandparents, so in that

regard they are very good.]) This ability is beneficial to these groups, especially in the hospital environment. For these white Afrikaans participants, it is remarkable how well some of the black cultural groups are capable to explain everything thoroughly and with such calming effect on the patients, that the patient immediately feels comfortable and relaxed. A particularly interesting finding was that two of the white Afrikaans participants pointed out that they have noticed how the nurses from black cultural groups tend to be more sensitive, careful and caring towards patients who are not from their own cultural groups, especially white Afrikaans and English patients, “...*maar ek kan ook se hulle het nie vreeslik baie empatie teenoor hulle eie kultuur wat hier in 'n bed lê nie, hulle wys meer empatie teenoor ander kulture, veral wit mense.*”

White Afrikaans

With this cultural group, there seems to be a central theme of respect that exists, gathered from the information that was obtained by participants from other cultural groups. Three of the participants mentioned that their white Afrikaans colleagues value respect from others (“...*the whites don't really like if we call them "ouma" and "oupa" we are supposed to say Mr. and Mrs.*”). Another participant explained how the white Afrikaans nurses see it as rude not to address someone in a respectful way, such as Mr, Mrs etc. and especially older people (“...*another thing with the respect, they will just say your name, but in our culture, you have to respect one another by saying "mama" or "ouma" or something.*”).

One participant stated that the white Afrikaans nurses like to teach others (“*If they know something, they will teach you. I have learnt a lot from Afrikaans white people.*”), and also like to get inputs from others.

It should be noted again that when participants were asked this question, they focused more on the differences, rather than the white Afrikaans group’s unique contributions. These differences pointed out will be discussed thoroughly later on, as a category in this paper.

The need for cultural awareness

Next, the participants were asked whether they would like to know more about the unique contributions the different cultural groups in the hospital have to offer. Of the 16 participants, 15 indicated that they would indeed like to know more about the different cultures and how they contribute positively to the workplace. Two of the white Afrikaans participants also asked whether they would get feedback after this study has been done. Only one participant stated that she is not particularly interested in finding out about the different cultural contributions. This participant explained that the reason for this is because of the fact that she would prefer to focus on her work rather than be occupied with non-work-related activities to investigate cultural differences. She also added that she does not see a person as limited to their culture, but sees them as a whole, as a person. After the interviewer explained in more depth, the participant did in fact say that if she became aware of the things that her colleagues can contribute from their culture to the workplace, it would help her to work better in collaboration with her colleagues from other cultures and that it will definitely have an influence on how they understand and perceive each other. Below are some of the direct responses from the participants when this question was asked to the participants.

- *“Yes I would like to know... Maybe we can mix some things of our cultures so that we understand each other better.”*
- *“...because maybe these contributions might be there but I don't notice them or know of them...”*
- *“In order to learn from each other and understand why people do things in a certain way in order to work better together. It may improve teamwork.”*
- *“Daar is so baie goed waarvan ons nie weet nie. Ek dink as mens weet van hierdie goed, sal mens soveel meer respek daarvoor hê. So ek dink veral in 'n werkplek waar daar so baie kulture is, is dit belangrik om van hierdie goed bewus gemaak te word.”* [There are so many things that we don't know about. I think if one knows about these things, one would have much more respect for it. I think in a workplace where there are so many different cultures it is important to become aware of these things.]

In addition to the above, the interviewer also asked the participants how they would like to be made aware of other cultures' contributions to the workplace. This was asked in order to identify the preferred methods or techniques of raising an awareness regarding other cultures. The results reflected that people's preferences to receive information are different, and the way

in which they prefer to learn from another also differs. Ten of the participants from each cultural group respectively specified that they would like to be informed in an informal, social setting where they could tell each other about their cultural customs and values and how they bring this to the workplace and ask questions openly. One black isiXhosa participant specifically stated that “*Us black people, we don't like to get information on paper, because you can't ask a paper questions, so if we can have a gathering or a meeting, so that we can also comment and say how we feel and problems we experienced*”. Four participants from the white Afrikaans group stated that a cultural workshop or diversity course with an expert in the field would be the best way for them to get an understanding of different cultural groups. Two of the white Afrikaans participants said that they would like to be informed by means of a written letter, pamphlet, email or news bulletins. The participants explained that it is easier to recall information if it is done in such way, and that they could read the information in their own time. Lastly, one participant mentioned that there is some type of class that they have in place in the hospital, sort of a de-stressing class, which takes away or helps them cope with stress. This participant explained that something such as an EAP programme in terms of cultural awareness would be very nice and helpful in order to gain understanding and help with the already built-up tension between the colleagues from different cultures.

The appreciation of diversity

During the interviews, the participants were also asked whether they believe that *an awareness of the unique contributions of every cultural group that they work with may result in an appreciation for these unique contributions*. The findings obtained from this question truly portrayed the need for the fostering of awareness for the unique cultural contributions offered by the different cultural groups in the workplace. Given that 15 of the 16 participants clearly specified that they would indeed develop an appreciation for these unique contributions from other cultural groups if awareness is raised, it clearly shows that there is a need for this development, specifically in this hospital environment. One white Afrikaans participant who indicated that she is not sure whether she would develop an appreciation or not, explained that it may or may not help her to open her eyes to things she was blind to before. 15 of the participants from the white Afrikaans, black Setswana and black isiXhosa groups mentioned that it would help them to understand each other and work together better and in cohesion with each other. As stated by one of the black isiXhosa participants, “*...it would really help us to*

work better together and understand each other, and if we have that understanding, we would be in a better place. I think we should combine everybody's unique contributions. We will definitely work better together, and even with us, I mean we are blacks yes, but we are from different cultures, and it would also be nice if people can understand that and learn about our cultures". One white Afrikaans participant made a remarkable point by explaining that the fostering of this appreciation depends on whether one cares to actually make the work a better place, or if a person is merely there because it is a "job", a means to an end. Five participants from different cultural groups (black isiXhosa, & white Afrikaans) that stated that it will help to understand each other, and explained that if one gets to understand why a person does something in a certain way, it will help foster that understanding, awareness and ultimately the appreciation for the differences. One of the black isiXhosa participants gave a valuable response by saying that "...now I can also be free and feel...And with my colleagues, we will understand each other better and work together better. Culture in the workplace counts a lot, it doesn't mean we have to practice it here, but only one thing that covers it all and that is respect. We have to work together, accept each other and feel comfortable and free to do anything and everything" and another participant added by saying "If we know each other we will put all the stereotypes people have about each other's cultural groups away, and then we will understand each other and work better together as professionals". A black Setswana participant added that "...we will understand each other better, our different values, our cultures and our backgrounds" And a white Afrikaans participant also made a remarkable comment by saying: "Ons gaan beter kan saamwerk met ons kollegas. Ek voel hulle (swart kollegas) doen net altyd alles om by ons (wit) aan te pas en ons doen nie genoeg om by hulle aan te pas nie, om hulle te leer ken en bietjie iets volgens hulle doen. Hulle moet heeltyd net alles doen soos wat ons dit wil hê, en ons raak kwaad as hulle dit anders doen, maar ons neem nie in ag dat dit dalk hulle kultuur is nie." [We will work better together with our colleagues. I feel that our black colleagues always do everything to fit in with our culture and we don't do enough to fit in to theirs or to get to know them and do something the way they want it to be done. They must constantly do things the way we want it to be, and we get angry if they do it different, but we don't take into account that it might be their culture's way of doing things.....].

Six of the participants from the black Setswana, black isiXhosa and white Afrikaans groups furthermore mentioned that if one learns about other cultures and gains an understanding of why they do things in a certain way, they will learn to accept, adapt and accommodate one another. By doing this, one will not go against the culture of someone else, or offend in any

way; instead, one will think of new ways to do things, to accommodate colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. One participant said that “*Kultuur is soms 'n groot verwarring en dit bring verdeeldheid onder die mense, as ons meer van mekaar se kulture weet sal ons mekaar beter aanvaar*” [Culture is sometimes a big confusion and it leads to dissension between people, if we get to know more about each other’s cultures we will learn to accept each other]. Another participant also stated that by learning to accept and appreciate the differences is to our own, the person from the other culture and the organisation’s benefit. Additionally, some participants also pointed out that “*...jy verander nie een se kultuur nie, jy aanvaar dit en respekteer dit en jy werk daarmee saam.*” [...you don’t change one’s culture, you accept and respect it and you cooperate].

