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Management Challenges of a Culturally Diverse Workforce in the Irish Hotel Sector: An Investigative Study of Four and Five Star Hotels in Cork

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Management Challenges of a Culturally Diverse Workforce in the Irish Hotel Sector: An Investigative Study of Four & Five Star Hotels in Cork

AMY JORDAN

MBS 2008
Management Challenges of a Culturally Diverse Workforce in the Irish Hotel Sector: An Investigative Study of Four and Five Star Hotels in Cork

Amy Jordan

Supervisor: Ms. Antoinette Hourican

Submitted to Cork Institute of Technology

September 2008
This thesis is entirely the author’s own work except where otherwise stated. This thesis has not been submitted for an award at any other Institute of Technology or University.

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Author

Antoinette Hourican
Research Supervisor

01-09-08
Date

09/08
Date
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Kevin and Valerie, whose belief in my abilities has never wavered.

And to Kevin; for your words of encouragement and endless support - thank you.
Abstract

In recent years Ireland has changed from a nation of emigration to one of immigration, facilitated by the Irish Celtic Tiger, the globalisation of labour markets and the erosion of labour restrictions across frontiers. Thus there is increased employee diversity in the Irish work environment, with many different races, cultures, norms, values and religions now in evidence in the Irish workforce. These changes have a significant effect on managers as the Irish workplace becomes increasingly culturally heterogeneous, and forms the basis for change in management practice.

Primary research was undertaken in the form of six interviews with hotel managers to assess their experiences of employing foreign national workers, the positives and negatives they associate with their heterogeneous workforce, any challenges they perceive, and their future concerns. Two focus groups with foreign national employees were conducted to ascertain their experiences of working in the hotel sector in Cork. Two focus groups were also conducted with Irish employees to assess the impact of working with foreign national employees. An interview was conducted with former Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mr. Micheál Martin T.D., to gain the government’s opinion of Ireland’s changing workforce. Finally, an interview was conducted with Mr. Adrian Gregan, former council member of the Irish Hospitality Institute with many years experience in hotel management and education, to gain the opinion of an industry expert on the increasing employment of foreign national workers in the Irish hospitality industry.

A number of conclusions have been made from the primary research conducted. The standard of spoken English among foreign national employees was found to be very low in a number of cases, causing frustration among Irish employees. Despite this, the hotel managers interviewed do not provide English lessons to all foreign national employees. It was discovered that many foreign national employees perceive a ‘glass ceiling’ regarding promotion. The initiatives of some hotels to integrate diverse cultures within their organisation, such as diversity days in the staff canteen, were seen as inadequate, empty gestures by some foreign national employees, who would prefer greater understanding and cultural empathy from their managers. It was also discovered that hotel managers are concerned about the possible short-term nature of employing foreign national workers, and the constant training of new staff in the event of continuous staff turnover.

A number of recommendations are made in this thesis for hotel managers, which can contribute to effective management of culturally heterogeneous work-groups in the hotel sector.
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Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dedication</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Appendices</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 1: Introduction
1.1: Introduction ........................................ 1
1.2: The Organisational Perspective ................. 2
1.3: Research Objectives ................................ 4
1.4: Motivation for Undertaking the Research .......... 6
1.5: Conceptualisation .................................. 10

Context for the Study ........................................ 13

Chapter 2: Literature Review
2.1: Diversity .............................................. 15
2.1.1: Workplace Diversity ......................... 16
2.2: Managing Culturally Diverse Employees ............ 21
2.2.1: Understanding Culture ......................... 24
2.2.2: Clustering Countries of Cultural Similarity .. 28
2.2.3: Managing Cultural Diversity - the Irish Context 36
2.3: Workplace Communication .......................... 43
2.4: Integrating Culturally Diverse Employees into the Workplace 48
2.4.1: Enhancing Employee Integration in the Irish Workplace 57
2.5: Conclusion ............................................. 68

Chapter 3: Research Methodology ......................... 77
3.1: Introduction ........................................... 78
3.2: Definition of the Research Objectives .......... 78
3.3: The Scope of the Research .......................... 80
3.4: Research Design ...................................... 81
3.5: Data Collection ....................................... 82
3.5.1: Secondary Data .................................... 82
3.5.2: Primary Data ...................................... 84
3.5.2.1: In-depth Interviews ......................... 85
3.5.2.2: Focus Groups ................................... 89
3.6: Analysing Qualitative Research Findings ......... 92
3.7: Research Validity, Transparency and Transferability 96
3.8: Summary of Research Methodology ................ 97
Chapter 4: Primary Research Results

4.1: Introduction ................................................. 98

4.2: Interviews with Hotel Managers ........................................... 99
4.2.1: Workforce Composition .............................................. 100
4.2.2: Workplace Communication ........................................... 100
4.2.3: English Lessons .................................................... 101
4.2.4: Integrating Foreign National Employees ....................... 102
4.2.5: Foreign National Employee Interaction with Irish Employees ............................................ 103
4.2.6: Equal Opportunities for Foreign National Employees .......... 104
4.2.7: Advantages Associated with Employing Foreign National Workers ............................................. 107
4.2.8: Disadvantages Associated with Employing Foreign National Workers ............................................ 108
4.2.9: Employing Foreign Nationals – Current and Future Management Challenges ..................................... 109
4.2.10: Support Services .................................................. 110
4.2.11: Foreign National Employees and the Fáilte Romhat ............ 111

4.3: Focus Groups with Foreign National Employees ..................... 112
4.3.1: Duration and Department Employed .................................. 113
4.3.2: Motivation to come to Ireland and Expectations of Working in Ireland ............................................. 114
4.3.3: Spoken English Ability .............................................. 115
4.3.4: Relationship with Irish Co-Workers .................................. 116
4.3.5: Racism Experienced by Foreign National Employees ......... 117
4.3.6: Integration Assistance .............................................. 118
4.3.7: Foreign National Employee Concerns .............................. 119
4.3.8: Foreign National Employee Perceptions of their Future in Ireland ............................................. 120

4.4: Focus Groups with Irish Employees .................................... 121
4.4.1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Working with Foreign National Employees ......................................... 122
4.4.2: Irish Employee attitudes towards further Immigration ...... 123
4.4.3: Treatment of Foreign National Employees .......................... 124

4.5: Interview with Minister Micheál Martin T.D. ......................... 125
4.5.1: The Benefits and Problems of Employing Foreign National Workers ............................................. 126
4.5.2: Foreign National Employees and a Management Challenge .................................................. 127

4.6: Interview with Adrian Gregan ......................................... 128
4.6.1: The Benefits and Problems of Employing Foreign National Workers ............................................. 129
4.6.2: Foreign National Employees and a Management Challenge .................................................. 130

4.7: Conclusion .................................................................. 131
Chapter 5: Discussion of Results

5.1: Introduction .............................. 149

5.2: Research Objective 1 ......................................................... 149
5.2.1: Workplace Communication ........................................... 150
5.2.2: English Lessons ......................................................... 151
5.2.3: Integrating Foreign National Employees ......................... 153
5.2.4: Equal Opportunities for Foreign National Employees .......... 155
5.2.5: Advantages and Disadvantages associated with Employing Foreign National Workers ............. 156
5.2.6: Employing Foreign Nationals – Current and Future Management Challenges ..................... 159
5.2.7: Foreign National Employees and the Fáilte Romhat .............. 161
5.2.8: Summary of Findings – Objective 1 ................................. 162

5.3: Research Objective 2 ......................................................... 162
5.3.1: Motivation to come to Ireland and Expectations of Working in Ireland .............................................. 163
5.3.2: Spoken English Ability ................................................. 164
5.3.3: Relationship with Irish Co-Workers and Experiences Of Racism ....................................................... 165
5.3.4: Integration Assistance ................................................... 166
5.3.5: Foreign National Employee Concerns ............................. 167
5.3.6: Summary of Findings – Objective 2 ................................. 168

5.4: Research Objective 3 ......................................................... 169
5.4.1: Advantages and Disadvantages of working with Foreign National Employees ............................ 170
5.4.2: Treatment of Foreign National Employees ........................ 172
5.4.3: Summary of Findings – Objective 3 ................................. 174

5.5: Research Objective 4 ......................................................... 175
5.5.1: Government Insight into the Employment of Foreign Nationals .............................................. 175

5.6: Research Objective 5 ......................................................... 176
5.6.1: Opinion of an Industry Professional ................................. 176

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1: Introduction ......................................................... 179
6.2: Language and Communication ........................................... 179
6.3: Foreign National Employees’ Perception of a Foreign National ‘Glass Ceiling’ .............................. 182
6.4: Retention of Foreign National Employees in Irish Hotels .............................................. 183
6.5: Greater Cultural Understanding needed by Managers to Motivate Foreign National Employees ................................. 184
6.6: Summary ......................................................... 186
6.7: Recommendations for Further Research ...................................... 187
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 2.1:</th>
<th>Hofstede’s Masculinity-Femininity and Uncertainty-Avoidance Map</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.2:</td>
<td>Hofstede’s Power-Distance and Individualism-Collectivism Map</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.3:</td>
<td>Hofstede’s Power-Distance and Uncertainty-Avoidance Map</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.4:</td>
<td>Ronen and Shenkar’s Country Clusters</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.5:</td>
<td>Factors that can Impinge on a Diverse Employees’ Interaction Adjustment into the Workforce</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1:</td>
<td>Interviews with Hotel Managers in Cork</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.2:</td>
<td>Composition of Foreign National Employee Focus Groups</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.3:</td>
<td>Composition of Irish Employee Focus Groups</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1:</td>
<td>Percentage of Foreign Nationals Employed in Each Hotel Researched</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2:</td>
<td>Foreign National Employees – Duration and Department Employed</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3:</td>
<td>Irish Employee Duration Employed with Foreign National Employees and Department Employed</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A – Bibliography

Appendix B – Interview Guidelines

Appendix C – Focus Group Guidelines

Appendix D – The Countries Used in Hofstede’s (1980) Research
Chapter One

Introduction
1.1: Introduction

Throughout history, migration has characterised human endeavour to triumph over adversity and seek prosperity. According to the former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan,

*Migration is a strong expression of an individual’s will to overcome adversity and live a better life*

(United Nations Department of Public Information, 2007).

The globalisation of labour markets and the erosion of labour restrictions across frontiers, as well as developments in communication and transportation, have significantly enlarged the number of people with the aspiration and capacity to migrate (United Nations, 2006). In 2003 an estimated 1 in every 35 people worldwide was classed as migrant. Migration across the world has grown to such high proportions that the 18th December is now International Migrants Day (United Nations Events, 2007). The United Nations report “International Migration and Development” (2006:7) defines international migrants as

*a dynamic human link between cultures, economies and societies*

European Union expansion has facilitated increased immigration into Ireland. While European Union expansion has undoubtedly increased the number of foreign nationals in Ireland, citizens from outside the European Union have a presence here also. The 2006 Census report found that almost 15% of foreign nationals resident in Ireland are from outside the European Union (Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, 2007). Furthermore, Chinese nationals have had a significant presence in Irish hotels over the last number of years (Melia and Kennedy, 2005). Clearly, it is not just European Union citizens who migrate to Ireland. A further factor which has contributed to increased migration to Ireland is the Irish Celtic Tiger. The era of the Irish Celtic Tiger was characterised by
economic prosperity, and changed Ireland from an almost homogenous population to a multicultural one (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a). Thus Ireland has changed from a country of migration to one of immigration (United Nations, 2006). There are many factors that facilitate immigration of this level. In Ireland’s case, the lack of skilled workers in certain employment sectors and the aging population mean employers frequently have to search abroad for employees to sustain our economic growth (Redmond and Butler, 2003).

There were 419,733 foreign nationals registered in Ireland in the 2006 Census, although it is estimated that there are many more foreign national people in Ireland, as many are believed to be undeclared. Over 275,000 of these foreign nationals come from the European Union. The largest group of foreign nationals are British (112,548), followed by Polish (63,276), and there are 24,628 Latvians. Over 35,000 people from Africa reside in Ireland and an estimated 47,000 from Asia (CSO figures 2006 cited in McEnroe, 2007:9).

The debate over the benefits and detriments of migration continues. Arguably, migration separates families, causes tension in the country of destination, and the country of origin loses some of its best people, who are forced to look to other nations for economic prosperity. However, there are many benefits, including the amount of international aid sent to developing countries by migrants who support their families – estimated globally at €141 billion in 2005. Further recognised benefits include new ways of social and political thinking, and transferable technological skills and institutional knowledge (United Nations, 2006).
1.2: The Organisational Perspective

From an organisational perspective, the increasing number of foreign national workers forms the basis for change in management practice. According to Gunnigle et al. (2002:1)

*People are the lifeblood of organisations. An organisation's workforce represents one of its most potent and valuable resources*

People are a vital element in an organisation, particularly a service organisation where employees and service delivery are essentially linked (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). Thus the role of the manager in leading, motivating, controlling and directing diverse workforces becomes ever more important. The homogenous Irish workforce is debatably a thing of the past, replaced with a diverse group of employees from different cultures, race and background. This is reflected in the number of foreign national employees within the Irish workforce.

Theorists outline a number of organisational benefits related to increased employee diversity. These theorists include Cassell (2001), Anderson and Metcalf (2003) and the IRS Employment Review (2003). Benefits have also been identified by the Fáilte Ireland “Cultural Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan” (2005a). They include enhanced customer satisfaction, the utilisation of diverse employee skills, and superior innovation and problem-solving resulting from diverse ideas, among other advantages. There are, however, a number of problems associated with employee diversity. Discrimination and exploitation are identified as problems (United Nations, 2006), while Cox (1991a) proffers that mismanagement of workplace diversity can lead to higher employee turnover, greater conflict and miscommunications. The Fáilte Ireland
“Cultural Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan” (2005a:8) outlines that the increased heterogeneity of Irish society necessitates;

careful, innovative and structured planning to maintain its unique competitive advantage – the friendliness and hospitality of its people who are now from diverse cultures

The Hospitality and Tourism sector attracts the largest number of foreign national workers in Ireland. The number of foreign national employees in this sector is currently 32,800 (Prime Time 06/03/2007). In their reflections on the tourism industry in Ireland, Fáilte Ireland (2005b) outline that the people involved are a real source of competitive advantage. They project that visitor numbers to Ireland will reach 10 million by 2012, and proffer that foreign national employees will increasingly satisfy the need for expanded employment in the tourism sector.

However, a question arises in the hospitality sector concerning the increasing number of foreign national employees and the effect it has on the nature of competition. The Irish Hotels Federation produced a “Blueprint for the Future” in 2001 in which they expressed a need to maintain

a distinctive Irish identity in the hotel industry

(The Irish Hotels Federation, 2001:52).

They outline the challenge hotel managers face to preserve the Irish experience in service delivery, despite increased reliance on foreign national employees.

Thus the challenge that hotel managers face in motivating, leading, organising, controlling and communicating with foreign national employees within their workforce, as well as the challenge they face in maintaining a distinctive Irish identity, needs to be examined as a pertinent and immediate concern. Exploring such challenges is the
Chapter 1, Introduction

central research subject for this thesis. In this context, the essential aims of this thesis are:

- To explore the opinion of managers working in four and five star hotels in Cork on employing foreign national employees.
- To explore the needs, concerns and attitudes of foreign national workers employed in four and five star hotels in Cork.
- To investigate the needs, concerns and attitudes of Irish employees in four and five star hotels in Cork towards the changes in their workplace, and their opinion on working with foreign national employees.
- To gain the insight of Mr. Micheál Martin T.D., former Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, on the increasing cultural heterogeneity in the Irish workplace.
- To gain the opinion of an industry professional regarding the increasing number of foreign national employees in the hotel industry in Cork.

1.3: Research Objectives

1 - To explore the opinion of managers working in four and five star hotels in Cork on employing foreign national employees.

It is intended to explore the opinion of managers in four and five star hotels in Cork in relation to working with foreign national employees. Of interest will be their views on assistance available to them, the challenges they faced or are currently facing, and their opinion on how the increase of foreign national employees in their workplace is affecting the traditional Irish welcome. Using unstructured interviews, the research aims to uncover their attitudes toward workplace diversity. Has it presented a significant
management challenge? What assistance is available to them? Is workplace integration a concern? Is communication with culturally diverse employees an added challenge? Managers will be asked to identify, in their personal experience, the advantages and disadvantages of the cultural diversity in their organisation, as well as future concerns.

2 - To explore the needs, concerns and attitudes of foreign national workers employed in four and five star hotels in Cork.

The research conducted will explore the needs, concerns and attitudes of foreign national workers employed in four and five star hotels in Cork. Of interest will be their opinions on their experiences of working in Ireland, how they are treated by managers and fellow employees, and any issues they may have regarding their employment. It is proposed to assess their initial expectations on working in the Irish hotel industry, and how their experiences have compared with these expectations. Future concerns will also be explored. Through the use of focus groups the author proposes to investigate these areas of concern for foreign national employees in hotels in Cork.