Finally, an interesting reflection was made by some participants that there are so many things they do not know about other cultures and it was stated by one participant from the black isiXhosa group that “*...everybody is unique and there are so many things we can learn from each other.*” Another white Afrikaans participant stated that “*...mens moet altyd oop wees vir kennis en informasie. Hoe meer mens daarvan het, hoe beter sal ons kan saamwerk met mekaar en ons verskillende kulture. Kyk op die ou einde van die dag is die pasiënt die belangrikste en as ons nie ’n effektiewe span het nie, sal die pasiënt daaronder lei en ons kan nie ons werk doen soos wat ons regtig moet nie*”, [...has to be open and receptive to new information and building new knowledge. The more you have of that, the better we can work together with each other and our different cultures. At the end of the day the patient is the most important and if we don’t have an effective team, the patient would suffer and we won’t be able to do our work the way we are supposed to].

Additional information obtained from the interviews

In this study, some of the information obtained through the interviews with the nurses was surprising and unexpected. Although the interviews were semi-structured and specific questions were posed to the participants, themes that are not related to these questions also emerged. These themes are discussed below.

A focus on differences in the way cultural groups do their work

Although the participants were asked to describe the unique contributions of their own culture, and of the contributions nurses from other cultural groups, it seemed as if they focused more on the differences between them, rather than the unique and positive contributions each cultural group brings to the hospital. Therefore, the participants tended to express their opinions and perceptions regarding specific behaviours from nurses from other cultures than their own. Below is a summary of themes extracted from some of the participants' responses. As mentioned before, when asked the question about the unique contributions from the different cultural groups in the workplace, many participants pointed out differences rather than contributions; giving the impression that they might be unappreciative of one another, or not totally sure of the reasons why people from some cultures do things in a way different from one's own culture.

Differences in the way cultural groups do their work

Tone of voice: As mentioned by three white Afrikaans participants, as a cultural group they tend to speak in a softer tone and are generally quieter, whereas the black isiXhosa as well as the black Setswana participants mentioned "*When it comes to communicating, us Tswana's and Xhosa's and Zulu's speak louder, and that is the only problem because then the people comes and "shhh" us, but that is the way we communicate, that is the way we were raised*"

Respect: White Afrikaans and English people see it as respectful to be addressed in a formal way, as stated by a black Setswana participant ("*As ek nou so vinnig kan dink, wat ek geleer het (Afrikaans kultuur) is dat dit lelik is om vir mekaar te sê "jy" en "jou", veral as dit 'n ouer persoon is, en in ons kultuur is dit anders, ons praat maar net en ons dink nie dat dit ongeskik is nie.*") [What I have learnt from the Afrikaans culture is that it is disrespectful to address someone in a direct manner, where in our culture it is different, we talk like that and don't see it as rude.] and a black isiXhosa participant "*Most of the whites don't really like if we call them "ouma" and "oupa" we are supposed to say Mr. and Mrs*". In the black isiXhosa and black Setswana cultures, it shows respect by addressing someone in an informal way ("ouma" or "mama") and they do not see it as disrespectful to address someone in an informal manner.

Sense of urgency: One white Afrikaans participant mentioned that, in their culture, people tend to be rushed to get work done as opposed to the non-white groups that tend to have a more relaxed (less rushed) approach towards work “...*nie-blanke mense vat die lewe baie rustiger as waar ons altyd in 'n gejaagdheid is, 'n ding moet klaar.*” [...non-white people take life more easy-going, where we are always in a rush to get things done].

Nurse-patient relationship: A white Afrikaans participant stated that she has noticed that people from her cultural group see it as unprofessional to get too comfortable with patients and do not get too familiar with patients, whereas the other groups (black Setswana and black isiXhosa co-workers) get comfortable with patients easily and will build friendships with patients from their own cultural group – “*Ek het al agter gekom hulle gemaklikheid met pasiënte, hulle maak vriende, waar ons kultuur sal voel dis onprofessioneel. Hulle sal 'n band met pasiënte van hul eie kultuur bou en vriende maak, somer nommers uitruil. Waar ons weer net professioneel wil wees van ons daar kom totdat ons huis toe gaan. Ons het nie daai gemaklikheid nie.*” [I have noticed how comfortable they can become with patients, they will make friends, where our culture feel its unprofessional. They will build a relationship with patients from their culture and even exchange phone numbers. Where we want to maintain professional from the time we get there till it is time to go home. We don't have that sense of comfortability].

Conflict solving: According to a white Afrikaans participant as well as a black isiXhosa participant, in the workplace, they will confront colleagues to try and solve a problem or conflict situation right away in order to address the matter and move on. The isiXhosa participant described this as “*We don't have to fight; we just stand up for ourselves and talk about it and sort the problem out*”. Whereas in the Setswana culture, it is sometimes seen as disrespectful to talk back or explain yourself when being confronted. They do not address a problem or conflict situation with a colleague straight away; they must first take time to compose themselves: “...*according to my culture I am not supposed to answer back or talk back or explain myself. When we keep quiet, the white sister for example will think that I'm stubborn, but according to my culture I must stand back, and maybe only in a few hours or days I can go and talk to her and explain. Because talking back in my culture is disrespectful.*”

Communication: It was mentioned by a white Afrikaans participant that people from her own culture in the workplace tend to get easily annoyed if people from other cultures do not do what

is asked from them or do not understand what is communicated to them, but people from other cultural groups do not always understand what is being said if Afrikaans persons speak fast (Conflict due to miscommunication) - *“...ons is so geneig om onself te wip as hulle nie iets doen wat ons hulle vra of nie verstaan wat ons sê nie, dan werk ons onself so op, maar ek het nou al agter gekom as ons so vinnig praat kan hulle regtig nie uitmaak wat ons sê nie. Baie keer kan daar onenigheid of konflik plaasvind bloot oor miskommunikasie, so ons moet regtig leer om te kan aanpas, net soos hulle by ons aanpas.”* [...we tend to get easily annoyed if they don't do what we ask or if they don't understand what we say, then we work ourselves up, but I have noticed that if we speak so fast, they can't really make out what we are saying. Many times then, conflict presents itself, merely over miscommunication. So we really have to learn to adapt to them, just as they adapt to fit in with us].

Patient care

Patient care is another category that revealed information about the different ways in which the various groups do their work. In the interviews, remarks were made about the ways in which nurses from other cultures go about in doing their work. They did not criticise it, nor did they disagree with the different ways in which work is done. An important remark was made by a black Setswana participant, stating that *“...in all aspects of work, it also differs from one person to another; some people are more knowledgeable than others, irrespective of race or culture. A person's personality plays a big role...”*

Yet again, the aspect of personality was brought up, which is something that does not play a role in culture, but rather a person's own personal values, beliefs and preferences.

Participants also often mentioned that they do not know why the nurses from other cultures do things in a certain way, which may indicate that there is a lack of awareness regarding cultures and their unique contributions. Table 2 summarises some of the findings specifically on patient care, substantiated with direct quotations from the interviews.