3 - To investigate the needs, concerns and attitudes of Irish employees in four and five star hotels in Cork towards the changes in their workplace, and their opinion on working with foreign national employees

This research aims to explore the opinion (positive or negative) of Irish employees in four and five star hotels on working with foreign national employees, the level of integration in their workplace, and obtain feedback on any issues they may have regarding their employment. The research will determine the areas of concern for Irish
employees working in hotels in Cork. Included in this is the aim to assess their personal opinion and attitudes on the changing workforce in Ireland. Research in this area will be conducted through the use of focus groups.

4 - To gain the insight of Mr. Micheál Martin T.D., former Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, on the increasing cultural heterogeneity in the Irish workplace.

Pertinent to the research question is the opinion of former Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Micheál Martin T.D. on the changed composition of the Irish workforce and the contribution of foreign national employees.

5 - To gain the opinion of an industry professional regarding the increasing number of foreign national employees in the hotel industry in Cork.

The insight of an industry professional is relevant to the research question. Mr. Adrian Gregan has served on the Irish Hospitality Institute Council, and has been involved in hospitality management and education for many years. His opinion is considered important in exploring the current cultural heterogeneity of hotel work environments and the contribution of foreign national employees to the hospitality sector. As Mr. Gregan is directly involved in the education of current and future hotel employees and managers, the insight he offers is considered pertinent to the research question.
1.4: Motivation for Undertaking the Research

The Fáilte Ireland “Cultural Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan” (2005a) was published while a topic was being considered for this research. This Plan detailed that the Irish tourism industry employs the largest proportion of foreign national employees in Ireland. This plan provides managers in the tourism sector with an approach to managing culturally diverse employees, as well as steps on how to integrate them into the organisation.

The idea that the traditional skills of managers need to be supplemented in order to effectively manage heterogeneous workforces was considered interesting. Arguably, such heterogeneity is a future feature of the Irish employment landscape. Furthermore, around this time an acquaintance of the researcher, who is in a supervisory position, remarked on the changes to her job specification. She commented that her subordinates were largely Polish, and remarked how different her work environment had been five years ago. She outlined a number of challenges in her supervisory role directly related to foreign national employees, such as problems communicating due to a language barrier. This prompted the researcher to consider the changing nature of employee management, brought on by increasing cultural heterogeneity in the Irish workforce.

The hotel sector was considered an interesting area for research, namely because

- The tourism sector in Ireland employs a significantly large number of foreign national employees.
- This is a service sector. The people element of service delivery has long been considered paramount. Thus how employees in Irish hotels are managed, a large portion of them foreign nationals, can affect service delivery.
The Cork area was chosen for research; as the researcher is based in Cork, this facilitated time and financial constraints. The scope of the research was narrowed to within 4 and 5 star hotels. The researcher rationalised that managers of 4 and 5 star hotels strive to deliver very high service standards, and are thus reliant upon their workforce, a large number of which are foreign national employees.

1.5: Conceptualisation

This research is underpinned by the theories of, amongst others, Hofstede (1980); Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993); and Ronen and Shenkar (1985), who enumerate that one’s culture differs by country or country cluster, and that this has a significant impact on managing multicultural workforces. Hofstede (1980) is well known for his research on national cultures, and the impact of culture on international management. He conducted a survey in more than seventy countries asking over 116,000 employees of IBM subsidiaries about their values and beliefs. The countries used in Hofstede’s (1980) research are outlined in the Appendices section. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) conducted cultural research using questionnaires to more than 15,000 managers in twenty-eight different countries. The research focused on values and relationships, and developed five relationship orientations. Trompenaars (1994) also examined cultural attitudes towards time and one’s environment. Their work provides a rich base of knowledge about cultural differences, very useful to managers of culturally and racially heterogeneous workforces. Awareness of cultural differences is paramount in a culturally heterogeneous work setting, which is becoming increasingly common in Ireland. Such awareness can assist managers to understand and better manage a diverse workforce. Ronen and Shenkar (1985) have studied the area of diverse cultures across nations, and the impact for managers of multicultural work
groups. They have contributed to the understanding of national culture in the work setting, and have clustered countries based on their cultural similarity. These aforementioned theorists encapsulate that in order to manage diversity effectively, managers must understand national cultures and their effect on behaviour in the organisation. This thesis is further strengthened by the Fáilte Ireland “Cultural Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan” (2005a) which expands on the changing role that managers play due to increased cultural diversity in their organisation; in this case in the hospitality industry. This report discusses in detail the changing nature of management due to employee heterogeneity, and provides valuable insight to managers. Furthermore, Melia and Kennedy (2005) have conducted research on diversity management in the hospitality sector. Their findings provide a basis for understanding on managing foreign national employees; they detail the need to integrate heterogeneous employees into the workforce, which is particularly relevant to this research thesis. The work of Canas and Sondak (2008), who detail the opportunities and challenges that workplace diversity can pose, provides further foundation for this research.

The hospitality sector employs the largest number of foreign national employees in Ireland: 32,800. Furthermore, because of an apparent decreasing Irish-employee interest in working in this industry, managers in the hospitality industry are increasingly dependent on foreign national employees.

As a result of the increased number of foreign national employees in this sector, and the difficulties outlined by Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars and Hampden Turner (1993), Ronen and Shenkar (1985), Fáilte Ireland (2005a), Melia and Kennedy (2005) and Canas and Sondak (2008), this research is justified. The need arises to examine the
changing nature of management in the hospitality sector, and the impact that cultural heterogeneity is having on managers' traditional role requirements. This research aims to discover the challenges employing foreign national workers poses to hotel managers at a fundamental level. This research will benefit hotel managers by highlighting the work of theorists in the area of diversity management, and the opinion of their Irish and foreign national peers and employees.
Context for the Study
Context for the Study

An Irish context for this research thesis may be gained by studying the various initiatives the Irish government has recently taken, and those they continue to implement, in their approach to dealing with the heterogeneity of Irish society and the Irish workplace. These initiatives are aimed at making Ireland an equal, integrated and fair place to work. As well as employment legislation, government bodies and future government actions, these initiatives include the FÁS Know Before You Go initiative, the National Action Plan Against Racism and committees such as the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism. The evident importance the Irish government places on workplace equality and integration adds weight to the research topic explored in this thesis; assessing the challenge to Irish hotel managers posed by cultural diversity in the workplace.

Further context for this research thesis was gained by examining the services sector, and in particular the hotel sector, in Ireland. This incorporates the impact people (as the instruments of service delivery) have on the organisation and the success of the services sector as a whole. As the Irish hotel sector relies increasingly on foreign national employment, the rationale exists that Irish hotel managers must successfully manage a vastly heterogeneous workforce. It is this rationale which raises the research question – to what extent does cultural heterogeneity in the workplace pose a challenge to managers of four and five star hotels in Cork?
Chapter Two

Literature Review
2.1: Diversity

Diversity is defined as the representation, in one social system, of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance (Cox, 1993 cited in Aghazedeh, 2004:2)

A narrow assumption of diversity is that it is based on merely gender or skin colour (Canas and Sondak, 2008). There are in fact many facets of diversity which need to be considered to allow a clear understanding of its dynamics. Diversity takes many forms, including:

- Gender
- Race
- Culture
- Age
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability

Gender

Gender diversity in the organisation comprises of more than the difference between males and females.

Gender refers to socially learned traits associated with, and expected of, men or women. It refers to socially learned behaviours and attitudes such as styles of dress and activity preferences (Wild, Wild and Han, 2006:60).

Media reports in recent years have documented firms such as Merrill Lynch and Morgan Stanley paying millions of dollars in settlements to women claiming sexual

Yet despite efforts to eliminate gender discrimination, a persisting pay gap exists between men and women throughout the European member states. In Ireland, since the introduction of the National Minimum Wage in 2000, the gender pay gap has fallen by approximately two percentage points (European Industrial Relations Observatory Online, 2007).

**Race**

Race is determined by the following classifications:

- Caucasian/White
- Asian
- African American/Black
- Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
- American Indian/Alaskan Native (Canas and Sondak, 2008).

In the organisation, individuals are often required to work in close contact. Research has discovered that racial diversity is a contributory factor in rejecting another in such close settings (Triandis and Davis, 1965). Such rejection amounts to racism. Racism is defined as
A specific form of discrimination and exclusion faced by minority ethnic groups. It is based on the false belief that some 'races' are inherently superior to others because of different skin colour, nationality, ethnic or cultural background. Racism denies people of their basic human rights, dignity and respect (Ireland, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2005:41).

Within Irish society racism is made apparent through discriminatory behaviour, assaults or threats, institutional racism or labelling and stereotyping of others (Ireland, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2005). If such attitudes are present, racial diversity may pose a challenge to managers of heterogeneous workforces. A study by Connolly and McGing (2006) found that 30% of the foreign national employees in Ireland that participated in their research had experienced racism.

Culture

The Fáilte Ireland “Cultural Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan” (2005a:5) defines culture as

a combination of ideals, beliefs, values and knowledge learned from birth, as well as moral codes about day to day interactions at a personal and professional level that influence how we choose to live.

Our culture determines how we communicate with others and influences our behaviour (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a). Thus different cultures within the work environment present differing behaviours and means of communication.

Luthans (1995) proffers that culture comprises of a number of characteristics. The first is that cultures are not biological or inherited; rather they are attained through learning and experience. Cultures are shared across a group or society and not specific to individuals. Cultures are passed down through generations, are structured and integrated, and based on the human capacity to adapt. Furthermore, cultures are based on the human ability to use one thing to symbolise another. Thus the learned culture of
an individual prior to entering the organisation determines how they will think and behave. Diverse cultures in the organisation may present a challenge to managers.

Age

There are four generally accepted categories of age in the organisation, contributing to organisational diversity. These are known as the Traditionalist generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y, or the Internet generation. These diverse categorisations of an employee’s age contribute to diversity in the organisation, and need to be managed effectively, as with any other facet of diversity (Sutton Bell and Narz, 2007; Canas and Sondak, 2008). The workforce is aging, and some employers associate negative traits with older workers, such as not being able to keep abreast of changing technologies, which is not a problem for Generation Y employees. However, older employees bring many advantages to the organisation, including skills, knowledge and experience (Canas and Sondak, 2008). Age diversity in the organisation may pose a challenge, as managers attempt to satisfy and motivate all employees and utilise all employees’ skills. Examining the background and characteristics of each age characterisation can be useful in helping managers to understand the diverse talents and challenges that age diverse employees can bring to the organisation (Sutton Bell and Narz, 2007).

Religion

The world’s major religions include Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism. Religious beliefs often impact upon human values, and this is critical in understanding the corollary between religion and diversity (Wild, Wild and Han, 2006). The demography of Ireland grows increasingly diverse - 419,733 foreign nationals were
registered in Ireland in the 2006 Census, and 215,500 of these are employed in the Irish workforce (CSO figures 2006 cited in McEnroe, 2007:9). This correlates to increased religious heterogeneity in the Irish work environment. The 2006 Census report outlined that a variety of religions are being practiced in Ireland. As well as the traditional Catholic and Church of Ireland differentiation, 21,496 respondents are Presbyterian, 31,779 are Muslim, 19,994 practice the Orthodox faith, 10,768 respondents are Methodist, and 54,033 listed their religious beliefs as ‘other’ (Central Statistics Office Ireland, 2007). These changes represent increased diversity in social and organisational life, a trend that continues worldwide.

Recently, the issue of wearing religious clothing in the workplace has been of media focus, highlighting the challenges to managers that religious diversity can pose (Evans, 2006). In August 2007, the Irish Garda Commissioner was compelled to claim that the force is “not racist” following criticism from their refusal to allow a Sikh Garda reserve wear his traditional turban as part of his Garda uniform (The Irish Independent, 20/11/2007).

**Sexual Orientation**

Understanding diversity in the organisation necessitates the gathering of statistical data about diverse employees. Few companies have engaged in gathering statistical sexual orientation data in their workforce on the basis of privacy (Griffiths, 2007). Lack of understanding and education may result in managers ignoring the issue of sexual orientation diversity in the workplace. It is recommended that sexual orientation diversity is treated the same way as racial or cultural diversity, to allow all employees to contribute their full potential (Lucas and Kaplan, 1994).
Disability

According to the 2006 Census Report, 4% of the Irish labour force is comprised of disabled employees (Central Statistics Office Ireland, 2007). According to Mr. Tony Killeen, Minister for Labour Affairs, the Irish government has initiated a number of schemes aimed at encouraging employers to recruit and retain disabled employees (Ireland, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2006). These include a financial wage subsidy in the private sector for employers to employ disabled workers for more than twenty hours per week (FÁS, 2007). It is evident that proactive measures are being taken to encourage the employment of disabled employees; however, disability represents a further factor of diversity in the organisation (Canas and Sondak, 2008).

2.1.1: Workplace Diversity

Diversity in the workplace was once thought of as merely a topical trend, and was given little credence or significance. However, it is now recognised as an important factor in organisational performance. Some firms have taken such steps as appointing Chief Diversity Officers, deploying greater diversity accountability systems and demonstrating greater commitment to difference in the workplace (Wheeler, 2005).

According to Canas and Sondak (2008:3)

\[
\text{As companies embrace diversity initiatives, they publicly declare their allegiance to promoting diversity as a business strategy.}
\]

In the business setting, the term 'diversity' gains significance.

\[
\text{For business, diversity represents the inexorably intertwined global marketplace, talent pool, vendors, and suppliers; the countries in which we operate; the governments with which we negotiate; and the communities in which we live. It is reflected in our laws and our values. (Wheeler, 2005:51).}
\]
Chapter 2, Literature Review

According to Robbins and Coulter (2002) one of the biggest challenges that managers face is that of aligning the efforts of culturally diverse employees to attain the desired business results. The variety of cultures that exist across countries often presents a challenge to managers. For international managers, understanding how culture affects behaviour is essential (Bonvillian and Nowlin, 1994). Workplace diversity is a relatively new phenomenon in Ireland. During the secondary research process the researcher did not uncover research assessing the challenges posed to hotel managers at a fundamental level in Ireland. Thus this research thesis aims to extend existing research by assessing the possible challenge posed to managers in the Irish hospitality sector due to employee cultural diversity.

The Irish workforce grows increasingly heterogeneous. The globalisation of organisations, facilitated by the elimination of many trade borders and the free movement of labour for European Union citizens since the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, has resulted in increased employee diversity across the European member states. Consequently, cultural diversity in the Irish workplace has increased. The Irish workforce is currently comprised of 215,500 foreign nationals, which make up 10% of the workforce. One third of these employees are from non-European Union countries. This figure does not include undocumented workers, estimated at 20,000. The main employment sectors for foreign national employees in Ireland are construction, farming and hotel and catering. In the hotel and restaurant sector there are 32,800 foreign national employees, comprising 28% of the workforce (Prime Time 06/03/2007).

Workplace diversity is poised to become a permanent feature of the Irish employment setting as more foreign nationals take up citizenship and ultimately employment in
Ireland. Thus Irish employers are faced with a vastly diverse workforce, no longer homogeneous, but heterogeneous in many ways. These differences bring both positive and negative aspects, and may present both challenges and opportunities for Irish organisations (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a; Melia and Kennedy, 2005).
2.2: Managing Culturally Diverse Employees

Traditionally, the management of employee differences centred on equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination on the basis of sex, ethnicity or disability (Rennie, 1993; Storey, 1995). Kandola and Fullerton (1994) outline how seeking to manage diversity now differs in that it attempts to harness differences for positive outcomes, instead of merely ensuring they do not contribute to negative outcomes. Pollitt (2005) further argues that successful organisations manage diversity to reap the benefits of different viewpoints, talents and experiences, not just to comply with the law. However, Makower (1995) states that diversity is a difficulty for many managers and employees, who may not have had exposure to different races, cultures or socioeconomic groups. The results of an inability to manage diversity can impact negatively on employee productivity and job satisfaction (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a). Yet, positive steps in cultural diversity management can be taken by following an approach outlined by Adler (1983), known as a synergistic approach. In this approach managers recognise diversity, but do not assume any group is superior to others; managers recognise that cultural diversity can lead to both problems and advantages for the organisation, and thus seek its effective management. Whatever approach taken to manage diversity, it cannot be done in isolation – it must be integrated into the human resource strategies of the organisation (Riccucci, 1997).

The rationale for careful management of workplace heterogeneity gains weight when the benefits culturally diverse employees can bring to the organisation are examined. Cassell (2001), Anderson and Metcalf (2003), the IRS Employment Review (2003) and Fáilte Ireland (2005a) identified many benefits associated with culturally diverse workforces. The organisation can avoid expensive and damaging discrimination
lawsuits by ensuring human resources procedures are equitable and professional. However, there are many other organisational benefits to be gained. These include enhanced consumer satisfaction and marketplace penetration by employing a diverse workforce whose composition reflects the changes in the local population. Gaining perspectives offered by diverse employees that reflect global demographics is a further advantage, supporting new offerings to a diverse customer base. Managers have the option to utilise diverse skills, and improve the image of the organisation, facilitating superior supply of labour and employee retention. Furthermore there is superior innovation and problem solving resulting from diverse ideas, backgrounds and training, and interaction with customers is enhanced by the varied languages spoken in the organisation. Added to this, better relations with foreign clients are facilitated (Adler, 1991; Canas and Sondak, 2008).