Table 2

Patient care

Black (isiXhosa/Setswana)	<p>Show more empathy towards patients of cultures other than their own. Especially white cultures. (“...nie vreeslik baie empatie teenoor hulle eie kultuur....nie...hulle wys meer empatie teenoor ander kulture, veral wit mense.” [...do not really show a lot of empathy towards people from their own culture...they show more empathy towards people from other cultures, especially white people].</p> <p>“...swart kulture is meer geneig om die blanke pasiënte op te piep, maar dan is hulle weer harder op hulle eie mense.” [...the black cultures tend to fuss more over the white patients, but then they are hard on their own people].</p>
Black (isiXhosa/Setswana)	<p>Ability to sympathise. In their cultures they look after their elderly family members, hence the ability to sympathise in the hospital environment.</p> <p>“...hulle verstaan hulle eie bevolkings beter. En ook omdat hulle meer na hul ouers en kinders omsien, toon hulle nogal baie simpatie.”</p>
Black (isiXhosa/Setswana)	<p>Don't care about the patients' culture or ethnicity, they will help anyone.</p> <p>“...hulle staan glad nie terug vir werk nie, met nood gevalle ...gaan hulle en gaan help; waar ons dalk besig is en nie sal gaan nie, sal hulle alles los en gaan help ...Hulle is ook nie kieskeurig of dit nou wit of swart is met wie hulle moet werk nie.” [...they do not stand back for work, with emergency situations...they go help, where we would perhaps not go because we are busy, they would leave everything and go help...They are also not picky whether the patient they have to help is black or white.]</p>
White Afrikaans	<p>Handles patients with care and sympathy. Make sure patients understand what they are doing and explain procedures they are going to do on the patient. Will spend extra time to make sure the patient feels comfortable.</p> <p>“Dis ons omgee wat bietjie verskil... ons is geneig om beter te simpatiseer. Ons langer tyd by die pasiënt sal spandeer en daar sit tot ons weet hulle voel gemaklik.” [It is the way that we care that differs...we tend to sympathise better. We spend a longer time with the patient to make sure that they feel comfortable.]</p>
White Afrikaans	<p>Tend to small detail to ensure patient is comfortable and satisfied.</p> <p>“...soos om te kyk of die pasiënt gemaklik en tevrede is, al daai klein dingetjies waarop ons sal oplet, wat die ander groepe dalk sal mis. Kyk dis maar algemene pasiënt sorg, ons gee ons beste, maar 'n ander een sal</p>

	<i>minimaal doen en voel dat dit goed genoeg is.</i> ” [...like checking if the patient is comfortable and satisfied, those small things we will tend to, which other groups might miss. Look, it is general patient care that I am talking about, we give our best, where another person will do minimal and feel like it is good enough.]
Black (Xhosa/Setswana)	Help patients to understand by explaining to the patient the operation or procedure that is going to take place, in the patient's own language. <i>“...lekker om altyd iemand te hê wat 'n ding kan oordra na pasiënte van hulle eie kultuur of om iets aan hulle te verduidelik.”</i> [...it's always nice to have someone that can carry a message over to a patient from their own culture or to explain something to them.]

Training

Many of the participants mentioned that the training they receive as nurses is all the same, regardless of one's culture. A particularly interesting response obtained from six of the participants from the white Afrikaans, black Setswana as well as the black isiXhosa groups was that in the nursing environment the training is the same for everyone and the longer one works in this environment, the more they adapt to the workplace and start to do things in the same way. Therefore, they believe that both the training of the nursing staff and experience as a nurse seem to have a greater influence on the way in which the work is done than an individual's cultural background influences her work. These participants believe that the scope of practice of the provision of patient-centred care cannot be changed by a person's cultural background as patient care has to be done in the same manner by every person working directly with a patient. Therefore, in essence, the way the work has to be done should be according to the same standard and protocol in which they were trained, and is therefore not dependent on one's culture, as one of the black Setswana participants stated: *“Kyk ek dink nie hoe ons die werk doen verskil juis van mekaar nie ons almal doen dit soos wat ons opgelei is om dit te doen....”* [Look I don't think the way we do our work differs from one another, we all do it in the way we were trained to do it...].

Factors that influence the way in which work is done

It was also mentioned by numerous participants that personality and the way in which each individual perceives things can differ. Four participants from the white Afrikaans, black Setswana and black isiXhosa groups mentioned that even though culture does play a significant role in the way work is done, one's personality, age, gender and religion also have a big role in the way the work is done. Furthermore, within a specific cultural group, each individual has their own personality, preferences, values and religion that play a role in the way in which she does her work:

- “...nie noodwendig oor hoe hulle die werk doen nie, maar hoe mens voel oor 'n ding...mense se geloof is anders”. (...not necessarily on how they do the work, but how a person feels about something...people's religion differs, so yes, I think it has an influence.)
- “...it shows in a person's personality. So the way in which we perceive things are not the same”.
- “...in die werkplek te doen meer met verskillende persoonlikhede as met kultuur...” [...in the workplace it has to do more with different personalities than culture ...].
- “Ek dink daar hang dit steeds af van 'n persoon se persoonlikheid. In verpleegkunde gaan dit nie baie oor kulturele verskille nie, maar meer oor jou geaardheid as mens en of jy regtig 'n passie het vir jou werk.” [I think it depends on a person's personality. In nursing, it is more about your nature as a person and whether you have a passion for your work or not, rather than cultural differences.]
- “Ons IQ vlakke is maar almal dieselfde so ek vind dit maklik om enige iets aan enige iemand oor te dra. Maar by die pasiëntsorg is kultuur baie belangrik, veral as jy mediese inligting aan hul oor dra. Jy moet weet glo hy aan alternatiewe medikasie, glo hy aan sangomas; jy kan hom nie probeer om daarvan af weg te kry nie want dan verloor jy hom in die mediese veld; jy moet die twee bymekaar bring. In verpleging moet jy baie sensitief vir kultuur wees... So dit is baie belangrik om die ander persoon se kultuur in ag te neem voordat jy uitsprake lewer.” [Our IQ levels are all the same so I find it easy to carry something over to anyone. But in patient care culture is very important, especially if you have to carry over medical information to the patient. You have to know that this person might believe in alternative medication or sangomas; you can't try and convince him otherwise, then you lose the patient in the medical field – you have to bring the two together. In nursing one has to be very sensitive towards culture...So it is very important to consider another person's culture, before you make judgements.]

Cultural moulding and changing

It is, however, important to note that many of the participants mentioned that, in the workplace, one becomes more adaptive to the environment that you work in.

“When I came here...I had to adapt and get used to the environment, I had to learn the language and the way they say things and do things, so actually you adapt to the environment.... your language has to change, your way of thinking, everyone around you moulds you and you become more modern”.

Based on the information obtained from the interviews it is inferred that some people from different cultural groups become more modernised and adaptive towards the environment they work and live in. Some participants do not even practise their culture of origin, whereas others are very true to their cultural ways of doing things. Either way, different cultures learn from each other when it comes to the workplace. One Setswana participant expressed it as *“I don't think that is really applicable anymore, because we are not in that old ways anymore, the way our parents raised us changed over generations and we are more modernised now. I don't know much about the ethics of my culture because I wasn't born again”.*

Discussion

Outline of findings

In the discussion below, the specific objectives of the study will be substantiated with the findings of the present research. The general objective of this research study was to explore what nurses believe are the unique contributions their own culture and what nurses from other cultures can offer or contribute to the workplace. For the purpose of this study, it was important to determine the cultural groups to which the participants belong. This has been proven to be problematic within the South African context (Straub, Loch, Evaristo, Karahanna & Srite, 2002) because each individual is influenced by a plethora of different cultural and sub-cultural aspects. As Thomas and Bendixen (2000) explained, it is unfitting to talk about South African cultures as a homogenous culture on its own, but rather a set of different cultures and ethnic groups that may have differing or similar values, despite their very different backgrounds. This shortage of clear concepts and measures for culture may explain why cross-cultural research

has been so extremely difficult to conduct. Among research there is a common assumption that any individual living in a particular place belongs to a single culture, for example someone who lives in South Africa is automatically classified as being a member of an all-encompassing African culture (Straub *et. al.*, 2002). Thomas and Bendixen (2000) went further by saying that one has to take into account a person's race, language and religion to gain an understanding of the values that people from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds bring into their workplaces. To address the issue of defining cultural groups, the researcher has asked the participants themselves to identify their cultural group, by simply asking them to name the cultural group they belong to. The majority of the participants used a combination of their language and ethnic groups as a common descriptor of culture (for example black Setswana, white Afrikaans). It is common for South Africans to describe the cultural group they belong to by using their language together with ethnicity (see Cilliers, 2007; Triandis, 1972; Van der Merwe, 2009), which serves as an indication of the unique values, beliefs and customs a group may share. It was therefore also useful for the author of this study to use a combination of one's language and ethnic group as a descriptor of culture within the context of this study.