Included in the benefits effective cultural diversity management can bring are the positive outcomes on group performance. Heterogeneous group members can contribute to more innovative decision making, and better quality solutions in the organisation (Guzzo, 1986; Hoffman, 1979; Hoffman and Maier, 1961; Janis, 1982). Further evidence suggests culturally diverse groups result in enhanced creativity, enhanced decision making, greater productivity, and a more effective performance (Ivencevich and Gilbert, 2000). Groupthink can also be avoided, as members do not think similarly to one another, and pressure to conform is reduced (Hodgetts et al., 2006). The effective execution of cultural diversity management has potential benefits that include enhanced organisational innovation, increased creativity and superior decision making (Cox, 1991a). Going beyond legal compliance, managing cultural diversity can lead to a safer work setting, employee dedication to and pride in the organisation, improved customer satisfaction, and better financial performance.
satisfaction and financial benefits (Pollitt, 2005). Thus cultural diversity in the organisation can be a source of competitive advantage (Pless and Maak, 2004), however, only in the event that it is actively managed (Iles, 1995).

The need for active and careful management is evident, as culturally dissimilar employees may experience difficulties in the workplace, and present some challenges to managers. Discrimination and exploitation are frequent problems experienced by minority groups (United Nations, 2006), as is the glass ceiling barrier to advancement (Powell and Butterfield, 1994; Connolly and McGing, 2006). Communicating with employees of diverse race and background can prove difficult (Cox, 1991a; Zenger and Lawrence, 1989; Hitt et al., 2005). Such factors of culturally diverse employee mismanagement can lead to higher employee turnover, greater conflict and miscommunications (Cox, 1991a). Furthermore, while the benefits of employee group diversity have been outlined, there are however frequent negatives experienced by diverse workgroups. These include misunderstandings and communication problems, conflict and mismatched approaches to resolving it, issues of mistrust, reduced group cohesion, and increased subgroup development based on elements of cultural similarity (Hitt et al., 2005; Zenger and Lawrence, 1989). Conflict can arise as diversity reduces members’ ability to predict each others’ behaviour (Lincoln and Miller, 1979). There may be increased conflict due to fear, ignorance or feeling superior to others, leading to a decrease in productivity if not handled properly. A further negative of employing culturally diverse employees is the claim by those in a majority group of reverse discrimination – that minority-group employees are benefiting undeservedly from their minority status (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a).
To overcome such potential workplace difficulties, careful diversity management practices are needed. Not only can managers reap many organisational benefits by successfully managing culturally dissimilar employees, the potential negative outcomes of such diversity can be avoided. Liff (1997) argues that dissolving the differences evident in the workplace should be the initial approach to managing diversity. This method highlights individualism and focuses on the premise that diversity need not be based on gender or social grouping. However, other theorists proffer that valuing the differences evident in the organisation is important to increase the confidence of those in minority groups through training and adherence to their norms (Copeland, 1988a; 1988b; Greenslade, 1991). Such differences form the basis of diversity and need to be understood by managers before the management process can begin.

Indeed, Conejo (2002) proffers that the first step in the process of managing cultural diversity is the ability to identify the workforce. This involves identifying exactly the culturally diverse groups and subgroups within the organisation. Prince (2005) further recommends this approach, outlining that a detailed knowledge of the facets of diversity evident in the workforce is necessary. Conejo (2002) then posits that the next step in the process requires a manager to discover the norms of each culture using all available resources and hiring cultural-change experts where necessary. He details that understanding the differences between cultures to avoid miscommunication and other hostilities in the organisation is vital. Indeed, Hitt et al. (2005) proffer that managers should assess their own exposure to different cultures, races and ethnicities, and should examine their tolerance, understanding, comfort with and curiosity of these differences in order to manage them.
2.2.1: Understanding Culture

Indeed a detailed knowledge of culture is vital for managers of heterogeneous workforces. Several cultural theorists (Hofstede, 1980; Ronen and Shenkar, 1985; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993; Trompenaars, 1994) have made significant contributions in this regard. An understanding of an employee's cultural norms can help managers to better understand and predict behaviour, thus facilitating greater cultural diversity management.

Understanding how culturally heterogeneous employees view themselves will assist managers in predicting employee behaviour. This pertains to whether people see themselves as an individual or as a member of a collective group; whether they are primarily concerned with themselves and their own family, or whether their concern is to belong to a group unit. Employees from *individualistic* cultures view themselves very much as an individual, and value autonomy, achievement, individual initiative and privacy (Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993; Trompenaars, 1994). Conversely, employees who value group loyalty and unity over the self are referred to as *collectivistic* (Hofstede, 1980) or *communitarian* (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993; Trompenaars, 1994). Individualistic cultures are identified in Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Canada, and the United States. Asian countries typify collectivist or communitarian cultures. Hofstede (1980) noted that wealthier countries tend to be more individualistic, and while he classified Mexico and Argentina as collectivist cultures, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) and Trompenaars (1994) identified them as individualistic, an interesting insight into changing cultural values. The changing nature of cultures, and indeed the danger of generalising cultures, is outlined by the varying classifications of Mexico and Argentina (Hodgetts *et al.*, 2028).
2006). However, cultural theories prove useful when managing culturally diverse employees. For example, it is beneficial for managers to understand how employees view themselves, so as to predict behaviour and motivational triggers. Understanding, for example, that a Chinese employee will not be motivated by individual reward because he views himself as part of a collective group is very beneficial for managers of culturally diverse employees.

In some cultures, employees place value on and are motivated by success, money, and materialism. These cultures are identified as *masculine* cultures (Hofstede, 1980), where employees apply great significance to financial reward, achievement, recognition, personal advancement, and challenges. Autonomy is encouraged, and socially, a ‘successful’ career is important. Similarly, in *achievement* cultures, identified by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993), status is awarded to individuals based on how well they perform their goals; achievers and those who do their best are valued.

Understanding the characteristics that employees of such cultures value, can greatly assist managers to integrate and effectively lead culturally dissimilar employees. There are contrasting cultures to these norms. *Feminine* cultures are characterised by cooperation, friendliness and job security, while stress levels at work are low. Greater gender equality is emphasized, and workplace harmony is desired (Hofstede, 1980). Similarly, in *ascription* cultures value is placed on age, social connections, class or gender (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993; Trompenaars, 1994).

How employees perceive uncertainty and risk is a further consideration for managers of culturally diverse workforces. Hofstede (1980) outlines the *uncertainty avoidance* cultural dimension explaining how people react to uncertain or ambiguous situations.
Citizens of cultures with high uncertainty avoidance have strong beliefs in experts and value security and stability. Risk taking and unusual behaviour tend to be avoided, and rules and structures are valued. Similar to this cultural dimension is the *universalism* culture identified by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) and Trompenaars (1994). This cultural orientation details the belief that one set of rules, ideas or practices should apply to everyone. In cultures that value universalism, formal rules take precedence over relationships and business contracts are closely followed. For Irish managers seeking the effective management of employees from universalistic or high uncertainty avoidance cultures, steps should be taken to ease uncertainty and ambiguity. Recommendations by Melia and Kennedy (2005) and Fáilte Ireland (2005a) include providing induction programs and arrival packs with information about working in Ireland, and well as assistance in obtaining PPS numbers and opening bank accounts.

Conversely, in cultures of low uncertainty avoidance, there is less structure and rules. In the quest for personal achievement, risk taking is desired (Hofstede, 1980); similarly in cultures that value *particularism* rules can be changed for a particular person or situation, and there is greater focus on relationships, which may alter the nature of contracts as they develop (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993; Trompenaars, 1994). Managers working with employees from particularistic cultures must take into account the employee’s family problems or job demands when deciding remuneration and other rewards.

Managing heterogeneous workforces necessitates an understanding of how employees from diverse cultures will accept or reject power from their superiors. In cultures of *high power distance*, people accept inequalities in power, and there is greater reliance
by the less powerful on those who have power. This is similar to the outer-directed cultures outlined by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) in which individuals believe they do not have enough control over the direction their life is taking. When managing those of outer-directed cultures Trompenaars (1994) outlines the importance of preserving good relationships, and being determined and polite. On the contrary, in low power distance cultures, inequalities tend to be minimised and employees expect to be consulted by managers (Hofstede, 1980), and in inner-directed cultures, employees believe they can control outcomes in life (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993; Trompenaars, 1994). Trompenaars (1994) proffers when working with those of an inner-directed culture, such as the United States, managers should test their resilience, and not expect to win every situation.

The long-term versus short-term orientation culture is based on the work of scholars who examined national cultures from a Chinese perspective (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987). While three of Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions were replicated, uncertainty-avoidance was not. Instead, a further dimension was identified, originally called ‘Confucian dynamism’, and later adopted as ‘long term versus short term orientation’. It refers to cultural differences in terms of time orientation. Long-term oriented cultures are typified by patience, persistence, respect for ancestors and elders, and a sense of obedience or duty to the larger good. This orientation can be found in Hong Kong and other Asian societies. Short-term oriented cultures can be found in Canada, and are characterised by the belief that one’s focus should be on the past, incorporating respect for tradition, and the present, including social obligations (Hofstede and Bond, 1988, Hofstede, 1991).
A further cultural dimension, *neutral* and *emotional*, was identified, which is important for managers to understand when communicating with culturally diverse employees. Because miscommunication and other communication problems are highlighted as potential drawbacks of employing culturally diverse workers (Hitt *et al.*, 2005; Zenger and Lawrence, 1989; Cox, 1991a), an understanding of communication norms is vital in the management of cultural diversity. Individuals of neutral cultures suppress their emotions and stoicism is considered important; the composure of the Japanese typifies this cultural orientation. In direct contrast is an emotional culture, where feelings and emotions are readily expressed, greetings are loud and enthusiastic, and people smile often, as in the Mexican culture (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993; Trompenaars, 1994). Managers of emotional cultures are advised not to view the nature of neutral employees as disinterest – conversely managers of neutral cultures should not be discouraged by the boisterousness or emotion of employees from emotional cultures (Trompenaars, 1994).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) and Trompenaars (1994) further identified *specific* and *diffuse* cultures. Specific cultures as those where the roles one plays in life are compartmentalised, that is, one’s job title and level of formality at work are very different to one’s role in their private life, and both are kept separate. Individuals tend to be open and unreserved, and public and private life is kept separate. This is typical of culture in the United States. However, in China, the roles an individual has in life are merged. For example, one’s job title can affect the manner in which one is treated by others in many different aspects of life. It is recommended to managers of specific cultures, when working with those of a diffuse culture, to be respectful of title, age and background, and patient with the indirect manner used. Managers of diffuse cultures are
advised to be direct and use agendas when dealing with those of a specific culture and not to use their own titles or achievements if irrelevant (Trompenaars, 1994).

Several of the cultural theories put forth examine the individual’s values, and how culture impacts upon them. In fact, the factors that employees value are important in managing them; thus an understanding of cultural values is necessary to effectively manage a culturally dissimilar workforce. The values an individual holds play a part in determining their behaviour in the work environment. Like culture, values are learned. Hodgetts et al. (2006:97) defines values as

*Basic convictions that people have regarding what is right and wrong, good and bad, important and unimportant*

One’s system of values has been considered to be comparatively stable (England, 1978). However, there is evidence that manager’s values are changing because of culture and technology. A study conducted on Japanese managers employed by Japanese firms in America found changing values. The work of Hofstede (1980) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) outline that Japan and America are largely viewed as extremely culturally diverse. The Japanese managers appeared to have values different from Japanese culture, in which lifetime employment is highly regarded and there is great respect for obedience and conformity. The managers interviewed did not place significant importance on lifetime employment with one company, but did value job security. Obedience and conformity were also perceived to be less important, although formal authority was still supported. The group orientation values also appeared altered, as the managers felt that being an individual was also important in the interest of maintaining a balance. While seniority is rewarded in Japanese culture, it appeared the Japanese managers had a lower level of support for this the longer they had been
working in America. The length of time spent working in the United States was also contributory in disagreeing with the important Japanese value of paternalism (Reichel and Flynn, 1984). This study provides insight into changing values among employees and managers when working in a foreign culture. In the Irish context, the premise based on the results above suggests that foreign national employees will adjust their cultural values relative to the time spent living and working in Ireland. Should this be the case, the task of managing diverse cultures in the workforce will become significantly easier.

Understanding how culturally diverse employees approach the concept of time can assist in their effective management. Trompenaars (1994) identified two different ways in which people from different cultures approach the concept of time. They are sequential and synchronous. The sequential approach describes the cultural norm of doing one task at a time, strictly keeping appointments and schedules, and not deviating from plans. The United States typifies the sequential approach to time. Cultures that take the synchronous approach to time carry out more than one task at a time, appointment times are flexible, and schedules are secondary to relationships. Mexicans are synchronous in their approach to time. Trompenaars’ findings support Hall’s (1983) theory on time. He outlines the United States as a monochronic culture, which is characterised by organisations that undertake one activity, and only one, at a time, and schedules are paramount. Their tendency towards precision timing supports this. Other cultures are identified as polychronic – there is a more flexible view of time, managers are expected to multi-task, and it is unusual in such cultures for schedules and appointments to be observed. Trompenaars (1994) further outlined the cultural difference between past or present orientation, and future orientation. In the United States, Italy and Germany, the future is considered the most important, while Spanish
Trompenaars (1994) has made a number of recommendations to offset the challenges these differences can create. He proffers that when managing future-oriented cultures, managers should highlight the opportunities of agreements and agree to precise work deadlines. When managing those of a past or present oriented culture, managers should determine the importance of relationships in making changes, highlight the history or tradition of their culture, and not set deadlines for achievement of the task. This is related to the long term versus short-term cultural orientation described in Hofstede’s later work (Hofstede and Bond, 1988; Hofstede, 1991), and assists managers in understanding the behaviour of culturally diverse employees.

While the cultural dimensions outlined above provide managers with a means to understand national cultural differences, criticisms exist. While Hofstede's (1980; 1988; 1991) theories on cultural norms assist managers greatly, there are critics who question the use of questionnaires, designed by 'western' researchers, as a suitable means for gathering information across cultures. Thus the content validity of the questionnaires comes into doubt (Koen, 2005). Hunt (1981) argues that the use of IBM as an appropriate target for research is questionable, because only the type of person attracted to the company and deemed employable are surveyed. Others argue that Hofstede's (1980) work is incomplete. Eastern European countries (from which Ireland has a significant number of immigrants) and less developed Asian countries, for example, Vietnam, are omitted from his research. In recent years Hofstede has included China and Russia to offset this criticism (Bond, 1991; Hofstede, 1993). However, the omission of Eastern European countries such as Poland and Latvia is a serious limitation. Jacob
(2005) criticises Trompenaars and Hampden-Turners’ (1993) work as too simplistic, stating that it has reduced leadership to two variables - whether managers are task or relationship oriented. Furthermore, the choice of respondents has been criticised, in that the respondents were all managers, and the risk that a professional ‘culture’ took precedence over national cultures is expressed (Burgmann et al., 2006). Marcus and Gould (2000) point out limitations in the work of cultural theorists, namely Hofstede (1980) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Tumer (1993). The criticism centres on the theorist's assumption that each national culture has only one dominant culture. This ignores the idea of multiculturalism and subcultures within nations. Although limitations to their research exist, Hofstede (1980) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) provide managers with insight into cultural values and norms, and an understanding of how these may be wielded in the organisation. Their theories outline employee cultural behaviour and expectations, a vital factor for managers when seeking to motivate, communicate with, lead and direct culturally diverse employees. Such theories, despite their limitations, cannot be discounted in the analyses of national cultures from an employee-management perspective.

2.2.2: Clustering Countries of Cultural Similarity

In attempts to further understand cultural difference, some researchers have clustered countries according to cultural similarity. This undoubtedly assists managers in identifying cultural similarity among employees in a heterogeneous workforce. Hofstede (1980) has provided a rich base from which managers of culturally diverse employees can better understand cultural differences. By creating maps which cluster the countries with culturally similar norms, greater understanding is facilitated. These maps serve as a source of information for managers to better predict diverse employee
behaviour and motivational factors, and are a useful diversity management tool. A
guide to the countries used in Hofstede’s research is included in the Appendices section.
Hofstede’s (1991) cluster maps are displayed in the following pages.
Figure 2.1: Hofstede’s Masculinity-Femininity and Uncertainty-Avoidance Map

Figure 2.2: Hofstede’s Power-Distance and Individualism-Collectivism Map

(Hofstede, 1991 cited in Hodgetts et al., 2006:105)
Figure 2.3: Hofstede’s Power-Distance and Uncertainty-Avoidance Map

(Hofstede, 1991 cited in Hodgetts et al., 2006:106)
As well as Hofstede’s (1991) country clusters, Ronen and Shenkar (1985) offer managers of culturally diverse workforces similar measures to better understand cultural heterogeneity. Ronen and Shenkar (1985) have studied the area of diverse cultures across nations, and the impact for managers of multicultural work groups. They have contributed to the understanding of national culture in the work setting, and have clustered countries based on their cultural similarity. This proves useful for managers of diverse workforces. Based on their research results, Ronen and Shenkar (1985) were able to cluster countries with similar values and attitudes. They identified eight different clusters, and four countries they considered separate: Brazil, Japan, India and Israel. These are viewed as independent from the others in terms of religion, language and history. Japan is also considered removed from the others by geographic isolation, contributing to a distinctive culture. However, it is important to note that several countries are omitted from the work of Ronen and Shenkar (1985), including those of the former Soviet Union, and few developing countries are contained in the clusters. Furthermore, there is no Asian cluster (McFarlin and Sweeney, 2006). However, these clusters provide managers of diverse employees with assistance in understanding behaviour and norms, and are useful in the process of managing diversity.
Thus for managers of diverse employees from countries within one cluster, the management process may be assisted by country similarity, provided by Hofstede's (1991) and Ronen and Shenkar's (1985) cluster maps. However, McFarlin and Sweeney (2006) point to the fact that cultural differences can exist between the countries of one cluster which highlights the limitations of clustering countries on apparent cultural similarities. Adler (2002), and Cox and Blake (1991b) outline increased employee
cultural diversity within countries due to increased immigration. However, the clustering process provides a tool for greater understanding of national cultures, and these maps are important considerations in the diversity management process.