The *first objective* of the study was to conceptualise diversity management and the appreciation of diversity according to the literature. In the existing literature, there are various different definitions of diversity. According to the work of some authors, e.g. Thomas (1992) and Betters-Reed & Moore (1992), the term 'diversity management' refers to the strategic and systematic commitment of organisations to ensure that employees with diverse backgrounds and abilities get recruited and retained. Diversity management is an activity that can be found mostly in the training and development areas, under the human resource management discipline of an organisation (Thomas, 1992). According to Bassett-Jones (2005: 170), "diversity management is defined as the aggregate effect of HRM sub-systems, including recruitment, reward, performance appraisal, employee development and individual managerial behaviours in delivering competitive advantage through leadership and teamwork". The appreciation of diversity, on the other hand, is the ability to acknowledge, accept and utilise cultural differences (Taylor, 2012). In order to develop an appreciation for diversity, persons have to first be comfortable and willing to evaluate their own perceptions, prejudice and biases, which is something many people tend to deny. To gain knowledge from cultural groups other than one's own, people have to start by examining who they are and what they bring that is unique to their culture (Taylor, 2012) and that will simultaneously benefit the organisation.

The *second objective* of the study was to investigate whether the nurses were aware of the unique contributions of their own cultural groups and how these contributions add value to their workplace and role as a nurse. In order to explore this objective, participants were firstly asked whether they believe that one's cultural background has an influence on the workplace and the way in which people do their work. Secondly, participants were asked a question regarding the unique contributions of their own cultural group in the workplace.

From the results, it was found that the majority of the participants recognised that *culture does indeed influence* the way in which work is done. Participants mentioned that as culturally different individuals working together they all have their own outlooks on life as well as differing values, beliefs and interpretations, which may influence the way in which they do their work. Similar arguments can be found in the literature. For example, Cox (1993) stated that cultural diversity can be described as the affiliation of people in a social system with different group connotations and may also form cultural identities in which people with a membership to a group share certain values, norms and traditions. According to Grossberg, Struwig and Pallay (2006), members of a group tend to think alike because they feel like this binds them as a group and also from their upbringing in that specific group. The way in which work is done can, therefore, differ because of the notion that members of a cultural group share a common understanding and interpretation of certain aspects (such as caretaking) and in this manner also perceive themselves as different from other groups (Iguisi, 2009). The indicators that make a cultural group unique can be seen in their communication style, shared meaning, rules, dialects and common knowledge (Ely & Thomas, 2001), which others may find strange or indifferent as opposed to their own group.

Few of the participants did, however, indicate that they do not believe that culture has an influence on the way work is done. These nurses argued that the way in which the work is done has to be according to the hospital's prescribed standards and procedures, and there is therefore little room for personal values and beliefs to influence their work. Some participants also indicated that the nursing education and training they received have a stronger influence on the way nurses do their work than that of personal background and culture. Research confirms that training is fundamental to the development of human resources (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001), however, only a small number of organisations display a positive relationship between training and positive change. It can therefore be argued that even though training has a strong influence on the way a person does his/her work, being trained in a culturally competent way,

by a cultural competent trainer, will increase the effectiveness of training in the culturally diverse world we live in (Cilliers, 2011).

Participants also touched on the aspect of personality and how that may influence the way in which they do their work, rather than the cultural group that they belong to. This speaks to an individual's own personal values, beliefs and preferences regarding the way the work is done. Arguments can be found in the literature that substantiate the influence of personality on one's behaviour at work. There are various reasons why personality may affect a person's job choice, job attitude, job values and job behaviours. Individuals with different personalities react differently to the various aspects of the environment in which they work. Research done on the work values of different individuals in the same job shows that there is substantial variability between people in the same work environment. It is suggested that this can reflect either personality or demographic differences or a combination of the two (Furnham, Petrides, Tsaousis, Pappas & Garrod, 2005).

It is true that culture also affects one's personality together with one's behaviour, perceptions and work values (Igusi, 2009), as some researchers of this construct view personality as a process of lifelong interaction between a person and his/her socio-cultural environment (Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen, 2002). One of the most longstanding arguments is that personality characteristics influence work values, and therefore extraverts would look for jobs with some variety and excitement, while neurotics might prefer jobs that are more stable and predictable (Furnham *et al.*, 2005). The argument can then be raised that, in this study, all nurses who participated may have some of the same work values. Their personality traits, however, distinguish them and influence the way they do their work. The fact that personality in general affects the way people interact in their work environment is inevitable (Van der Zee, Atsma & Brodbeck, 2004).

Next, the participants were asked what they believe are the *unique contributions that stem from their own cultural group*, that they offer to the workplace.

Black Setswana

It was indicated by black Setswana participants that accepting responsibilities is something that they believe is a unique contribution from their own cultural group that is beneficial to the

workplace. Work done by Iguisi (2009) on African cultural dynamics supports this finding. Iguisi (2009) explained that this acceptance of responsibilities in the workplace could be because, in this culture, members of the group are given responsibilities in the community from early childhood until death. Emphasis is also placed on age groups and how different age groups socialise members in taking over responsibilities in the society.

It was also mentioned that some of the younger generations are not fixed in the old cultural ways anymore and that they have modernised, which is also indicated by some literature on these specific cultural groups. According to the work of Inta Allegritti and Mel Gray (2005), on some cultural insights within the South African context, there is a new generation of young people who have grown up in urban townships without strong connections to African cultural ways and adapt to the environment in which they work. Their research indicated that this is not only prevalent in among black Setswana-speaking individuals, but also in other cultural groups.

Black isiXhosa

Participants of this cultural group reported that good leadership skills and the ability to solve conflict right away in a calm manner are a contribution that they offer the organisation that stems from their cultural values. It was also mentioned that isiXhosa people are raised to be independent and assertive, which are also things that spill over in their working environment. Respect for others and respect for older people are something they have a high regard for in their culture and that they contribute to the workplace. This is something that characterises most African cultures, and age specifically plays an important role in African cultures (Iguisi, 2009).

These results are in line with the literature available on this cultural group. By looking at the background of the isiXhosa culture and the struggles they made through since 1994, together with their often poor living conditions, children in the isiXhosa communities were raised to be strong and assertive and because of families that were split as both mother and father had to work for an income, the eldest child would often take care of the family duties and responsibilities (Barr, 2008). The isiXhosa community is very proud and also has strong leadership orientations (Barr, 2008).

White Afrikaans

White Afrikaans participants in this study described themselves as more caring in nature, specifically when it comes to patient care when compared to other cultural groups. Going above and beyond to ensure that the patient is comfortable and tending to every small detail with care, are some of the ways in which the Afrikaans participants described themselves. This is in line with the literature that suggests that, traditionally, in the white Afrikaner culture, Afrikaans females are considered as caregivers and mothers in nature (Frizelle & Kell, 2010). According to the study done by Kerry Frizelle and Gabrielle Kell (2010), mothering, just as any general caring, remains the work of women and is an inborn characteristic of this cultural group.

The interviews also revealed that the white Afrikaans nurses consider themselves to be responsible and conscientious when it comes to their work and that their work must be done in a precise manner. If one takes a look back into the history of the white Afrikaner, one can see that these morals, values and beliefs stem from their ancestors and early white Afrikaans dictators. Children in white Afrikaans families are raised to be respectful of their elders, to be good corporate citizens, to be self-preserved, and to do something well from the start, due to the rigid ways in which their parents were raised (Van der Merwe, 2009). Participants also indicated that the white Afrikaans cultural group in general is more considerate by speaking in a language that everyone in the group understands, and when explaining something or giving a message to someone from another cultural group they make sure that the messages are carried out correctly, in a way that everyone understands. Van der Merwe (2009) mentioned in his work, that the “Afrikaner” (referring to the white Afrikaans) found themselves in a radically changing world in the post-apartheid era and many of their cultural values, beliefs and traditions fell away and since then their outlook on life and the world has often been based on the norms of Western civilisation, possibly explaining the consideration for other cultures.

The researcher also raised the question to the participants to elaborate on *the contributions they believe their colleagues from other cultures* bring about in the workplace. The researcher was interested in exploring whether the participants were aware of (or oblivious to) the positive contributions that their colleagues may deliver to the workplace. What the researcher found particularly interesting was that, when posed these questions, the participants focused more on the differences in how nurses from different (other) cultural groups do their work, rather than the specific positive contributions from these cultures to the workplace. It is not uncommon for

people to focus on differences between groups. For example, it is suggested that people from the same cultural group share a common understanding and have certain views pertaining to certain aspects of work, which make them perceive themselves as different from other groups (Iguisi, 2009). The social identity theory could also be one of the main reasons why people do not recognise the positive contributions that people from other groups can offer to the organisation (Abrams & Hogg, 1988), simply because they do not acknowledge that another group could contribute positively to the environment. People from one cultural group can form stereotypes about other groups, simply as a way to feel part of a group, but without even acknowledging what that group could contribute positively to the environment. The categorisation to one group (in-group) makes people differentiate and often discriminate against groups other than their own (out-group) and favour their own in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) thereby creating a space for stereotyping, projection and bias, which may result in conflict between groups (Coetzee, 2015).

When participants were asked to elaborate on the unique contributions that the other cultural groups in the hospital can offer to the work environment, little information was gathered about the black Setswana cultural group, as many of the white Afrikaans participants could not distinguish between the different black cultural groups. Mostly, the white Afrikaans participants referred to the 'black' colleagues, from which one can infer that the black group comprises both the black isiXhosa as well as the black Setswana groups that form part of the participating hospitals in the current study. This is not uncommon and can be explained by Iguisi (2009) who states that there are numerous common features that can be generalised as cultural values, which most African cultural groups share. Some of these cultural values include the respect for older people, respect for authority, profound family orientation, affiliation and care for extended family and collectivism. Age groups also play a significant role in African cultures (Iguisi, 2009). In the current study, it was noted that black (isiXhosa and Setswana) nurses being able to speak and understand various languages is highly valued and appreciated within the work context. This also enables them to take the lead in certain situations. The cases where the specific cultural groups' contributions were discussed are presented below. With the white Afrikaans participants talking about their 'black' colleagues, referring to their ethnicity rather than the different cultural groups, it may be implied that culture in South Africa are being discredited and the importance thereof are undermined by many. It is therefore important to attend to this matter in the workplace, for employees to become aware of the richness and the numerous benefits that cultural diversity encompass in the workplace.

Black Setswana

It was mentioned by white Afrikaans as well as black isiXhosa participants that black Setswana nurses tend to speak loud, even though they work in a hospital environment that requires peace and quiet. According to the handbook of Culture and Identity in the workplace (2015), it is quite common for all African cultures to speak loudly. It is explained that according to their value system they are not allowed to whisper as it is perceived as being rude or gossiping about another individual. This group is also quite comfortable to laugh or cry loudly in public.

Black isiXhosa

As with the Setswana culture, the isiXhosa cultural group is also perceived by others as a group that tends to speak loudly, even if it is in a hospital environment. This again is part of their culture and the way in which they were raised, to voice themselves loud and clear so that others know that they are not gossiping or being rude by not speaking loud enough for everyone to hear (Culture and Identity in the Workplace, 2013). Youngsters are also not allowed to address their superiors by name, and therefore they call them "mama", "ouma" or by their rank.

White Afrikaans

When other participants were asked to elaborate on the contributions that white Afrikaans colleagues add to the hospital, a central theme of the value of respect from others emerged. Patterson (2004) confirmed this by stating that the 'Afrikaner' has a predisposition for order and respect; however, it is showing a tendency to disappear.

From the above, it is evident that the participants showed little insight into the unique positive contributions that people from different cultural groups can bring to the workplace. The social identity theory can provide a possible explanation for the lack of knowledge that participants have about cultures that are different than their own. This theory suggests that a (cultural) group provides its members with an identification of themselves in social terms and continues by stating that individuals strive to achieve social identity. What this basically means is that if one belongs to a group, this group is seen as the in-group and one is focused primarily on the positive evaluation of one's in-group and differentiates themselves from the other, or out-

groups. The focus is therefore on their own group and the superiority of their group, rather than on other groups and what they can bring to the table (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). This mentality among colleagues could be one of the main reasons why people do not recognise the positive contributions that people from other groups can offer in the organisation. This lack of knowledge about different cultures is concerning, since an appreciation for diversity and the effective management of diversity in the workplace may be dependent on the awareness of and a focus on the strengths of all employees (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

The *fourth objective* of this study was to investigate whether an awareness of the unique contributions from individuals from different cultural groups could contribute to an appreciation of diversity in the workplace. It is reasonable to expect that an appreciation for diversity can only be fostered once employees become aware of what aspects from other cultures there are to appreciate. Therefore, the participants were firstly asked whether they have a need to become more aware of the contributions their colleagues from different cultures can contribute to the organisation, and also what strategies the organisation can follow to create such awareness.

Almost all of the participants indicated that they would like to know more about the unique contributions the different cultural groups in the hospital have to offer. This is encouraging, and it is strongly recommended that organisations invest in the training and sharing of information on the cultural groups in the workplace. Participants themselves also stated that by learning about other cultures and to gain an in-depth understanding of why they do things in a certain way, employees will learn to accept, adapt and accommodate one another.

Previous research has shown that for information sharing to be effective, employees need to identify with the mode of delivery of the communication (Zulu & Parumasur, 2009). Therefore, the researcher was interested in the participants' suggestions on how they would like to receive information about the unique contributions of different cultures in their hospital. The results revealed that nurses' preferences to receive information on the contributions of different cultural groups at work are different, and the way in which they prefer to learn from one another also differs. Suggestions were made by participants to share information about cultural customs, values and contributions in informal, social settings, where open discussions can be held, formal workshops, as well as written communication such as letters, pamphlets, emails or news bulletins. Collins and Pieterse (2007) in their research done on effective approaches to

develop cultural awareness, considered all different modes of training and the limitations thereof. They have found that adults learn best when they are confronted with real-life situations where they are considered as the stakeholders. The proposed method of training in cultural awareness is the use of a critical incident analysis. The critical incident analysis is a reflective learning type that involves reflection, personal experience and the transformation of significance and knowledge (Collins & Pieterse, 2007). This approach to raise cultural awareness examines situations and encounters that take place in a real-life setting, in other words, the day-to-day work encounters that the participants face.

Finally, the participants were asked whether they believe that an awareness of the unique contributions of every cultural group that they work with may result in an appreciation for these unique cultural contributions. Most of the participants clearly specified that they would indeed develop an appreciation for these unique contributions from other cultural groups if awareness is raised.

The participants mentioned that if one learns about other cultures and gains an understanding of why they do things in a certain way, they will learn to accept, adapt and accommodate one another. They also indicated that if they are made aware of the unique contributions that the different cultural groups bring to the workplace, they will work better together as they will have a deeper understanding of each other and their different cultural groups. These statements are supported by the work of Shen, Chanda, D'netto & Monga (2009) that a diverse workforce that is managed effectively and that has learnt to value the uniqueness of different cultural groups, displays better cooperative behaviour and has the capability of raising the organisation's effectiveness, efficiency and profitability. By managing diversity in such a way that it focuses on the appreciation of the cultural contributions of the various cultural groups, it enables the full utilisation of the skills and potential of all the employees in the workplace (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

Practical implications

Based on the results, the practical implication of this study is the identification of unique cultural contributions that people from different cultural groups can contribute to the workplace. The lack of well-defined cultural diversity incentives has proven to be a great

barrier in the effective management of diversity in the workplace. It is evident that there is confusion with regard to culture, what it comprise, how it can bring opportunities and a better understanding if an awareness of the unique contributions is made, which will, in turn, foster a greater appreciation for diversity. Participants reported on the differences between the groups, and how the way in which the work is done differs from one cultural group to another; however, they did not recognise the positive contributions. The way in which diversity has been managed up until this day has not indicated that it has been done for the right moral or social reasons. Unfortunately, the focus of the South African legislature is also to comply with the minimum requirements and not necessarily the appreciation of diversity in the workplace, hence the major gap currently in South Africa.