2.2.3: Managing Cultural Diversity – the Irish Context

A greater understanding of national culture is gained by managers from the research on national cultures outlined above. This satisfies the recommendations of Conejo (2002) and Hitt et al. (2005) that the management of culturally diverse employees should begin with a detailed understanding of culture. However, managers must move beyond cultural understanding, and turn their cultural awareness into organisational advantages (McFarlin and Sweeney, 2006). As such, managers must direct energy to integrating culturally diverse employees into the workforce in the interests of efficiency and productivity. The importance of employee integration is highlighted by Makower (1995), who details that managing diversity requires employees to be integrated into the organisation and given equal opportunities. Pollitt (2005) argues that managing diversity requires organisations to adopt equality and inclusion. Such strategies should be elements in a multicultural workplace to ensure the effective management of diversity (Diversity At Work Network, 2004). A study conducted by Connolly and McGing (2006) discovered that foreign national employees perceived their Irish co-workers as having better promotional prospects, and a Diversity At Work Network Report in 2004 found that foreign national employees believe employers are reluctant to give them the same opportunities as other workers, despite similar qualification and experience. These findings outline a need to offer equality of opportunity as a means to engender a productive, inclusive workforce. In the quest to manage workplace heterogeneity, equality of opportunity is vital. The management of culturally diverse
employees is also facilitated through greater communication capabilities. The manager must prepare himself/herself and the workforce to listen and communicate effectively across cultures, and resolve conflict or negotiate with others (Hitt et al., 2005). This can alleviate some of the possible negative characteristics of culturally heterogeneous workforces (Hitt et al., 2005; Zenger and Lawrence, 1989). Effective communication with employees is linked to the promotion of both integration and equality in the work environment (Sadri and Tran, 2002); thus communicating across cultural barriers is vital in diversity management. Sadri and Tran (2002) proffer that mentoring is a valuable tool in long term diversity management. Mentoring is beneficial in promoting communication and helping employees integrate into the organisation (Webb, 1995); the process of mentoring allows culturally diverse employees to adjust more easily to the organisation, become involved in their job and organisational role, develop relationships, and resolve conflicts (Sadri and Tran, 2002). Thus mentoring is beneficial in the diversity management process. Furthermore, it is recommended that managers should monitor and direct the behaviour of others in the organisation, and reinforce their own behaviour, to promote tolerance and utilisation of diversity (Hitt et al., 2005). The recent Intercultural and Anti-Racism Week (19th – 25th of March 2007) was an initiative by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism 2007). Such initiatives can assist managers to direct the behaviour of employees and managers in the organisation. Other methods of improving diversity management include setting measurable diversity goals and linking managers’ rewards to achieving diversity objectives (Prince, 2005). This can focus Irish managers on effectively leading, controlling, motivating and integrating their culturally diverse employees.
The management of culturally diverse employees is paramount in the Irish hospitality sector as 28% of the workforce originates from outside Ireland (Prime Time, 06/03/2007). According to Groschl and Doherty (1999) many of the problems encountered in the hotel sector – skilled staff shortages, high staff turnover and high instances of business failure – can be assuaged by effective diversity management. Additionally, managing diversity in hotels allows managers to offer a quality service to meet the expectations of diverse customers (Nykiel, 1997).

Indeed, because of the nature of the services sector, effectively managing those responsible for service delivery is essential. One of the main characteristics of the services sector is its intangibility: the service cannot be examined in terms of taste, feel, smell and so on, before purchase (Kotler et al., 2005; Levitt, 1981). Furthermore, a service is essentially a performance, delivered by people. In fact, the people who deliver the service often are the service in the eyes of the consumer. Heterogeneity of service delivery exists across time, organisations and people; consistency of service delivery is a challenge. The service encounter therefore expresses diverse cultural norms and values. Unfortunate results of diverse cultures engaging in the service encounter are misunderstandings, conflict, dissatisfied consumers, and ultimately, lost business (Cushner and Brislin, 1996).

Added to such possible drawbacks is the fact that Irish hotels are now struggling to ensure customer loyalty in the face of reduced customer numbers. In a recent study it was discovered that the friendliness of hotel staff, or the feeling that hotel staff know the customer personally, affected the customer’s willingness to return to a particular hotel (Scannell, 2006). These findings demonstrate the importance of people to the
success of the hotel industry, and a possible challenge for Irish hotel managers when the people they rely on are culturally heterogeneous.

A further possible challenge of relying on culturally diverse employees in the hospitality sector is outlined by the Irish Hotels Federation (2001), which has called for the preservation of Ireland's distinctive identity in the hotel industry as a source of competitive advantage. This indicates a concern regarding the increasing number of foreign national employees in the Irish hotel sector and the effect this has on the nature of competition. It has become evident from the research thus far that with the increased reliance on foreign national employees, maintaining an Irish distinctiveness may prove difficult for hotel managers. Thus the issue of workplace cultural diversity in the hotel industry is not just a management concern, but one which may impact on the competitive nature of the industry itself. Managers in the hospitality sector are faced with a number of potential challenges: successfully managing cultural diversity within the organisation and ensuring such diversity does not erode competitive advantage based on the traditional *Fáilte Romhat*.

Some questions remain over the issue of cultural diversity management. Kandola and Fullerton (1994) purport the difficulty in recording some of the benefits associated with cultural diversity management, including increased morale, gaining a competitive advantage or enhanced job satisfaction. McDougall (1998) questions the feasibility of increasing the responsibility of line managers in attempts to manage diversity. He cites conflicting priorities, for example forcing a line manager into a human resources role, as factors for consideration. However, despite these difficulties, effective management of
workplace diversity is a catalyst to reap many benefits for the organisation, and is being embraced as a modern business strategy.
2.3: Workplace Communication

Communication is a vital skill for managers in the organisation. Management functions, roles and skills, such as directing employees, acting as a disseminator of information, and the need for interpersonal skills, are paramount for strategic success (Hitt et al., 2005). In fact, Euske and Roberts (1987) rationalised that superior organisational communication can lead to greater job satisfaction and an ultimate increase in productivity. Considering the increased heterogeneity in the Irish workplace, the importance of effectively communicating with employees of diverse cultures is vital. In efforts to successfully manage cultural diversity, effective communication strategies are deemed to promote both integration and equality in the work environment (Sadri and Tran, 2002). Thus, enhanced organisational communication is deemed a facilitator of effective diversity management.

The importance of workplace communication is highlighted; however challenges may exist for managers seeking to communicate with culturally diverse employees. In fact, miscommunication is considered a drawback of employing foreign national workers (Cox, 1991a; Zenger and Lawrence, 1989). Hitt et al. (2005) support this consideration, and detail that misunderstandings in the workplace are frequent challenges in multicultural workgroups. Supporting such theories, research by Redmond and Butler (2003) discovered that language barriers are one of the difficulties faced by some foreign national employees in Ireland. The effects of this difficulty included problems for foreign national employees in accessing training and development opportunities. As such, Fáilte Ireland (2005a) has highlighted communication skills as foreign national employee requirements which managers should take note of. As well as language capabilities, the use of language style can provide a barrier to effective communication.
Fáilte Ireland (2005a) outlined Irish people’s frequent use of slang and colloquialisms. This may hinder effective communication in the workplace among culturally diverse employees even though they may have a good standard of spoken English.

Regardless of what language is used, culture and background often influence communication style, making it difficult for individuals of other cultures to understand the true meaning of what is being communicated (Adair, 2000). Culture is considered a possible barrier to effective communication in a heterogeneous work environment (Hodgetts et al., 2006). The work of cultural theorists supports this viewpoint.

Hofstede (1980) outlined various cultural dimensions which can assist managers of culturally diverse organisations to understand their workforce. One such dimension is *power-distance*, which outlines that people in different cultures accept or reject large distances or inequalities in power. An important element of this is whether or not employees are comfortable being consulted by managers in the organisation. This directly impacts upon management communication with employees – in cultures of high power distance, it would be culturally abnormal for managers to communicate or consult with employees. Cultures characterised by high power distance are found in China, low power distance in the United Kingdom (Hofstede, 1980).

Such information proves invaluable for managers of culturally heterogeneous employees. Cultural analysis was also conducted by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993), and supports the view that cultural norms can affect communication. Two of the cultural dimensions identified, *neutral* and *emotional* cultures, may provide insight for managers seeking to communicate with culturally heterogeneous employees. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) identified that in neutral cultures, individuals
suppress their emotions, whereas in emotional cultures, individuals enthusiastically
greet others, and feelings and emotions are willingly expressed (Trompenaars and
Hampden-Turner, 1993; Trompenaars, 1994). Thus communication with employees
from a neutral or emotional culture will differ.

From a practical perspective, managers of heterogeneous workforces must understand
that there are many means in which to communicate to employees, and that cultural
differences impact upon those means (Hodgetts et al., 2006). Yet managers often fall
into the trap of assuming their way of speaking to others is the norm. This assumption
can cause problems in culturally diverse environments. Americans, for example,
perceive the gap in conversations as a chance to respond to others; longer gaps in
conversations can be uncomfortable. Contrary to this, the Finnish and Japanese observe
long periods of silence as normal, and expect one to take time to consider what has been
said before responding (Adair, 2000). Irish evidence that managers presume their own
cultural methods of communication are the norm is provided by Fáilte Ireland (2005a).
In Irish workplaces, conversation pauses are short, local colloquial speech is frequently
used, and talking over others is not considered impolite. Further evidence of cultural
communication differences detail that Japanese business people rarely say ‘no’. Instead
they will say it indirectly, so that neither party loses face (Victor, 1992). One
management task is to critique the work of employees, however when criticising the
work of others, culture influences the way in which it is communicated. The Japanese
use passive criticism using humour or references to a third party (Copeland and Griggs,
1985). This may reinforce Hofstede’s theory (1980) of the desire for group harmony in
collectivist cultures. Americans, typical of the masculine, individualistic culture
(Hofstede, 1980), criticise directly and sometimes display anger (Copeland and Griggs,
For managers, it is important to recognize the cultural means of communicating feedback for heterogeneous employees. Stull (1988) posits that different cultures respond to feedback in different ways, and cultural consideration is needed when communicating feedback to multi-cultural workgroups. These differences are the result of national cultural norms, and may present problems when managing or working with diverse cultures as they affect communication between employees and managers.

McFarlin and Sweeney (2006) posit that managers should use caution when using written communication in multicultural work environments: the perception of words used can differ among cultures, known as bypassing. Bypassing occurs when different people use the same words to convey different meanings. This is further expanded by Sullivan and Kameda (1982) who proffer that to use the term 'projected profit' to Japanese business people implies long term growth, but personal gain to an American. Interestingly, it implies exploitation to a Russian counterpart (Rajan and Graham, 1991). This information underlines the necessity to understand the cultural impact on communication in order to enhance its efficiency in the workplace.

The way individuals use physical space to communicate is known as proxemics. Hodgetts and Kuratko (1991) detail that in the United States there are four recognized distances used by individuals when communicating with others. The first is intimate distance, where people are kept within 18 inches when communicating; this is best suited to communicating confidential information. The second distance is used for communication with family and friends, and is known as personal distance, where the individual keeps others at a distance of between 18 inches and 4 feet. The social distance keeps others between 4 and 8 feet and is used primarily in business. Public
distance, at 8 to 10 feet, is best used when addressing others across the room, or making a presentation. Hall (1960) proffered that this form of silent language is learned and differs across cultures; thus in multicultural workgroups, physical distance is a form of communication of which managers must gain understanding. When Americans communicate with those of the Middle East or South America, the intimate or personal distance is often violated, with a negative effect on communication.

How one lays out office space is also an example of proxemics. According to Dodd (1977), the differences in office and work environment layout reflects differing cultural preferences. American managers have large offices with a secretary to vet visitors. This reflects the individualistic nature of the American culture, as identified by Hofstede (1980). The majority of Japanese managers do not have large offices, and spend most of their time with employees: to stay in the office would convey anger or mistrust. This reinforces Hofstede’s theories (1980) in which the Japanese culture is associated with group unity. Communal office space for all employees is becoming more common in Europe. These examples of proxemics have an effect on communication, and an understanding of the cultural implication of this form of communication is vital for managers of heterogeneous workgroups (Hodgetts et al., 2006).

There are other forms of communication commonly referred to as body language, which also differ with cultural diversity. Facial expressions and body movement as tools of communication are known as kinesics. Daniels et al. (2004) detail that kinesics differs among cultures. Gestures, posture and eye contact are common forms. Oculiesics, the use of eye contact, is desirable practice in the United States, however, care must be taken in other cultures not to stare too long – this conveys bad manners (Hodgetts et al.,
Cultural perceptions of posture are also an important consideration. Americans often put their feet on a chair to relax in a business meeting, highly insulting to business people from the Middle East (Hodgetts et al., 2006). Added to this, gestures often have vastly different cultural meanings. Forming the letter ‘O’ with one’s fingers in America signifies the word ‘okay’, in Japan it signifies money, while in France is means ‘zero’, and in Brazil it signifies an obscenity (Daniels et al., 2004). These are just some examples of how gestures communicate different messages across national cultures (Axtell, 1990).

Haptics refers to the use of touch to communicate with others. While this is natural in some cultures, others perceive it as too personal or intimate. British people tend to avoid the use of haptics and extended eye contact as a communication means. Arabs by contrast use haptics, eye contact and other non-verbal communication means. This may cause problems in interaction between the two cultures. In fact, an experiment that trained Britons in Arab nonverbal communication showed they were perceived more favourably by the Arabs (Collett, 1971). The importance of understanding such forms of non-verbal communication is outlined by Mendenhall et al. (1995) who posit that misunderstanding and discontent are caused by lack of knowledge of the cultural differences in kinesics.

Cultural perception also impacts upon communication in the organisation. Al-Meer (1988) discovered that western managers perceive women in managerial positions more favourably than Asian or Saudi managers, a factor which impacts on organisational communication and interaction. Similarly, the speed and pitch of the voice used to communicate with others can convey an image of credibility to others, depending on
their cultural perceptions. Lee and Boster (1992) conducted a study in which the same message was delivered to Koreans and Americans, but varied in speed. The study found that Americans associate power and competence with faster speakers, while Koreans attributed credence to slower speakers. This may be explained by the Koreans’ collectivist culture, outlined by Hofstede (1980), and their desire to measure spoken words so as not to offend (Peng et al., 1993). This is a facet of communication which cannot be overlooked for the managers of a culturally diverse workforce. Communication breakdown can naturally occur in organisations with mixed cultural perceptions, as well as in social settings where culturally diverse perceptions are expressed (Hodgetts et al., 2006).

According to Hitt et al. (2005), it is the manager’s task to prepare himself/herself and the workforce to listen and communicate effectively. Several theorists have made suggestions for managers of culturally diverse workgroups to alleviate the problem of workplace communication. As detailed, language barriers pose a potential challenge for culturally diverse employees in Ireland (Redmond and Butler, 2003), and the Irish proclivity for colloquial speech may pose communication problems (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a). Managers of culturally diverse work groups are advised to adapt the communication style they use to the whole audience (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a), while access to English language training should be made available to all foreign national employees, with participation encouraged by the organisation. Key needs for foreign national employees are identified as speaking and listening skills, and building vocabulary. Industry specific language training is also necessary, incorporating common hospitality phrases (Melia and Kennedy, 2005; Fáilte Ireland, 2005a). This need is addressed in a novel way by some hotels in Ireland which demonstrate best practice.
They include the Hilton Hotel and the Mespil Hotel in Dublin, which use a Buddy system and a Shadow system respectively. These systems pair English speaking with non-English speaking employees. The objective is for each employee to teach the other their native language, learning up to ten new words a day related to the hospitality sector (Melia and Kennedy, 2005). This process addresses communication problems in the organisation as well as teaching foreign national employees industry specific phrases and building their vocabulary.