Limitations and recommendations

Various limitations can be pointed out that influenced the present research study. The study was limited to nurses from two hospitals in the North West Province, which, as a result, made the sample size small, with only 16 participants of which the distribution of participants from different cultural groups was not equal. The ideal would have been to study culture and the unique contributions from every cultural group across different hospitals through all provinces in South Africa. Such a project, however, would have been costly and time-consuming, and due to a lack of resources this approach was not possible. It is therefore suggested that future research should include more participants from an array of cultural groups in the sample in order to reach comprehensive generalisability.

Furthermore, some participants seemed hesitant or somewhat uneasy when posed questions that may come across as sensitive. This may be because the interviewer was from a different cultural group than some of the participants, and therefore participants may have felt that they could not voice their opinion or observations of that cultural group in full honesty. It is recommended that in future research interviews should be conducted by people from different cultural groups to best assist with the preferences of participants and to get the most open and honest responses possible. Another possible reason for the reluctance of participants to talk openly and honestly to the interviewer may be due to the indisputable fact that the topic is rather sensitive and it would be suggested that future research on this subject matter should make use of Paper-and-Pencil Interviewing (PAPI) method or a Computer-Assisted Personal

Interviewing (CAPI) method (Schräpler, Schupp & Wagner, 2006) in order to explore whether this approach would elicit more elaborate responses to sensitive subject matter.

Another possible limitation of the study was that it focused primarily on nurses. The researcher thought it to be wise to use nurses to participate in the study as they have to work in close collaboration with each other, for long hours and they are from widespread cultural backgrounds. It is recommended that future research should expand the context within which the study is done, and focus on a more extensive variety of participants from different samples.

Conclusion

To conclude, the results of this study demonstrate that, in the workplace, employees are not aware of the contributions that people from other cultural groups bring to the workplace. It also became apparent that most people cannot differentiate between the different African cultural groups, which makes it difficult to understand the culture and what individuals from that culture can provide to the organisation.

If employees are unaware of the unique attitudes, beliefs and values of their colleagues from a culture different to their own, it may negatively influence their perceptions, interactions and views of that person within the work context. The results, however, also indicated that there certainly is a need and craving of employees to understand what it is that other cultural groups bring to the workplace that is unique to their culture and that would impact the workplace positively. Participants also indicated that they believe it would help them work better together as they would have developed a greater understanding and sensitivity for one's culture and how it influences the way in which they do their work. The aim of this study therefore was to raise awareness for organisations to invest in the cultural diversity of their people to foster an organisational culture where diversity is appreciated. As Whitmore (2002:33) stated: "I am able to control only that of which I am aware. That of which I am unaware controls me. Awareness empowers me". Organisations should therefore empower their employees to develop a skills set in which they are sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to adjust their behaviour as a sign of respect and appreciation for the people of other cultures (Bhawuk & Brislin, in Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003).

There are limited studies to date that have empirically focused on cultural contributions as the main focus of diversity management. This study aims to fill that gap and make it clear to the individual, organisation and industrial/organisational psychology of how important cultural contributions in the workplace are, and how an appreciation of diversity can be fostered. To add on, the potential value-add of this research is also to push the awareness around cultural diversity dynamics beyond the obvious rational organisational observation, towards the exploration of below-the-surface cultural behaviour, thinking and functioning.

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CHAPTER 3

Conclusion, limitations and recommendations

Chapter 3 presents the conclusions that are drawn from the literature review and the findings in accordance with the general and specific objectives of the present study. Furthermore, the limitations of the research are discussed, followed by recommendations for future research and practice.

3.1 Conclusions

The lack of well-defined cultural diversity incentives has proven to be a great barrier to the effective management of diversity in the workplace. It is evident that in South Africa there is confusion with regard to a definition of culture, what it comprises and how it can bring opportunities and better understanding if an awareness of the unique contributions is made, which could, in turn, foster a greater appreciation for diversity.

The first objective of this research study was to examine how diversity management and the appreciation of diversity was conceptualised in the literature. Diversity management can be defined as methods and systems that are utilised to manage change in an organisation and to eliminate oppression and injustice based on any human differences (Cilliers, 2007) and aims to improve the effectiveness and well-being of an organisation by sustaining value and respect for human differences, social righteousness, pro-action, humility, authenticity, community, social participation, effectiveness and learning (Cilliers, 2007; Human, 2005). Furthermore, an organisation will only portray its devotion to its diversity management incentives, as a business imperative, by devoting time and resources into cultural diversity initiatives. This, in turn, will show that the organisation wants to promote the awareness and appreciation of the unique cultural contributions of employees from their different backgrounds. According to Taylor (2012), an appreciation of diversity is the ability to acknowledge, accept and utilise cultural differences.

The appreciation of diversity can also effectively contribute to the success of the organisation (Cox, 1994) by becoming a source of competitive advantage for the organisation. Furthermore, this appreciation may lead to an increased quality of one's work life, the life of the organisation and good business (Shen *et al.*, 2009). It is, however, important for an organisation to realise

that the benefits of an appreciation of diversity will not merely come to the fore by employing a more diverse labour force, but the actual fact that individuals are different, even if they belong to a certain cultural group, they comprise different personality make-ups and a tolerance for this individuality should be increased (Shen *et al.*, 2009). The focus, therefore, should not only be on accepting that individuals are different, but also on creating an atmosphere of inclusion, respect and making a commitment to appreciate diversity. Managers should not only encourage the appreciation of diversity, but be actively involved in managing and appreciating diversity themselves (Shen *et al.*, 2009). Any individual who has the desire to develop and grow in his/her appreciation of diversity has to first become comfortable and aware that he/she has biases and prejudices that most people tend to deny in most cases. It is vital to understand that if we want others to understand our culture, we must first understand our own cultural values, prejudices, standards and expectations (Taylor, 2012). The fostering of this appreciation also depends on whether one cares to actually make the work a better place or not.

According to the literature, there are numerous definitions of cultural diversity, but for the objective of this study, the early definition of Cox (1994) is used, stating that cultural diversity is the affiliation of people in a social system with different group associations in which they may form cultural identities in which people with a membership to a group share certain values, norms and traditions. The participants in this study described their cultural group as a combination of their home language and their ethnic group (e.g. black Setswana, white Afrikaans).

Participants were also asked whether they believe that culture has an influence on the way in which they do their work, and most participants reported that it has a definite influence on the way they do their work. Participants elaborated by explaining that one's upbringing and cultural background have a way of moulding a person and this spills over into the workplace, and in this instance, patient care. All of the different cultural groups within the organisation have their own belief systems, values, preferences and perceptions, which have an impact on everyday tasks, including work tasks. One has to acknowledge, however, that the training one receives as well as a person's personality make up is seen by many as the biggest influencing factors on the way in which they do their work. With regard to training, some participants believe that the scope of practice of the provision of patient-centred care cannot be changed by a person's cultural background, as patient care has to be done in the same manner by everyone who received the same training. In terms of personality, it is inevitable that individuals with

different personalities react differently to the various aspects of the environment in which they work, because of the mere fact that each individual is unique and has his/her own personality traits and preferences. Research does, however, suggest that the variability between people in the same work environment can reflect either personality or demographic differences or a combination of the two (Furnham, Petrides, Tsaousis, Pappas & Garrod, 2005). Culture also affects one's personality, together with perceptions, behaviours and work values (Iguisi, 2009).

The second objective of the study was to explore the unique contributions individuals believe their own cultural group can contribute to the organisation. In summary, black Setswana participants view themselves as responsible and accepting of the responsibilities given to them, although some also indicated that they do not have a high regard for the traditional cultural ways of doing things. Black isiXhosa participants see themselves as people with good leadership and problem-solving skills and have a high value for respect. White Afrikaans participants reported that they have a caring nature and consider themselves to be responsible and conscientious when it comes to their work.

The third objective of the study was to investigate what, according to one cultural group, another cultural group can contribute to the organisation. From the analysis, it became evident that employees deemed culture as an important contributor and influencing factor on the way in which work is done. When the participants were asked to elaborate on the contributions they believe their colleagues from other cultural groups bring to the workplace, the participants focused more on the differences in how nurses from different (other) cultural groups do their work, rather than the specific contributions they bring to the work. Grossberg *et al.* (2006) support these findings by stating that people view their cultural identities as a set of differences that differentiate one culture from another, and therefore they answered the question by identifying differences instead. People from the same cultural group share a common understanding and have certain views pertaining to certain aspects of work, which make them perceive themselves as different from other groups (Iguisi, 2009). The ways in which similarities and differences between groups are perceived and acted upon are influenced by an array of different motives and forces. The central idea, however, is to recognise and respect cultural differences in the workplace (Zulu & Parumasur, 2009) for this awareness to become lasting.

When asked about the unique contributions that the other cultural groups in the hospital can offer to the work environment, little information was gathered about the black Setswana and black isiXhosa cultural groups, as many of the white Afrikaans participants did not distinguish between the different black cultural groups. Mostly, the white Afrikaans participants referred to the 'black' colleagues, thereby using a collective name, rather than providing information about the individual cultural groups. Igusi (2009) stated that there are numerous common features that can be generalised as cultural values, which most African cultural groups share. Some of these cultural values that participants mentioned in the interviews include the respect for older people, respect for authority, profound family orientation, affiliation and care for extended family and collectivism. Participants also touched on the aspect of personality and how that may influence the way in which they do their work, rather than the cultural group that they belong to. Personality influences the way one does one's job because individuals with different personalities react differently to the various aspects of the environment in which they work.

A theme that emerged from the posing of these questions to participants was the *differences in the way cultural groups do their work*, which touched on all the differences that the different groups pointed out, rather than the unique contributions. These differences include *tone of voice, respect, sense of urgency, nurse-patient relationship, conflict-solving, communication, patient care, training and factors that influence the way in which the work is done*.

From the findings, it is evident that participants were unaware of the unique contributions that their colleagues from other cultural groups can bring to the hospital. This lack of knowledge about different cultures is concerning, since an appreciation of diversity and the effective management of diversity in the workplace may be dependent on the awareness of and a focus on the strengths of all employees, across different cultures (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

The fourth objective was to investigate whether an awareness of the unique contributions by individuals from different cultural groups contributed to an appreciation of diversity in the workplace. Participants clearly specified that they would indeed develop an appreciation for these unique contributions from other cultural groups if awareness is raised. The participants also mentioned that if one learns about other cultures and gain an understanding of why they do things in a certain way, they will learn to accept, adapt and accommodate one another. Shen, Chanda, D'netto and Monga (2009) supported this and stated that a diverse workforce that is

managed effectively and that has learnt to value the uniqueness of different cultural groups, displays better cooperative behaviour and has the capability of raising the organisation's effectiveness, efficiency and profitability. Furthermore, recent literature stated that there is still an unavoidable need to attain a deeper understanding of cultural diversity (Pretorius *et al.*, 2012) and the way it affects and influences the work, the way in which the work is done, the organisational culture as well as employee relations. It was indicated by the participants that they would like to be made aware of these contributions of other cultures and that this awareness would ultimately develop an appreciation of cultural diversity. Suggestions were made to share information about cultural customs, values and contributions in informal, social settings where open discussions can be held, formal workshops, as well as written communication such as letters, pamphlets, emails or news bulletins.

Anyone who has the desire to develop an appreciation of diversity has to first become aware that they have biases and predispositions of their own. It is vital to understand that if one wishes for others to understand one's own culture, one's own cultural values, prejudices, standards and expectations must be comprehended first (Taylor, 2012).

3.2 Limitations

Irrespective of the valuable outcomes and positive results of this research, various limitations were identified that affected this particular study. The first limitation of this study was with regard to the sample size that was small. The sample comprised 16 participants ($N = 16$) of whom three were black Setswana, two black isiXhosa, and 11 white Afrikaans. The distribution of different cultures in the sample was not equal and the ideal would have been if the same number of participants from each cultural group could participate. Nonetheless, the research was qualitative in nature and congruent with that of the composition of the different cultural groups in the hospitals. Future research can include more participants from an array of cultural groups in the sample in order to reach a comprehensive generalisability.

A second limitation that was identified in this study was that some participants from other cultural groups seemed hesitant to answer some questions truthfully and comfortably. This could be because the interviewer was from another cultural group and this may have prevented them from sharing their feelings and observations about that cultural group in the workplace.

Future research can eliminate this issue by appointing interviewers from all the prospective cultural groups included in the sample. Another possible reason for the reluctance of participants to talk openly and honestly to the interviewer may be because of the sensitive nature of the interview. It would therefore be suggested that future research on this subject matter should make use of a paper-and-pencil interviewing (PAPI) method or a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) method (Schräpler, Schupp & Wagner, 2006) in order to explore whether this approach would elicit more elaborate responses to this sensitive subject matter. Another limitation that could be identified in this study was that the sample group focused primarily on nurses. It could, therefore, be recommended that future research extends this context to corporate organisations of various different spheres in order to determine whether it would also have such a big impact on people working in different environments of the South African workforce. The way culture has an influence on the way nurses do their work may differ from the way it influences, for instance, the police force. Research has to be extended across all different disciplines and work contexts across South Africa to get an in-depth understanding of what it is that is necessary to change the views of organisations and its people with regard to culture and cultural diversity.

The final limitation of this study is that there is no concrete way in which culture in South Africa is conceptualised. In other words, the cultural make-up is not clearly defined in the literature. For the purpose of this study, culture comprised the combination of one's language as well as ethnic group. The participants also described their cultures as such. It would, however, be recommended for future research to focus on the criteria that describe the cultural make-up of the various cultural groups in South Africa.

3.3 Recommendations

The recommendations of the research study have two focus points, namely recommendations for the hospital as an organisation, as well as other organisations that can benefit from this research and suggestions for opportunities for future research on this topic, building on the findings of previous research and the present study and addressing the limitations.

3.3.1 Recommendations for future research

It is evident from previous research, together with the findings from the present study, that there is a pivotal need for effective diversity management, and more specifically cultural diversity. Empirical research on the awareness of the contributions of different cultures to the workplace seems to be lacking, and therefore it is suggested that researchers expand the literature on cultural diversity within the South African context by focusing on the unique contributions that each cultural group in this country can contribute to the workplace, as well as on how these contributions can foster a greater appreciation for diversity. This study aims to fill that gap and make it clear how important cultural contributions in the workplace are, and how an appreciation of diversity can be fostered. It is, however, important to build on this topic with some further in-depth research.

With respect to the above-mentioned limitations, it is suggested that future research should include more participants from the various cultural groups encompassed in the hospital to participate in a research project. By getting participants from all, or most, of the cultural groups in South Africa, researchers will be able to draw more accurate findings on this topic and thereby gain more insight into this topic.

A further recommendation for future research is to explore what the different cultural groups expect from the workplace and from management in order to accommodate their cultural values, beliefs, preferences and traditions. It is suggested that management should also be included in such a study, because a manager has to first acknowledge the importance of fostering a work environment where diversity is appreciated and how it can bring opportunities and better understanding if an awareness of the unique contributions is made. As mentioned before, the first step is to get buy-in from management, in order to focus on the unique cultural contributions and how these can be utilised as strengths in any organisation. If facilitated resourcefully by management, cultural diversity within an organisation will contribute to employees developing flexibility, improve negotiating skills, developing an open mind and ensuring continuous learning (Gardner, 2005).

Finally, research studies that explore the way in which culture can have an influence on the way one does his/her work can be conducted in the future. This became an apparent theme during the interviews, as many participants commented that their cultural background has an

impact on the way they do their work, as well as the patients' cultural background that has an influence on the manner in which they work with the patient. This is a prospective study for future in-depth research.