An increasingly popular tool to facilitate enhanced communication in the organisation is mentoring (Webb, 1995). It describes the relationship between a superior staff member and a junior employee, and involves coaching and support. The mentoring programme’s success depends upon the willingness of the mentor to share knowledge and skill, and the eagerness of the protégé to learn. Sadri and Tran (2002) posit that the mentoring system can improve communication and ease the process of managing culturally diverse employees. Supporting the viewpoint by Euske and Roberts (1987) that superior communication leads to many organisational benefits, Sadri and Tran (2002) also proffer that open communication between managers and employees can alleviate feelings of discomfort, discrimination and isolation, thus facilitating greater communication in culturally heterogeneous workgroups.

Stull (1988) recommends that when providing feedback to culturally diverse employees, the language style or wording used should accommodate diverse communication skills and norms; hence colloquiums should be avoided. This is an important point for Irish managers of heterogeneous workgroups, as the tendency to use colloquiums was highlighted as an Irish inclination (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a).
However, as outlined, communication extends beyond the spoken word, and body language and other forms of silent communication may cause problems in culturally heterogeneous environments. Cultural awareness and understanding by managers can alleviate any discomfort and equip managers to better understand and communicate with their culturally diverse employees (Conejo, 2002). Indeed, cross-cultural communication skills include the need for empathy for another’s feelings and situation (Lane and DiStefano, 1992). Hitt et al. (2005) posit that a thorough understanding of culture is necessary for managers to accomplish their objectives and responsibilities, including communicating effectively with culturally diverse employees.
Chapter 2, Literature Review

2.4: Integrating Culturally Diverse Employees into the Workplace

Conejo (2002) proffers that in the process of cultural diversity management, the ultimate aim is to direct all employees' talents and energies toward organisational goal achievement. Thus work environments comprised of cultural heterogeneity necessitate that culturally diverse employees are integrated into the entire workforce. There are many benefits to be gained from such integration, including a faster settling-in period, employee retention and increased comfort in one's surroundings (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a; Devine et al., 2007). Thus within culturally diverse organisations, managers must be able to integrate employees, direct their diverse skills towards organisational goal achievement, and facilitate a harmonious work environment (Melia and Kennedy, 2005).

However, the characteristics that render one 'diverse', such as race, culture, and gender, can have an important impact on the success of integration strategies in the organisation. Of interest to Mamman (1996) is how diverse employees interact with and adjust to the traditional workforce, as managers seek workplace harmony. He details that how employees adapt to a heterogeneous work environment is an important consideration in the process of diversity management. Mamman (1996) refers to such adaptation to heterogeneity as 'interaction adjustment', which can facilitate the integration of culturally dissimilar employees in the workplace. He outlined three variables that affect the interaction adjustment of the diverse individual, represented in the diagram overleaf. Of particular concern to this thesis is culture, race and country of origin; thus age, gender, religion and disability are omitted from the discussion of Mamman's work (1996).
Figure 2.5: Factors that can Impinge on a Diverse Employees’ Interaction Adjustment into the Workforce

Secondary Variables
- Psychological factor
  - Cognition
  - Behaviour
  - Personality
  - Attitudes
  - Prior Experience
- Education
- Position
- Linguistic ability

Primary Variables
- Culture
- Race
- Country of Origin
- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Disability

Mediating Variables
- Situational factor
  - Nature of attitudes (stereotype, ethnocentrism, prejudice)
  - Frequency
  - Time factor
  - Depth
  - Breadth
  - Neutralising factor
  - Double (dis)advantage
- Interaction Strategies
  - Avoidance
  - Reactive
  - Proactive
- Organisational factor

(Mamman, 1996:451)
Primary variables

Culture

Cultural similarity among employees of a diverse workforce diminishes uncertainty or anxiety (Gudykunst, 1985), and because cultural similarity can lead to reciprocal feelings, it contributes to mutual liking between employees (Brewer and Campbell, 1976). Similarly, Black et al. (1991) proffer that the greater the degree of diversity between cultures, the more difficult it is for the individuals of those cultures to adjust to a new environment.

Indeed cultural theorists outline many differences which can factor into the integration of heterogeneous employees. Research by Trompenaars and Hampden Turner (1993) and Trompenaars (1994) identified neutral cultures in which emotions and stoicism is considered important. In direct contrast an emotional culture was outlined, where feelings and emotions are willingly expressed, greetings are loud and people smile often. For employees of conflicting cultural norms in this regard, interaction with others, and thus integration into the workforce, may be hindered.

Further cultural research by Hofstede (1980) identified that some cultures are high in uncertainty avoidance, that is, for citizens of such cultures, risk taking tends to be avoided. Were this cultural norm expressed in the workplace, employee integration may suffer. Indeed, as Prince (2005) outlined, diverse employees tend to stay within their comfort zone – to deviate from this, and integrate with others, may be difficult for individuals from a culture of high uncertainty avoidance.
Hofstede (1980) also outlined *masculine* and *feminine* cultures, with vastly differing employee values. In masculine cultures, such as those found in the United States, success, money and materialism are valued. Conversely, in feminine cultures, such as those found in Norway, cooperation, friendliness and job security are valued. In a work setting with such diverse cultures, where employees place value on different factors, integration may prove difficult.

**Race**

Heterogeneity of race is a frequent feature of the modern workplace. Triandis and Davis (1965) propose that when individuals are required to interact in close settings, race is often a factor which contributes to the rejection of others. This fact may pose a challenge to Irish managers in the hotel sector, as 28% of their workforce originate from outside Ireland (Prime Time 06/03/2007). Research also indicates workforces of diverse ethnic origin vary regarding adjustment to and experience in new environments (Furnham and Trezise, 1981; Graham, 1983; Punetha *et al.*, 1988; Rubin and Smith, 1990; Tanaka *et al.*, 1994); thus for managers seeking to integrate racially diverse work groups, employee race provides an indicator of integration success. A strong determinant of how well employees will integrate is the significance they place on their own race and how they are perceived by others (Figueroa, 1984). Stereotyping, prejudices and ethnocentrism influence the insight and viewpoint of interactants in the organisation (Stening, 1979), and can act as barriers to successful integration of diverse workforces.
Country of Origin

The country of origin of an employee has a serious impact on successful integration and interaction adjustment into a diverse workforce (Triandis and Triandis, 1960; Stening, 1979; Collier, 1989; Lalonde and Cameron, 1993). Being a foreign national worker from Cambodia, England or Russia, for example, leads to differing perceptions of status, ability, friendliness or degree of civilisation based on the stereotypes, prejudices or ethnocentrism ingrained in the perceiver (Mamman, 1996). Reinforcing these theories is the work of Connolly and McGing (2006), who recently conducted diversity research in Ireland. One example from their research details a Russian employee who claimed to be discriminated against because of the perception that Russia is a poor country and its citizens uneducated. Clearly such stereotypes will affect the level of interaction adjustment of culturally dissimilar employees in the organisation. Of interest, because of prior experience, international relations and colonial history, is the fact that individuals from developing countries perceive the capabilities of those from developed countries in a positive light (Ferrari, 1972; Kidder, 1977; Adler, 1991). Conversely, individuals from developed countries perceive the competencies of people from developing countries negatively (Marin and Salazar, 1988; Segall et al., 1990; Adler, 1991). Inter-country conflict also affects the integration and interaction adjustment of culturally diverse employees. Citizens of countries perceived to be allies are more likely to have positive attitudes towards each other (Ogunlade, 1971). Similarly, Marin and Salazar (1988) ascertained that populace of countries in conflict are more likely to express negative feelings towards each other. As relations between countries change over time, the effect the country of origin has on employee interaction adjustment is altered (Mamman, 1996).
Secondary Variables

Behaviour

Behavioural norms vary within and across cultures. Thus theorists underline the importance of adopting appropriate behaviour for new environments (Brien and David, 1971; Ruben, 1976; Hammer et al., 1978; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1986). The behavioural means to integrate into diverse environments include the ability to create interpersonal relationships with strangers and communicate effectively with others (Hammer et al., 1978; Gudykunst and Hammer, 1984; Hammer, 1987). An employee’s cultural background, traditions, gender, and occupation all impact on the behaviour deemed appropriate, and interaction necessitates developing a variety of social skills (Mamman, 1996). Connecting one’s behaviour in the workplace is how they perceive themselves. Hofstede (1980) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) outlined that by understanding one’s culture, managers can understand their behaviour. These theorists have outlined that in some cultures, known as individualistic cultures, individuals perceive themselves as an individual and are primarily concerned with themselves. In the opposite culture, identified as collectivist by Hofstede (1980) and communitarian by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993), individuals perceive themselves as part of a larger collective group. Such perceptions can affect employee behaviour in the workplace, and be a factor in their successful integration.

Personality and Attitude

The attitude and personality of the diverse employee can compliment the individual’s social skills and assist with their integration into the organisation (Ruben, 1976; Brislin, 1981). Factors of personality and attitude which can facilitate enhanced interaction in multicultural settings include flexibility, self-assurance, self-efficacy, openness,
enthusiasm, orientation to knowledge, cultural understanding, openness to information and optimism (Mamman, 1996).

Prior Experience

Adjustment to foreign environments is made easier by past experience (Klineberg, 1981; Furnham and Bochner, 1986; Black et al., 1991). Hence interaction adjustment into multicultural work settings may be greater for workers with similar prior experience (Mamman, 1996). The duration spent in unfamiliar settings can also influence integration, in that the longer an employee stays or expects to stay with the organisation, the greater effort s/he will extend to adjust to those settings (Dodd, 1982).

Education

Through enhanced ability to learn new things and cope with challenges, education increases one’s ability to adjust to foreign environments (Kim, 1977; Dodd, 1982; Yum, 1982; Case et al., 1989). Researchers suggest that more formally educated individuals react optimistically to new experiences (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971; Kimberly and Evanisko, 1981). In fact, Cox (1991a), Cox and Blake (1991b) and Tung (1993) proffer that increased education and training among culturally diverse individuals diminishes conflict and enhances understanding. It is therefore assumed that a high level of education is influential in the integration and interaction of diverse workers. This view is enhanced by Harris and Moran (1991) who associate education with respect and thus favourable perception by others. However, according to Mamman (1996:456) this factor needs careful management, as

high educational attainment could attract jealousy and resentment from some members of the organisation, especially if educational attainment is viewed as a source of power or/and career advancement.
Position

Gudykunst (1985), Black et al. (1991) and Witte (1993) believe that an element of control is needed by the individual to adjust to a new environment. They contend that this control reduces uncertainty, which may positively affect the integration of employees from cultures of high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980). At varying organisational levels, the strategies used by employees to cope with change differ. At higher levels, ‘active’ approaches are taken, for example, adjusting organisational policies, while at lower levels, employees depend on social support to cope with adjustment (Brett et al., 1990). Thus the position the employee holds in the organisation can facilitate greater interaction adjustment.

Linguistic Ability

Another factor used to ease interaction adjustment is linguistic ability. Stening (1979) and Dowling and Schuler (1990) detail that enhanced linguistic ability can reduce barriers to interaction between diverse cultures. How language is used can be interpreted to connote ability (Chebat et al., 1989; Rubin and Smith, 1990), friendliness or aggression (Page and Balloun, 1978) or be a determinant of social standing (Scotton, 1977). When attempting to interact with other culturally diverse employees it is important to understand that what is considered appropriate communication or linguistic style is culturally decided (Norton, 1983). Ethnocentrism can be a barrier to effective communication, if employees refuse to learn a foreign language (Mamman, 1996). As highlighted by Melia and Kennedy (2005) and Fáilte Ireland (2005a), English language training should be made available to all employees, including industry-specific language training. This can enhance the culturally diverse employee’s level of integration into the organisation, as they can interact better with co-workers.
Mediating Variables

Situational Factors

The situational factors of mediating variables impact on the employee's ability to interact with those of another culture. Stereotyping, that is, to form assumptions about an individual based on their group identity (Tajfel, 1969, Wiseman et al., 1989) can negatively impact on the interaction of culturally diverse workers. Ethnocentrism describes how individuals experience negative feelings for groups other than their own, and evaluate other groups according to the standards of their own group (Summer, 1906; Gudykunst and Kim, 1984; Adler, 1991). If ethnocentrism is present in the workforce, assimilation between diverse employees can be impeded. Prejudice can also impact negatively on the integration of diverse workgroups; based on inflexible generalisations about individuals from other groups, it places an individual at a disadvantage (Allport, 1958).

Time also has an impact on the interaction of diverse employees with others. Fishman (1977) outlines that the meanings attributed to different races can change over time. It is further posited that during the initial stages of interaction superficial relationships are established when diverse employees do not express negative attitudes openly (Adler, 1975; Dodd, 1982; Torbiorn, 1982). As time goes on, this will also change. The frequency of negativity expressed by the diverse employee's peers also affects the individual's integration and interaction adjustment into the organisation (Mamman, 1996). Furthermore, the members of the organisation with whom the diverse employee interacts may impinge on their integration into the environment. Thus the importance of mentoring culturally diverse employees is highlighted (Sadri and Tran, 2002), as the mentor can play a vastly positive role in the successful integration of culturally diverse

65
employees. Variation of interaction can also ensure the individual is not exposed to consistent negative attitudes (Mamman, 1996).

The intensity of the majority group’s negative opinions about the race or culture of a diverse employee effect interaction adjustment, in that the greater the depth of negativity, the lower the interaction adjustment. The breadth of these negative attitudes is also a factor. Breadth refers to

*the extent to which the dominant group’s negative attitude towards a diverse employee’s background transcends formal interactions* (Mamman, 1996:461).

Thus the diverse employee may be viewed by others as incompetent but socially attractive, and this impacts on their interaction adjustment. Hall (1989), Bell (1990) and Bell et al. (1993) proffer that when a diverse employee’s identity is defined by two or more variables, their effect is greater than if just one variable was used. Thus the more variables used to define a diverse employee, the more pertinent those variables are to interaction adjustment. However, one variable can cancel another out, neutralising their effect on interaction (Mamman, 1996).

*Organisational Factor*

There are also elements of the organisation which can impact upon the interaction adjustment and integration of culturally diverse employees. Kanter (1977) and Cox (1991a) posit that an important factor of diverse employee integration is workforce composition. This theory purports that the fewer diverse employees in the organisation, the more difficult it is for them to integrate because of a lack of moral and social support. In the hospitality sector, 28% of the workforce comprises of culturally diverse workers (Prime Time 06/03/2007), and integration may be facilitated as the workforce
is composed of a higher number of culturally diverse employees. Organisational issues such as equal opportunities policies, sexual harassment policies, job design, diversity training, workforce profile, organisational culture and flexible working hours also impact upon the interaction adjustment and integration of diverse employees (Kanter, 1977; Pettigrew and Martin, 1987; Cox, 1991a; Thompson et al., 1992; Offermann and Armitage, 1993; Harris, 1994). Organisational policies to abolish discrimination and harassment can enhance the interaction adjustment and subsequent integration of diverse employees (McNerney, 1994), as can stable organisational cultures (Harris, 1994). The recommendations by Melia and Kennedy (2005) and Fáilte Ireland (2005a), to foster racism awareness training and senior management support, become even more relevant.

Interaction Strategies

It is important to note that diverse employees have a number of strategies open to them when seeking to adjust and integrate into a new environment. One such strategy that can be adopted is avoidance. Employees who adopt this strategy interact infrequently with peers, who may have negative attitudes towards the employee which s/he cannot change (Mamman, 1996). Related to this is the tendency of diverse employees to avoid contact with other cultures and races (Prince, 2005), with a clearly negative impact on employee integration. Another interaction strategy is reactive and refers to a diverse employee choosing to reply to any queries about his/her background, and in essence reducing uncertainty for the majority group. In fact Hellriegel et al. (1989) proffer that this form of ‘self-disclosure’ is critical for the growth and development of the employee. A proactive strategy extends the reactive strategy by instigating interaction with the majority group in efforts to correct stereotyping and misconceptions (Mamman, 1996).
Indeed, this willingness to interact with strangers is attributed to reducing anxiety (Gudykunst, 1988; Witte, 1993), and thus should reduce the risks and uncertainty of interaction into unfamiliar work settings (Mainman, 1996).

2.4.1: Enhancing Employee Integration in the Irish Workplace

There are 215,500 registered foreign national employees in the Irish workforce (CSO figures 2006 cited in McEnroe, 2007:9). This heterogeneity encompasses employees unfamiliar with Irish people, culture and the way in which work is carried out (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a). Recent research by Melia and Kennedy (2005) and Fáilte Ireland (2005a) has highlighted the need to integrate heterogeneous employees into the Irish work environment to overcome such unfamiliarity and foster effective diversity management. The need to successfully integrate culturally diverse employees is also highlighted by Prince (2005), who details that diverse employees tend to stay within their own groups. Such behaviour can have a negative impact on employee productivity, and thus must be discouraged. In an integrated work environment, with a culture of inclusion, employees from a variety of backgrounds and cultures work together effectively; different viewpoints and perspectives are valued (Pless and Maak, 2004). Thus the need for an integrated culturally diverse workforce is highlighted.