3.3.2 Recommendations for practice

From the findings in this study as well as previous research, it is clear that there is a need for organisations to invest and explore the cultural contributions of their culturally diverse workforce in order to optimise the benefits that cultural diversity brings about. This became apparent during the interviewing phase where most of the participants confirmed that the cultural group one belongs to influences the way in which the work is done, whether it is the way in which they collaborate with colleagues or the way in which they take care of their patients. To achieve this end of exploring and investing the cultural contributions of their employees, organisations need to do the following (Zulu & Parumasur, 2009):

- Review human resource policies in an ongoing manner in order to guarantee that they are focused on the employees and are aware and sensitive to cultural differences.
- Conduct organisation health, wellbeing and engagement surveys to determine employee engagement and satisfaction pertaining to cultural diversity incentives.
- A clear communication strategy must be communicated and documented to all relevant stakeholders.
- Get the involvement and buy-in from trade unions and professional bodies to assist with the improvement of cultural diversity management initiatives.
- Quarterly reports, meetings with all relevant parties and annual roadshows to present the progress of the newly implemented diversity initiatives.

It is, however, also true that there are limited studies to date that have empirically focused on cultural contributions as the main focus of diversity management. It can also be inferred from the findings that people are not aware of the unique contributions that people from other cultural groups bring to the workplace that would benefit the organisation positively. In order to raise awareness regarding the contributions that each cultural group provides the workplace with, campaigns can be implemented to raise this awareness in terms of cultural awareness workshops, written communication forums such as news bulletins, letters or pamphlets as well as monthly meetings or social gatherings where subject matter experts facilitate sessions or

where employees from the different cultural groups talk about their cultural customs, values, beliefs, traditions, norms and taboos.

Individuals, including employees and management, would benefit from this study by increasing awareness and understanding of cultural diversity in the workplace, how it impacts on ones work and relationships, communication and collaboration at work and how it can benefit employees, managers and the organisation as a whole. It is advised that future studies include managers' perspectives on cultural diversity and how to get buy-in from them.

Lastly, it is highly recommended that organisations should pay serious attention to this need and revise their currently instated diversity management programmes and devote themselves to an all-inclusive multicultural work environment in which cultural diversity is appreciated, by brushing up on legislative interventions and making sure that systems and structures are put in place to accommodate the transformation to an all-inclusive multicultural environment where diversity management focuses not only on employment equity and affirmative action legislation, but also on culture and the appreciation thereof. By transforming to this type of conducive environment, an organisation will start to portray that its diversity management initiatives are commissioned for the right moral, social and ethical reasons.

Organisations should dedicate themselves to the transformation of an all-inclusive multicultural approach to diversity management initiatives, focusing specifically on the cultural contributions of their employees and the fostering of an appreciation for diversity (Stevens, Plaut & Sanchez-Burks, 2008). In order to cultivate an appreciation of diversity, an organisation could employ strategies to do culturally relevant training by facilitators who are experts in the field and that who an appreciation and respect for diversity as well as the employees themselves who deal with the diversity issues on a daily basis. Participants made suggestions to share information about cultural customs, values and contributions in informal, social settings where open discussions can be held. Some also suggested formal workshops, as well as written communication such as letters, pamphlets, emails or news bulletins. Such programmes have to progress beyond just mechanistic exercises based on the preconceived idea that diversity can be trained in a "one-size fits all" approach (Coetzee, 2007). Organisations need to put in all efforts to get the organisational culture and climate inclusive of all cultural groups and their unique contributions in order to gain resilience as a way forward towards transformation (Cilliers, 2007). Organisations can develop an all-inclusive

multicultural work environment by including all culturally diverse employees in diversity management structures and policies (Stevens *et al.*, 2008). Through positive interdependent work, symbolic interaction and feelings of inclusion, an environment receptive to positive change will be shaped (Stevens *et al.*, 2008). By knowing that their contributions are valued, employees will generate positive relationships with great positive outcomes such as higher levels of physical and psychological well-being, transferring knowledge and feeling safe to innovate (Cameron, Dutton & Quinn, 2003; Ryff & Singer 2001) and the encouragement of continuous learning.

In order to develop an appreciation for other cultures, it is recommended that individuals expand their world views and examine themselves and who they are in their own cultures and what they can bring to the workplace. Any individual who has the desire to develop and grow in his/her appreciation of diversity has to first become comfortable and aware that he/she has biases and prejudices that most people tend to deny in most cases. It is vital to understand that if we want others to understand our culture, we must first understand our own cultural values, prejudices, standards and expectations (Taylor, 2012). Every employee, manager and employer has to take full ownership in this regard, not only as a way of good corporate governance, but also as a system contributing to the national body of knowledge, in which there is a major gap currently in South Africa.

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ADDENDUM A

To be conducted by: Valeske Kelly
Email: valeske.kelly@gmail.com
Tel: 079 881 1940
Project number: EMSMHW16/05/19-01/02

I, Valeske Kelly, Master's student at the North-West University, am currently undertaking research on 'Exploring the unique contributions of different cultural groups within hospitals in the North West province' in order to foster a working environment where diversity is appreciated and thereby effectively managing diversity in South African organisations. This study is conducted for my M.Com Industrial Psychology mini-dissertation. The study has the approval of the North-West University.

The **purpose of the study** is to explore the unique contributions that individuals from different cultural groups contribute to the organisation, in order to manage diversity more effectively in an organisation, by firstly becoming aware of the unique contributions and ultimately fostering a positive working environment where diversity is appreciated.

Your input in this study will be of great importance and will be highly appreciated. I wish to assure you that all information I receive will be treated as confidential and that your participation will remain anonymous. Your contribution to this study is extremely important to ensure the success of the project.

Interviews will be conducted in person, individually and private, according to the interviewee's schedule and availability. With your approval the interview will be tape-recorded, in order to facilitate record keeping. An interview guide will be prepared ahead of time to be sure to cover all aspects of the topic but significant freedom will be taken to explore, elaborate or explain answers if it is thought to be fruitful. Interviews will be semi-structured and in order to gain a deeper understanding of the whole situation structured questions may be followed with probing questions.

Once the data has been analysed, summary findings will be presented to participating individuals if so requested. In this way, your contribution to the research should benefit you and your institution in future. The value and outcome of this research depends on your willingness to take part in this project. If you have any queries, which I have not addressed, and would like to discuss these with me, please contact me: Valeske Kelly at valeske.kelly@gmail.com. A letter of consent is attached. Please tick and sign (signing is optional if so preferred) and hand back at interview.

Yours faithfully

Valeske Kelly



INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

*Department of Human Resources Management
Faculty of Economic & Management Sciences
North West University Potchefstroom Campus*

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Valeske Kelly under the direction of Dr. Crizelle Els of the WorkWell: Research Unit for Economic and Management Sciences at the Potchefstroom campus of the North-West University. This project has undergone ethical review and is accepted, with the project number EMSMHW16/05/19-01/02.

1. Purpose of the research

The purpose of the study is to explore the unique contributions that individuals from different cultural groups contribute to the organisation.

2. Research procedure

I understand that I will be requested to be interviewed. The interview will be conducted by the researcher (Valeske Kelly). I will be contacted to confirm the time and venue of the interview. The interview will be semi-structured according to an interview schedule. The interview will take approximately twenty minutes. The interview transcript will be kept in a safe and secure place, where no one except the researcher has access to it.

3. Rights of participant

I understand that my participation is on a voluntary basis and that I can choose not to participate or withdraw from the project at any time and without adverse consequences. At my request a copy of this consent form will be provided to me.

4. Confidentiality

The interview will be treated confidentially, in a private setting and my participation will remain anonymous.

5. Disclosure and Right of Access

I agree not to disclose any confidential information discussed during the interview with any other parties. If there are points discussed that I would like to discuss in more depth, I will contact the researcher. I do not give up any legal rights by signing this informed consent form. I understand that I will not receive any compensation for participating in this research project.

6. Consent

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I understand what the study is about and how it is being done. I hereby give consent that the interview may be tape recorded. Tape recorded interviews will be kept in a secure place, with password protection so that all the interviews stay confidential.

Participant's signature

or (tick if you do not want to sign)

Date

Yours faithfully,

Valeske Kelly, Researcher