Research by Melia and Kennedy (2005) and Fáilte Ireland (2005a) in this area provides managers with a foundation of ideas on how to integrate heterogeneous employees. Their combined recommendations outlined training and other needs for culturally diverse workers, and can assist managers of culturally diverse workforces to reap the benefits of workplace heterogeneity. For example, the provision of a pre-arrival pack with information about travelling to Ireland, living in Ireland and places of interest, is
Chapter 2, Literature Review

considered instrumental in easing foreign national employee integration into Irish life. So too is the provision of practical information, such as how to obtain a PPS number, taxation advice, pay slips, opening a back account and the Irish work ethos (Melia and Kennedy, 2005; Fáilte Ireland, 2005a). The FÁS Know Before You Go initiative provides foreign national employees with such information geared toward easing their transition into Ireland and is available in twelve languages (FÁS, 2007). Such initiatives can alleviate employee uncertainty, which is particularly important for employees from cultures of high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980). Furthermore, a welcoming ethos from the wider community assists with integration of culturally diverse employees, and can help with the stress of living away from home (Melia and Kennedy, 2005; Fáilte Ireland, 2005a). Setting up an induction programme to detail company and job specifics, and providing detailed information on the Irish product offered by the organisation, can ease tension or anxiety for the culturally diverse employee. Operating standards may vary across countries, technical training should be provided, and health and safety training and other necessary training programs should also be made available.

Communication skills are vital if employees are to be successfully integrated into the organisation – access to English language training should be made available and participation encouraged. Key needs for foreign national employees are identified as speaking and listening skills, and building vocabulary. Industry specific language training is also necessary, incorporating common hospitality phrases (Melia and Kennedy, 2005; Fáilte Ireland, 2005a). Language is one of the difficulties for foreign national employees outlined by Redmond and Butler (2003), which made it difficult for foreign national employees to access training and development opportunities; these
findings support the need for English language training. Employee integration can be facilitated if foreign national employees gain knowledge and understanding of Irish history, culture and society. Managers can further enhance the integration of culturally diverse employees by understanding the difficulties, concerns, needs and ambitions of foreign national workers. Thus international cultural training for all employees will prove beneficial. Incorporated into this should be racism awareness, and organisations should ensure this is a fundamental part of formal and informal practices. Senior managers must lead by example to foster a culture of inclusion and respect.

Career development opportunities should be made available to culturally diverse employees. Redmond and Butler (2003) found low numbers of foreign national employees had either sought or received a promotion, and some foreign national employees felt they did not have the same chances to succeed as Irish workers. Findings to support this research are contributed by Connolly and McGing (2006), who discovered that foreign national employees in Ireland perceive the presence of a glass ceiling in relation to advancement. Thus providing equality in career advancement can contribute to the integration of diverse employees into the workforce. Further integration of culturally diverse employees with their co-workers can be gained by social activities outside the workplace. Devine et al. (2007) identify social activities and events as a means for heterogeneous individuals to settle in quickly and become comfortable in their surroundings.

The provision of training in the English language for foreign national employees, and cultural awareness training for foreign national employees, Irish employees and managers, can assist in the integration process (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a). As well as
enhancing communication ability, and because enhanced linguistic ability can reduce barriers to interaction between diverse cultures (Stening, 1979; Dowling and Schuler, 1990), language training is an important factor in facilitating heterogeneous employee integration (Melia and Kennedy, 2005). Successful mentoring, as well as allowing for greater employee communication, can facilitate integration into the workforce, as culturally diverse employees work closely for a period of time (Sadri and Tran, 2002).

The Equality Act 2004 affords employers additional measures to enhance the integration of foreign national workers, and also to eradicate the effects of racial discrimination. Equal treatment is implemented between people regardless of race or ethnic background (The Equality Authority, 2007). Furthermore, employees from outside the European Economic Area are given the same rights and protections in the workplace as European Economic Area citizens (Diversity At Work Network, 2004). Considering the fact that diverse race is a contributory factor in the rejection of others (Triandis and Davis, 1965), by enforcing racial equality in the workplace, employers may engender more effective employee integration. Research by Connolly and McGing (2006) found that foreign national employees did not feel they are treated equally to their Irish co-workers. They expressed the viewpoint that Irish employees receive more favourable treatment in relation to work hours, promotions, benefits and treatment from managers, and that Irish employees can say ‘no’ to work. A further study by the Diversity At Work Network Report in 2004 found that foreign national employees believe Irish employers are reluctant to give them the same opportunities as other workers, despite qualification and experience. These negative perceptions may have a detrimental impact of the integration of culturally diverse employees into the Irish workforce. The need for management understanding and language training for foreign
national employees, outlined by Melia and Kennedy (2005) and Failte Ireland (2005a) increases in significance in efforts to achieve an integrated, though heterogeneous, workforce.

Some hotels in Ireland are taking active steps to integrate their culturally diverse employees. The Hilton Hotel encourages employee bonding and integration by the organisation of activity days and a leisure club, and the Four Seasons Hotel uses ‘Diversity Days’ in which an employee can showcase their home country through posters, brochures and short presentations (Melia and Kennedy, 2005). Such activities are outlined by Devine et al. (2007) as tools for integration, and are geared towards removing prejudice and stereotypes of certain cultures, and fostering greater integration. However such efforts at integration may not be widespread in Irish hotels – research by Connolly and McGing (2006) found that 81% of foreign national employees they researched reported no such integration activities in their workplace.

The Diversity At Work Network (DAWN), an initiative funded by the European Union Community Equal Initiative, aims to assist in the integration of people from minority groups and eliminate barriers to integration, including racism. Part of the initiative is to introduce ‘Diversity at Work’ as a study module in third level education and as a work based training programme (National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, 2007). As researchers proffer, education increases one’s ability to adjust to foreign environments (Kim, 1977; Dodd, 1982; Yum, 1982; Case et al., 1989), and this initiative aims to make positive steps in this regard. Prior knowledge of difference may help to reduce prejudice and stereotypes held, thus facilitating greater integration with diverse cultures when they are experienced. The Intercultural and Anti-
Racism Week 2007 was a focus on celebrating diversity and increasing the feeling of integration and belonging for minority groups in Irish society (National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, 2007). Such initiatives demonstrate national commitment to integrating culturally diverse individuals into Irish life and the work environment.
2.5: Conclusion

As Ireland’s population grows increasingly diverse and multicultural, the natural assumption, supported by CSO figures, is that this diversity is steadily making its way into the organisation.

There are many facets of diversity that can be experienced in the organisation. Cultural diversity impacts upon many of the fundamental aspects of running an organisation, from methods of communication, proxemics of employees, attitudes and values. Theorists have documented different cultural norms and values, and provided insight into the impact this will have for managers.

Researchers have identified various benefits associated with employee diversity. Furthermore the problems associated with employee diversity have been documented, as have the effects of diversity on the workgroup. An analysis of existing literature has allowed the conclusion that employee cultural diversity needs careful management in the organisation. Indeed, completing this literature review has significantly enhanced the understanding of the researcher of the elements of culture and its potential impact on employee management. The author concludes from the literature review that the role of manager now requires augmentation – the traditional skills required to run a business efficiently and profitably must be supplemented to manage a workforce with a diverse range of races, cultures, attitudes, and values. Recognising the importance of effective workplace communication and integration of culturally diverse employees is vital in the management of culturally dissimilar workgroups. This role augmentation may pose a challenge to managers, as they seek to effectively manage both the organisation and a
heterogeneous workforce. The author is satisfied that the literature available further strengthens the rational for this research thesis.

Previous research has focused on the effect of cultural heterogeneity on the organisation, with recommendations for how it should be managed. However the author felt there was a lack of research detailing the impact employee cultural diversity has on Irish managers at a fundamental level in the hotel sector. The aim of this research is to assess the challenge Irish hotel managers face in their day to day running of the organisation utilising employees from diverse cultural backgrounds. The author aims to discover the impact managing culturally diverse workgroups has on Irish hotel managers, and whether striving to reap the benefits and avoid the problems associated with culturally diverse employees presents them with a significant challenge. It was also deemed important to discover how Irish and foreign national employees regard the effort their managers put into managing diversity and the impact it has on their workday. This will allow the researcher to correlate any challenges managers report with the attitudes and opinions of their employees. Such opinions had not been discovered in research to date.

The researcher has benefited from conducting this literature review to the extent that she gained a deeper understanding of the impact of cultural diversity in a work setting. The author learned that the impact of cultural diversity extends to all aspects of employee management, from communication and motivation, to promotion. The author discovered that what was once considered to be a topical business trend now demands significant attention from management, because cultural diversity management is
pertinent to business success. The author believes this literature review supports the need to assess the challenges of a culturally diverse workforce in the Irish hotel sector.
Chapter Three

Research Methodology
3.1: Introduction

The Economic and Social Research Council (2001), cited in Berkeley Thomas (2004:55), classifies management research as follows:

*Management research seeks to understand and explain the activity of managing, its outcomes and the contexts in which it occurs. This involves the study of the origins of managing and its ongoing development as both an intellectual field and arena of practice.*

Blumenthal and Thier (2003) proffer that management research is designed to affect the decisions and actions of managers. When conducting management research, the role of the people who contribute to the management process, and the forces that shape the nature of management, are investigated. The aim of management research is to construct a broad body of knowledge to explain the causes of business situations and the methods of assessing other courses of action. It takes into account all facets of management including accounting, finance, marketing, organisational behaviour/industrial relations, and operations (Economic and Social Research Council, 2001 cited in Berkeley Thomas, 2004).

3.2: Definition of the Research Objectives

Saunders *et al.* (2007:610) define research objectives as

*clear, specific statements that identify what the researcher wishes to accomplish as a result of doing the research*

Research objectives detail the intent of the researcher, and ideally are precise, action-oriented and measurable (Domegan and Fleming, 1999, Arens, 1999). Research objectives should enable the reader to understand precisely what is being researched and what the research seeks to achieve (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). Research objectives enable the researcher to gain a sense of vision regarding the research question. The objectives
define the purpose of the research, provide focus for the researcher and detail the expected achievements (Rowley, 1999).

The research objectives of this thesis are to explore the management challenges of a culturally diverse workforce in the four and five star hotel sector in Ireland, and specifically to gain the insight of hotel managers in Cork. In detail, the objectives of this research thesis are:

- To explore the opinion of managers working in four and five star hotels in Cork on employing foreign national employees.
- To explore the needs, concerns and attitudes of foreign national workers employed in four and five star hotels in Cork.
- To investigate the needs, concerns and attitudes of Irish employees in four and five star hotels in Cork towards the changes in their workplace, and their opinion on working with foreign national employees.
- To gain the insight of Mr. Micheál Martin T.D., former Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, on the increasing cultural heterogeneity in the Irish workplace.
- To gain the opinion of an industry professional regarding the increasing number of foreign national employees in the hotel industry in Cork.
3.3: The Scope of the Research

Four and five star hotels in Cork were chosen for research. Four and five star hotels in Ireland offer higher quality of service, accommodation and facilities, including spacious suites and excellent cuisine. Five star hotels are the most luxurious in Ireland, of the highest standards internationally, and offer exceptional service standards. Described as 'exquisite', a five-star service often includes personalised welcomes (Irish Tourist, 2007; Fáilte Ireland, 2007).

A large number of foreign national workers are employed in Irish hotels, and this industry, as a service provider, is heavily dependent on its workforce. The high service standards in four and five star hotels are delivered by and dependent on the hotel's employees. Thus the underlying principle is that to obtain the higher service standards necessary to operate a four or five star hotel, for example to deliver personalised welcomes, managers depend significantly on foreign national workers. Therefore it was decided to concentrate the primary research on four and five star hotels, which offer a higher standard of comfort and service, which is dependent on the workforce. Any hotel with a star rating below a four star was omitted from the primary research. Due to time and financial constraints, the primary research was narrowed to within the Cork area, where the researcher is based.

The Irish Hotels Federation (2001) called for a new taxonomy for the Irish hotel industry, recategorising hotels and guesthouses. Fáilte Ireland in association with the Irish Hotels Federation has developed a new hotel classification scheme, for phased introduction through 2007. The first announcement of all new classifications appeared on the Fáilte Ireland website in late autumn 2007 and in the "Be Our Guest Ireland
2008" guide. The old and new schemes ran correspondingly until the end of 2007, with new categorizations in place for 2008 (Fáilte Ireland, 2007). However, the primary research for this thesis was largely conducted in 2006, for which the old classification system applies.

3.4: Research Design

According to Berkeley Thomas (2004:20):

\[ Research \text{ design involves deciding how the strategy and methods will be implemented in the context of a specific inquiry, indicating more precisely where, when and how data will be obtained and the method to be used to analyse and interpret those data. } \]

Chisnall (1986) proffers that appropriate research design promotes objective and economic data collection, as well as certifying that the information gathered is pertinent to the identified research problem. There are three classifications of research design: exploratory, descriptive and causal research design. The choice of research design used is largely dependant on the research objectives (Burns and Bush, 2006).

The researcher concluded that exploratory and descriptive research was best suited to collect information to answer the research question. Exploratory research is generally unstructured, informal and flexible, and allows the researcher to obtain background information about the research question. Secondary data, a form of exploratory research, was used to allow for a greater understanding of the research question and its elements. Such analysis facilitated a greater insight into the research topic, thus identifying areas for descriptive research. Descriptive research allows the researcher to gain more detail about key elements of the research question. The thoughts, feelings and behaviour of respondents can be captured by descriptive research, leading to greater understanding (Stangor, 1998). This was employed to allow for greater insights into the behaviour of
managers, as it allows the researcher to capture the thoughts and feelings of respondents, and discover their attitudes relating to the research questions.

3.5: Data Collection

This research thesis is a presentation of data used to analyse the factors relating to the research problem, which is exploring the challenges workplace cultural diversity presents to managers of four and five star hotels in Cork. Data is defined as

*information collected through formal observation or measurement.*

(Stangor, 1998:400).

When commencing research, data construction is important. Decisions must be made to determine what data to attain, how to do so, and which resources to use. Analysing the data and interpreting it assists in solving the research problem by summarising the data and relating it to the research questions. Data exists in both primary and secondary form, both of value to the researcher (Berkeley Thomas, 2004).

3.5.1: Secondary Data

Secondary data is invaluable to the researcher. It is data that was constructed for other purposes by a third party, not specifically for research. However its findings will be related to the research question. It can be in both qualitative and quantitative formats. The use of secondary data is common when carrying out both exploratory and descriptive research (Berkeley Thomas, 2004).

There are advantages to using secondary data to answer the research question. Data analysis can commence as soon as secondary data is accessed, saving the researcher...
considerable time. Also, there are significant cost savings to be made. It is also proposed that secondary data may be of better quality than data the researcher would have created independently. However, there are disadvantages. The cost benefit of using secondary data is lost if the cost of accessing the data is high, common in commercial databases. Data collected may not be applicable to the research problem, and indeed secondary data may prove difficult to interpret when taken out of the context for which it was collected (Punch, 1998).

Secondary data was amassed for this thesis with the following intentions:

- It was necessary to gain an understanding of the term diversity, and how diversity can affect the workforce.
- An in-depth understanding of culture, how it varies across race, and how this can impact on others was also required.
- Compiling a literature review enabled the determination of themes for the interviews with hotel managers, and focus groups with employees, as well as other key personnel.
- The research objectives were refined.

Academic journals, theses, management textbooks, newspaper reports, government publications and the internet were utilised when compiling secondary data for the literature review. A number of conferences were also attended. The first, themed "Working Places, Learning Spaces", was held in the Clarion Hotel, Cork, on 25th November 2005. While this conference centred on collaboration involving the workplace and higher education, workplaces of the future were discussed, including cultural differences in terms of diversity. The increased access to other cultures via
Information Technology was also discussed, an area of consideration for future managers. The second conference attended was the Young Irish Hospitality Institute conference "Hospitality 2016 - Welcome to the Future" on 15th October 2006. At this conference the future of the hospitality industry in Ireland was discussed, and valuable insight was gained into the changes the hospitality industry faces.

3.5.2: Primary Data

Primary data is data gathered by the researcher to solve the problem or opportunity identified (Domegan and Fleming, 1999). It involves gathering information from the source. The information collected answers specific questions for the research problem at hand (Saunders et al., 2007). The advantages of using secondary data, including time and financial savings (Punch, 1998), are lost when the researcher conducts primary data collection, as it can be both time-consuming and costly.

Methods of primary data collection are both qualitative and quantitative. According to Patton (1980), qualitative data consists of comprehensive descriptions of events, situations and the interaction between people and things. Qualitative research can present a greater understanding of social phenomena (Silverman, 2005). It offers depth to information, allowing the researcher to make meaningful analyses (Patton, 1980). Qualitative research methods allow flexibility, and use a variety of techniques that attempt to interpret phenomena in dynamic environments (Carson et al., 2005). On the other hand, quantitative research seeks to answer the research question using quantifiable answers. Techniques include the use of existing statistics, questionnaires and observation scales (Alveeson and Deetz, 2000).
The research objectives of this thesis were explored using qualitative primary data collection. The information needed to answer the research questions for this thesis was considered to be in the form of attitudes, opinions, feelings and beliefs, and therefore, it was decided not to use quantitative research methods, as such data is obtained more accurately by qualitative research means.

3.5.2.1: In-depth Interviews

For many qualitative researchers the data gained from interviews is the main source of information (Carson et al., 2005). Patton (1990) states that the purpose of the interview is to gain another's perspective on things that cannot be observed or exposed otherwise. Such findings include feelings, interpretations and memories.

While Carson et al. (2005) contend that the contributions of the researcher in the interview process can improve data collection, care is advised - the researcher should avoid expressing or imposing their own opinion in the interview. This advice was heeded when interviewing personnel for this thesis, which included hotel managers of four and five star hotels in Cork, and others, whose opinion and insight were valuable to answering the research question.

Interviews can be structured or unstructured. The foundation of structured interviews is a select set of questions and the assumption is that each interviewee is asked the same questions in the manner of interviewer-administered questionnaires. In unstructured interviews the researcher has a list of themes to be covered in the duration of the interview. Saunders et al. (2007) refer to unstructured interviews as 'in-depth interviews', used to explore in-depth a particular area of research. While the list of
topics to be covered in the interview is prepared in advance to ensure the research question is answered, the interviewee is able to discuss freely their own beliefs and opinions. According to Burns and Bush (2006) in-depth interviewers are equipped with a list of topics or open-ended questions which are used to gain deep, revealing responses. Kumar (2005) outlines the flexibility offered to the researcher by the use of unstructured interviews; this is a real benefit when seeking to interpret managers' feelings and opinions. This flexibility allows the researcher to follow the interests and thoughts of the interviewees (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). The use of unstructured interviews was considered to be more beneficial for this research thesis, as it provides in-depth information about the interviewee's concerns, allows the interviewees to elaborate on their answers, and enables the researcher to inject a suitable new question where appropriate (Saunders et al., 2007).

While specific information was required, such as the number of foreign national employees, in each hotel, the unstructured nature of the interviews allowed the participants to elaborate on the theme of cultural diversity in the workplace, and enabled the researcher to explore topics that arose based on the managers' own experiences and opinions. For example, one of the main research findings of this thesis is that hotel managers are concerned over the longevity of tenure of foreign national employees, believing they will face constant recruitment and training cost when foreign national employees return to their home countries. This information was gained as a result of the unstructured nature of the interviews when hotel managers elaborated and gave their opinion and beliefs. The researcher used a prepared list of themes when prompting discussion, but managers were able to inject new information, their own beliefs and opinions, and any past experiences relevant to the themes of the interview. The
unstructured nature of the interview allowed managers to draw from their own experiences when elaborating on their answers, and offer the researcher in-depth understanding on the topic of diversity management.

For the purpose of this thesis, six unstructured interviews were conducted with managers of four and five star hotels in Cork. These interviews were conducted in July 2006. Having defined the scope of the research, requests for interview participants were administered to four and five star hotel managers in Cork. Those that participated in the interviews are those which expressed interest in the research question and availability for interview. This is referred to as ‘self-selection sampling’ (Saunders et al., 2007; Daymon and Holloway, 2002). This non-probability sampling method requires the researcher to publicise the need for interviewees either through media or direct contact. Those who would like to take part in the research then make contact, and the research process begins.

**Table 3.1: Interviews with Hotel Managers in Cork**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel Manager</th>
<th>Hotel Star Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
</tr>
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</table>

These interviews were conducted to satisfy the first research objective which sought to explore the opinion of managers working in four and five star hotels in Cork on employing foreign national employees. The central themes of the interviews were the
problems they faced or are currently facing, any future concerns, and their opinion on the impact employing foreign national workers has on the traditional Irish welcome. A guide to the interview themes is included in the Appendices section.

An unstructured interview was also conducted with former Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Micheál Martin T.D., to satisfy the objective of gaining government insight into the increased cultural diversity in the Irish workplace. This interview was conducted in March 2006. Again, themes were prepared to be addressed in the interview, but the Minister was free to elaborate and expand on his answers, allowing the researcher to understand the opinion of an Irish government Minister on the issue of workplace diversity.

To assess the opinion of an industry professional, an unstructured interview was conducted with Mr. Adrian Gregan, who is actively involved in hospitality education and a former member of the Council of the Irish Hospitality Institute. This interview was conducted in February 2007. While there were a number of themes to be covered in the interview, Mr. Gregan was able to discuss the topic of diversity freely and elaborate on his own experiences and beliefs. The in-depth and unstructured nature of the interview with Mr. Gregan allowed for his own experiences in the industry to come to the fore.

Thus, the author believes the use of unstructured, in-depth interviews proved invaluable; gaining real insight and knowledge was facilitated by employing such methods.
3.5.2.2: Focus Groups

Focus groups are characterised by the simultaneous involvement of a number of participants. Focus groups use group interaction to generate data and research a topic. As well as collecting information, the purpose of a focus group is also to engender a greater depth of understanding about the research issue. Because the focus group involves interaction between the respondents, comparisons of viewpoints can be obtained. The group dynamic means participants will respond to each other, and may even have to justify their opinion to their peers, giving rise to greater quality of information (Carson et al., 2005).

The purpose of the focus group must be clearly defined, requiring the researcher to understand the research subject matter, and communicate that effectively to participants. Selection of participants in a focus group is not random as in other research methods. Even if the participants chosen are not representative of the total population, they are deemed suitable if they are able to give quality insights relevant to the research problem. This is called purposive selection. It is beneficial if the members of the focus group are homogenous, so that commonalities among them can be used to promote familiarity, and ease any tension or hesitation (Carson et al., 2005).

Four focus groups were conducted in total. These focus groups were conducted in October 2006. Two focus groups were conducted consisting of foreign national employees from a number of four and five star hotels in Cork, and two consisting of Irish employees. This purposive selection was very beneficial, as the participants spoke freely, in a manner in which they may not have done, were the focus groups mixed. A guide to the focus group themes is included in the Appendices section.
The number of focus groups conducted depends on a variety of factors, including the nature of the research issue and the number of new topics or ideas raised in each focus group. It is advised that the researcher continues to conduct focus groups until she is satisfied that she can predict the participants answers, or no new information can be obtained, on the premise that increased frequency of focus groups does not equal increased accuracy of information. While it is accepted that there is no recommended number of focus groups to conduct, the more homogeneous the focus group participants are in terms of background, the fewer that are required (Carson et al., 2005). The focus group should be long enough to establish an affinity with the respondents; 1.5 to 3 hours is the general timeframe (Carson et al., 2005). The amount of participants to include is much debated. Duame (1988) recommends between 6 and 8 participants, while up to 12 is also advised (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990).

Participants from a number of four and five star hotels in Cork were recruited. Purposive selection was used ensuring the participants were largely of homogeneous background. After these focus groups were conducted, similarity among the answers became evident, and prediction of the answers became possible. It was decided that four focus groups were sufficient. The following tables detail the focus group compositions:
Table 3.2: Composition of Foreign National Employee Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Hotel Star Rating</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Group 1</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Group 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>India</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
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<td>G</td>
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<td>4 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3: Composition of Irish Employee Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group 1</th>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Hotel Star Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
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<td>E</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group 2</th>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Hotel Star Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td></td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Male</td>
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</table>

3.6: Analysing Qualitative Research Findings

It is recommended that the first step in analysing qualitative data involves labelling, editing and then organising the information collected, thus allowing easy access for the researcher (Carson et al., 2005). There are no accepted, formal guidelines for researchers when analysing, interpreting and assessing qualitative data (Patton, 1980). However, qualitative data gained from interviews and focus groups is often analysed by using content analysis. This process involves coding groups of words, phrases or sentences, from the research transcripts into categories. These categories are usually derived from the research question or objectives. The codes are used to arrange the data gathered into patterns (Carson et al., 2005).
According to Miles and Huberman (1994) cited in Carson et al. (2005:83)

*These codes are retrieval and organising devices that allow the analyst to spot quickly, pull out, then cluster all the segments relating to a particular question, hypothesis, concept or theme.*

The categories are generally known to the researcher before data analysis as they are based on the topics of research and the probes used to guide the interviews (Carson et al., 2005).

The first step in this process is called ‘axial’ coding (Neuman, 1994). During this stage the researcher analyses the data and assigns the codes or categories to the text. While the emphasis is on the existing codes, new codes may emerge (Carson et al., 2005). Saunders et al. (2007) refer to this process as ‘categorising’ and ‘unitising’ data. Categorisation involves classifying data into significant categories, which are essentially codes used to group the data. This allows for systematic and rigorous analysis of the data. The categories are identified by the research objectives. Saunders et al. (2007) then recommend ‘unitising’ the data, which is attaching sections of the primary research data to the categories or codes being used.

Selective coding is the next step (Neuman, 1994). After allocating codes to the data the researcher then seeks comparisons and contrasts between data. The aim is to make generalisations about what the respondents are saying, summarising the similarities and differences (Carson et al., 2005). Saunders et al. (2007) posit that after categorising and unitising the data, the next step is recognising relationships in the data. The researcher searches for themes and patterns in the categorised data. Although Carson et al. (2005) and Saunders et al. (2007) refer to the process of analysis differently, the methodology of assigning codes to the data and seeking relationships between the data are the same.
These methods were utilised to enable the researcher to understand what was being said in the interviews and focus groups. The coding of data enabled the researcher to draw conclusions, and to present the relationships in the data under appropriate headings in Chapter 4: Primary Research Results. As Carson et al. (2005) outlined, the categories used to analyse the research are generally based on the topic of research, and known to the researcher before data is collected. Such categories are based on the themes used to guide the research, and this process was used. Following the primary research, new codes may also emerge (Carson et al. 2005). The categories used to analyse the primary research for this thesis are a combination of codes known to the researcher prior to carrying out primary research, and new codes which emerged. The new codes emerged from the transcripts of the interview data. From these transcripts the researcher was able to ascertain similarities in the interviewees’ answers, and use new codes to categorise them accordingly.

For the purpose of analysing the qualitative research findings, the researcher used the following categories or codes:

**Categories used in Analysing Interviews with Hotel Managers**

- Workplace communication
- English lessons
- Integrating foreign national employees
- Equal opportunities for foreign national employees
- Advantages and disadvantages associated with employing foreign national workers.
- Employing foreign nationals – current and future management challenges
Chapter 3, Research Methodology

• Foreign national employees and the Fáilte Romhat

Categories used to Analyse Focus Groups with Foreign National Employees

• Motivation to come to Ireland and expectations of working in Ireland
• Spoken English ability
• Relationship with Irish co-workers and experiences of racism
• Integration assistance
• Foreign national employee concerns

Categories used to Analyse Focus Groups with Irish Employees

• Advantages and disadvantages of working with foreign national employees
• Treatment of foreign national employees

The interviews conducted with Minister Micheál Martin T.D. and Adrian Gregan are analysed based on the themes of the interviews.

Detailed notes were taken during the data gathering process. The first step in the analysis procedure required the researcher to transcribe all information and then group it into the codes and categories selected. The author then analysed the data gathered to find comparisons and contrasts within it. The analysis of the data was done manually and by using Microsoft Word. This analysis facilitated greater understanding for the researcher and allowed her to make conclusions from the research findings.

There are a number of computer aided packages available to the researcher when analysing qualitative data. These are known as Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). These packages vary in analysis capability, and can
assist the researcher when attempting to analyse vast amounts of qualitative data. However, these packages can impose time constraints on the researcher, as often the information needs to be pre-coded prior to analysis (Carson et al., 2005). CAQDAS applications were not used to analyse primary research for this thesis, as the functions necessary to analyse the findings were available in Microsoft Word. Furthermore, the time deemed necessary to become familiar with CAQDAS packages was considered better spent in other areas of research.

3.7: Research Validity, Transparency and Transferability


*truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers*

Research validity is concerned with whether the research results were collected accurately, and how they correspond to reality (Berkeley Thomas, 2004). To ensure the validity of the data collected the author can follow a number of guidelines. The first is the careful examination and interpretation of literature relevant to the research question (Carson et al., 2005). Hermeneutics is defined by Polkinghorne (1983) and cited in Berkeley Thomas (2004:219) as

*the science of correct understanding or interpretation*

This is of significance in how the researcher interprets the work of others and deems it useful for the research question. Further methods of ensuring validity include justifying the qualitative methods to be used in carrying out the research. Furthermore, data analysis must be controlled to ensure complete evaluation and appraisal of the results.
(Carson et al., 2005). When these criterions are met as research is conducted, the validity and credibility of the research can be assured. When compiling qualitative research findings, transparency must be evident. This is required in the analysis of findings, and a clear explanation of why an interpretation of the research was made is necessary (Carson et al., 2005). To ensure transparency, copies of all transcripts, documentation, and notes made while carrying out the research are available for inspection. Carson et al. (2005) purport that qualitative research should cover a wide range of respondents and settings, and the research findings should be transferable across that range. However, there should not be a concern with generalising the research findings outside that range. As such, it is encouraged to outline the boundaries of the research, so future researchers will know the range to which their findings apply. The range of this research has been outlined to cover managers, Irish employees and foreign national employees of four and five star hotels in Cork, as the boundaries to which the research findings can be applied.

3.8: Summary of Research Methodology

This chapter outlined the methodologies used for collecting and analysing the data necessary to answer the research question and the scope for the research. The types of research available to the researcher were explored. From this exploration it was concluded that qualitative research was the best means to explore the research problem. The qualitative means of gathering primary data used in this thesis are explained, including interviews and focus groups. The results and discussion of these findings are outlined in the following chapters.
Chapter Four

Primary Research Results
4.1: Introduction

The results of the primary research conducted are presented in this chapter. This research includes interviews with hotel managers, former Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Mr. Micheál Martin T.D., and Mr. Adrian Gregan, former member of the council of the Irish Hospitality Institute. Focus groups with foreign national employees and Irish employees in four and five star hotels in Cork were also conducted.

The primary research findings are presented as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Primary Research Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Interviews with hotel managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Focus groups with foreign national employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Focus groups with Irish employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Interview with Minister Micheál Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Interview with Adrian Gregan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coding of the primary research data was used to analyse the research findings for the interviews with hotel managers and focus groups. This facilitates the breaking down of data, its examination, comparison and categorisation; it also allows the researcher to conceptualise from the research findings. The findings from research conducted with hotel managers, foreign national employees and Irish employees are presented under the categories used to code the data collected. The primary research findings gained from Minister Martin T.D. and Mr. Adrian Gregan are presented under the themes used to conduct the interviews.
4.2: Interviews with Hotel Managers

In this section the primary research findings from interviews with hotel managers in four and five star hotels in Cork are presented. Interviews were carried out with six managers of four and five star hotels in Cork to satisfy the first research objective; assessing the opinions of managers working in the hotel sector in Cork, and their experiences of working with foreign national employees.

4.2.1: Workforce composition

All hotel managers interviewed reported foreign national employee percentages above 50%. The percentages of foreign national workers employed by each hotel researched, is as follows:

Table 4.1: Percentage of Foreign Nationals Employed in Each Hotel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel Manager</th>
<th>Hotel Star Rating</th>
<th>Percentage of Foreign National Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>50% +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>55% - 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>65% - 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A wide variety of nationalities are employed in hotels in Cork, including European and non-European citizens. One 5 star hotel manager reported that Polish nationals make up the majority of his foreign national employees, which consists of over twenty-five different nationalities.
Chapter 4, Primary Research Results

We employ something in the region of 25 nationalities. Irish are in the region of 40% to 50%. The next most popular one would be Polish.  
(Manager C, 5 star hotel).

4.2.2: Workplace Communication

All managers interviewed believe that a certain standard of English is vital when communicating with hotel guests. Managers’ attitudes regarding the importance of English ability at the recruitment stage varied. The opinion of the managers interviewed is that English needs to be of a high standard in the customer-focused or customer contact areas,

Anybody in the customer-focused areas or customer contact areas like reception or front office, which would include concierge or restaurant or bar, it’s important that English would be of a very good standard.  
(Manager C, 5 star hotel).

However this manager argued that the right attitude from the potential foreign national employee is more important than any skill, including language skills, because skills can be taught, i.e. English skills enhanced.

Some people actually had skills to do the job, but they had not quite the attitude we were looking for. We can teach people the skills, but you can’t teach people the attitude.  
(Manager C, 5 star hotel).

Other managers believed that a standard of English is very important at the recruitment stage.

The foreign national employees would have to have a certain level of English, we couldn’t take them on if they don’t have it. To be fair, that’s nearly across the board. We might make an exception in one or two departments where they wouldn’t be as interactive with guests. But generally speaking, they would have to have a certain level of English.  
(Manager F, 4 star hotel).
The majority of hotel managers stated that spoken English is considered important if the individual is employed in ‘front-line’ positions, i.e. in direct communication with the hotel’s guests.

*English is something we look for at interview if they are going to be in front of house or dealing with customers.*

(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

In these customer contact positions, the ability to communicate with the hotel guest is the main priority.

*Although I fly the flag for cultural diversity, common sense has to prevail. If you put somebody on the phone that can’t convey a message or can’t sell what it is that you’re trying to sell, it’s pointless.*

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

While the managers interviewed did not state English is needed *only* for these positions, it was implied in the majority of cases, and in one case stated, that English is not a priority for non-contact positions.

*In some departments English isn’t a priority, for example, in housekeeping. If you move them into the restaurant, then yes it is.*

(Manager D, 4 star hotel).

*English is very importance to us if they’re going to be communicating with hotel guests.*

(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

*English is something we look for if they are going to be in front of house or dealing with customers. If not, we would keep them working in the back of house areas until their English had improved and they were ready to deal with customers.*

(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

In one hotel, English is the only language permitted while working, to promote one language within the organisation.

*We encourage people, when they’re in the hotel, to use English as a language, rather than speaking their own native language, and also when around other people, so that everybody can communicate with each other.*

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).
4.2.3: English Lessons

All hotels represented in the interview process provide English classes to their foreign national employees, although they are not widely available to all employees throughout the organisation, or without some stipulations. For example, one hotel stipulates that employees have to attend a certain number of English lessons in order for them to be free of charge to the employee.

*How we commit people to English classes is that in order for it to be free they must attend a certain number of classes.*

(Manager C, 5 star hotel).

In other hotels the foreign national workers are only offered English classes if management felt they were going to stay with the hotel.

*If we felt that they were going to stay with us, they were progressing in their jobs, and we wanted to keep them, we'd certainly pay for their English lessons.*

(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

*One of the things we provide is English courses, if someone has shown loyalty.*

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

One manager expressed concern about providing English lessons or other forms of training for foreign national employees.

*I would be concerned about people coming here for a few years, getting enough money to set themselves up, then going home. Essentially that would mean retraining for us.*

(Manager A, 5 star hotel).

Despite the stipulations imposed on employees as outlined above, that the employee has to attend a number of lessons in order for them to be free, this manager of a 5 star hotel was the only manager to report offering English lessons to employees in non-customer contact positions.

*We do offer, in some of the other areas like housekeeping where customer contact varies, free English lessons here.*

(Manager C, 5 star hotel).
This manager spoke of the hotel chef’s frustration at his exact instructions not being followed and blamed language as a communication barrier, which may explain the reason for English lessons being offered to background employees.

*The chef would have some issues where English would not be the strongest, but that’s a situation where you need to show employees how you want things done.*

(Manager C, 5 star hotel).

### 4.2.4: Integrating Foreign National Employees

Half of the hotel managers interviewed were proud to have wide and varied initiatives in place geared towards helping the foreign national employee settle into their new job and new environment.

*We try to give them everything they need to settle in, and the faster they settle in obviously the happier they are, and the quicker they can get in to doing the job.*

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).

These initiatives include:

- Social committees, which include get togethers a number of times a year, for example, barbeques and family get togethers.

*We try to encourage interaction socially. They go out together, they mix together; there are a lot of friendships and relationships being started.*

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

- Induction programmes to acclimatise the employees to the hotel’s culture.

- The Buddy system or mentoring support for foreign national employees.

*We have four outings a year, all the staff go; each department would bring their staff out at various times as well. And we encourage staff to talk about their own culture and their own background. We have a big barbeque coming up soon; we like to meet the employees’ families. There’s also mentoring systems, when new staff come on board we would provide a Buddy system.*

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

- Assistance with PPS numbers, finding the local bank and doctor, and information on other practical issues. This information is available in the foreign national employee’s native language if needed.
Chapter 4, Primary Research Results

- English lessons.

We have put together language classes. Our induction includes a diversity program. We have a starter pack so if somebody comes in and they're not from Cork the pack acclimatises them to Cork and gives them all the information that they need. This pack includes advice on PPS numbers, taxes, and bank accounts. We give information in foreign languages as well if needed.

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).

- Regular meetings where all employees can raise issues or concerns.

We have a social committee here and we also have an associate council. The associate council is made up of volunteers from different departments in the hotel. We meet once a month, we talk about issues they may be having. We take people from mixed nationalities – we are getting a good input from everybody. Everybody goes through an induction when they start at the hotel. Before they go in front of a customer they have to understand the culture of the company and what we're trying to do.

(Manager C, 5 star hotel).

While none of the hotels interviewed has all of the above measures in place, half of the hotels researched have a combination of the above initiatives operating to assist foreign national employees. These hotel managers spoke of their plans for the future. These plans include expanding the programmes their hotel already has in place to make foreign national employees feel welcome and at ease, and integrated into the organisation. Winning the Fáilte Ireland Diversity Award was a common goal.

We want to educate ourselves and everybody else on different aspects of culture. There's a new award initiative, the Diversity Awards. We would definitely get involved in that because what it does is it promotes and it prompts companies like us to do things like hold cultural evenings.

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

Some managers interviewed displayed a sense of awareness of what it is like to work in a foreign culture, unsure of cultural norms and behaviours. They spoke of their own experiences when they had worked abroad, and there was a definite affinity with foreign national employees in that regard.

I worked abroad, and got to know so much about other cultures – maybe I'm a little different; I'm a lot more receptive to it. I might be a bit more sympathetic having done that.

(Manager C, 5 star hotel).
Attitudinal differences were, however, apparent. Three hotel managers detailed no integration effort or assistance for foreign national employees.

*We are growing as a hotel and putting our energies into that, celebrating diversity is not something I feel is needed.*  
(Manager A, 5 star hotel).

*We don’t ‘celebrate’ diversity or hold diversity days.*  
(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

One manager felt that current operating constraints prevented him from implementing diversity policies. However, he stated

*It’s something I would be very much for, something I might consider in the future.*  
(Manager D, 4 star hotel).

One of these managers conceded it was something the hotel was looking into for the future.

*I’d certainly be open to it in the future. There are over 90 foreign staff here, I’m sure some would gain from it, we could all learn something.*  
(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

However, one hotel manager’s views were very far removed from the general consensus in relation to providing assistance to foreign national employees. In his opinion, staff are happy to remain in their own groups, and it is not ‘celebrating’ diversity that motivates his foreign national workers, but more fundamental factors.

*I think it boils down to treating people fairly, paying them a fair wage for the work they do, providing a uniform and having good working conditions. It’s about treating people with respect, and we do that. Going beyond that is not something I think is necessary.*  
(Manager A, 5 star hotel).
4.2.5: Foreign National Employee Interaction with Irish Employees

All managers stated that they have observed no problems between Irish and foreign national employees while working together in the hotel. It was pointed out that there are not a lot of Irish people working in ‘background’ positions anymore, so this would restrict the level of interaction between Irish and foreign national workers.

*In the departments where the foreign national staff work, there aren’t many Irish. It is not an area we tend to get a lot of Irish employees.*  
(Manager A, 5 star hotel).

However, where they are required to work together, no problems were reported.

*We have a very good rapport, very good mix in the team. It’s something we encourage.*  
(Manager B, 4 star hotel).

As one hotel manager put it, working alongside foreign national employees is not a new phenomenon:

*It’s not like we’ve been hit by a big thunderbolt. People go on holidays all the time and integrate together and it’s no big deal. I haven’t come across anything. Our staff all mix, they all live in the locality.*  
(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

4.2.6: Equal Opportunities for Foreign National Employees

The majority of hotel managers interviewed stated their willingness to promote foreign national employees.

*Out of eight departments, certainly nearly half of the foreign national employees would be in supervisory or management positions.*  
(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

In the hotels researched, the majority of foreign national employees currently in supervisory or management positions entered the hotel at a more basic level, and progressed within the company, but were not initially hired as a supervisor/manager.
There would be quite a few foreign national employees in a supervisory position, also people who would have come in at a basic level and have moved up to supervisory positions, some even to management positions.

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).

Foreign national employees in supervisory or management positions come from a variety of countries, including the United Kingdom, South Africa, Holland, Eastern Europe, France and Hungary. While there are no foreign national employees in a general or assistant manager position, supervisory roles named include Food and Beverage supervisor and Restaurant supervisor. One manager made it clear that there are opportunities available to whoever wants to avail of them, and outlined the requirements for promotion.

*There is room for promotion, absolutely. Race, creed or colour is not an issue: it’s your ability, your loyalty to the company, and your interest in the job.*

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

The same hotel is actively involved with Fáilte Ireland and other agencies, which monitor their training. This was the only hotel manager to mention affiliation with any organisation regarding employee training and promotion.

*We are involved in awards with Fáilte Ireland which monitors our training. We are involved also in another level of that called Best Practice, and we’re also a Quality Employer. That monitors your willingness to promote from within and your willingness to train your people.*

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

One hotel manager recognised that many foreign national employees are highly qualified in other areas, but forced to seek low-skilled work abroad, and believes that every opportunity should be offered to all employees to reach their full potential.

*Some of the people coming from Eastern European countries, everybody under the EU umbrella now, are extremely highly qualified. It’s a bit of a shame that they don’t realise their potential.*

(Manager C, 5 star hotel).

Only one hotel manager had a negative opinion of foreign national employee promotion. In this hotel, all supervisors and managers are Irish. The manager outlined
how he had promoted two foreign national employees to customer-contact roles. After considerable training, one left the hotel. His opinion on promoting foreign national employees is now:

Unless the person was exceptional, we'd be slow to do it again.

(Manager A, 5 star hotel).

One manager, who was positive overall to the promotion of foreign national employees, raised the concern that some foreign national workers are here for the short term to earn money, and ultimately return home.

Staff come and go, we train them up in whatever course, and next thing they go home, it can be a bit frustrating.

(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

4.2.7: Advantages Associated with Employing Foreign National Workers

Many managers recognised that the hotel sector is no longer attractive to Irish employees, and that foreign national employees can successfully fill this employment gap.

We find that Irish people don’t want these positions for a number of reasons: firstly, they are more educated than the role requires, and secondly they know it’s not the best paid job in the world. I think there is also a status thing – Irish young people don’t want to be seen as a chambermaid.

(Manager A, 5 star hotel).

The benefits of employing foreign national workers, as detailed by the hotel managers interviewed, include:

- Ability to communicate with guests in their own language,

Different cultures, different methods, different ways – they can be positives. They are good with the foreign guests as well, as in languages with the guests, right through from check-in to check-out.

(Manager E, 5 star hotel).
Chapter 4, Primary Research Results

- Balance of races within the organisation, which was perceived as advantageous,
- Reliability,
- Good appearance,
- Hardworking,

Reliability is very good, their appearance, their hygiene is excellent. Also it’s good to have a mix of different nationalities.

(Manager D, 4 star hotel).

- Focused,

A lot of people that come here have a goal and tend to be very focused, and they want to move up in the organisation.

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

- Variety of experiences and ideas available to hotel management.

It’s good to see different groups of people who share different ideas, who’ve had different experiences, different backgrounds. I think the hotel industry is unique because its people have worked all over the world.

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).

All managers praised the work ethic of foreign national employees. This was something no manager could fault, and perceived to be a huge advantage.

Their work ethic is absolutely fantastic, their mentality, their attitude to provide good service, to do the right job is amazing.

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).

Only one manager singled out economic advantages.

I could not run the hotel without them, economically speaking. You can ask any hotel manager, they will say the same thing. They work hard and are very efficient.

(Manager A, 5 star hotel).

Many managers also considered the enhanced satisfaction of hotel guests an advantage.

Our foreign national employees help to satisfy a diverse customer base, and not only satisfy, but understand what their needs are.

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).
One manager who differed from this viewpoint explained that his clientele is mainly corporate, and not from Eastern Europe.

*Our clientele are mainly United States corporate and leisure, the U.K. corporate and leisure, and Irish corporate and leisure. We don’t have Polish, Chinese or Eastern European guests really, so I would have to say no.*

(Manager A, 5 star hotel).

### 4.2.8: Disadvantages Associated with Employing Foreign National Workers

A number of managers made reference to the fact that language barriers between different races extends beyond spoken English, but also pertains to non-verbal language and local colloquiums, and perceived this to be a negative associated with foreign national employees.

*Definitely there is a language barrier - we are still dealing with people with all different accents in Ireland. Also non-verbal communication, it takes a bit of time to get used to other people’s eccentricities.*

(Manager D, 4 star hotel).

*Over time we will get used to the various different ways people portray their emotions and feelings. If they’re under pressure or feeling stressed. You know to look at an Irish person whether they’re under pressure or not. Right now we are probably not as educated as we should be in terms of body language and pre-empting those kinds of issues. Somebody might come along and say ‘this guy seems to have one gear’, he might move at a steady pace all the time. But that’s just they way the individual is.*

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

*It’s not necessarily that they don’t understand the word but they don’t understand the connotations or local colloquiums if you like, or local ‘phraseology’. That wouldn’t be just from a manager’s point of view but also from a guest’s point of view.*

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

Managers made reference to the fact that foreign national employees tend to stick together, to be “a bit cliquey”
The foreign employees tend to stick to their own cultures and nationalities; it can be a bit 'clique-ish'. That would be a negative straight away, trying to break that. You'll break that so far, but at the end of the day, they come from the same place, they are going through the same things in Ireland that they find difficult – they have that common bond.

(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

However it was conceded that Irish employees can also form groups within the organisation.

Managers detailed how the Irish tourism industry can be quite localised, and employees often satisfy customers’ needs by providing local knowledge and perspectives. It was pointed out that it is difficult for foreign national employees to do this.

There are a lot of international hotels set up worldwide and if there isn’t some local feel or some local idea of what’s going on, they don’t always penetrate the market and achieve the success they need to. That is in the back of my mind, in particular.

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).

Knowing local knowledge is extremely important, from our point of view, and what our guests expect, going up to the desk and asking about local activities is just as important as checking in or checking out. Having somebody who is local, not just Irish – we would try and do that where possible.

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

One manager found the attitude of some of his hotel guests disappointing, and claimed employing foreign national employees can be a worry because of fears they will be subjected to negative treatment:

I’m a bit disappointed in some ways, because I had a letter recently from a customer who stayed in the hotel who didn’t quite have the Irish hospitality experience they were expecting. I think some of our customers think that it’s all thatched cottages and white-washed walls. It’s not like that; Ireland is changing dramatically. It’s only those companies who can keep up with it are the one’s that will survive.

(Manager C, 5 star hotel).

We have a chap, just taken on as night concierge, from South Africa. I hope he’ll be ok dealing with people at three o’ clock in the morning that has had a few pints. I hope they don’t taunt him, which worries me a little bit. I’m conscious of putting him in that situation.

(Manager C, 5 star hotel).
While all managers were able to point out negative aspects of employing foreign national workers, they were keen to stress that these disadvantages can be overcome, or that they are minor in comparison to the advantages gained.

*Other than some misunderstandings, I'd say employing foreign national workers is positive.*  
(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

*In the hotel game I think we just need to take the blinkers off, and understand that foreign national employees have an awful lot to contribute.*  
(Manager C, 5 star hotel).

**4.2.9: Employing Foreign Nationals - Current and Future**

**Management Challenges**

The primary research discovered that managing foreign national employees poses a challenge to managers of four and five star hotels in Cork, although few believed this challenge is significant, because they have adapted to the changed composition of their workforces.

*It is a challenge, it has been. But we have all adapted.*  
(Manager D, 4 star hotel).

The opinion of the managers interviewed is that the experiences they have gained in their previous employment, and through travelling with their job, has benefited them enormously.

*I have travelled and worked in a lot of countries, and been exposed to different races, and how to work with them before. I'd say most hotel managers work abroad and gain similar experience.*  
(Manager A, 5 star hotel).

*I think it reduces the challenge and it also gives a better understanding, a better empathy in terms of understanding your team. Not everybody is the same, but you expect the same standards from everybody. How they are motivated, how they are driven, can be slightly different.*  
(Manager B, 4 star hotel).
Two managers identified the fear of appearing racist as a specific challenge to managing racially diverse workgroups. One manager stated that he felt it was a challenge reprimanding staff, in that he could be accused of racism.

"Some cultures can be very headstrong, in the sense that if you correct them on certain things, they might get the impression you're being racist. They would say that, yet we would be correcting all nationalities at the time, Irish as well. It does arise sometimes and is something you'd be afraid of."

(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

Another manager echoed this view by outlining the need to be seen to be 'politically correct' in the organisation.

"Managers couldn't be so afraid of appearing racist that they cannot manage effectively".

(Manager A, 5 star hotel).

The only aspect to be mentioned by more than one manager as a perceived future challenge is the possible short-term nature of employing foreign national workers. The challenge stated pertains to the need to constantly train new employees.

"When foreign staff come and go it is a concern. It means we are constantly retraining."

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).

In one case, to alleviate this challenge, a hotel manager stated his hotel's policy of hiring spouses of current employees.

"We would have members of staff where they have decided to bring over their wives or their husbands and actually settle here. And then we employ the wife or the husband and, you know once one spouse is happy the other is in a sense, it keeps them all happy."

(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

Other perceived future challenges were varied. One manager specified the lack of people entering the hotel industry, and the lack of Irish people, as a significant present challenge, and one which may be evident in the future.

"One of the major problems we have in our industry at the moment is a shortage of people, and a shortage of Irish people."

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).
Another hotel manager outlined the need to keep the hotel service as localised as possible in the future, a challenge he contends that will keep foreign national employees away from the reception area:

*The reality is, if I was to be very honest, Irish hoteliers still like to keep a certain amount of Irish people in the front line, and in front of house areas. Knowing local knowledge is extremely important. Having somebody who is local, not just Irish – we would try and do that where possible.*

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

One manager was concerned future hotel guests will not be receptive to foreign national workers and the changes in the hotel industry.

*Some customers are more receptive than others to foreign nationals. Some complaints come as a result of it: I see it in some of the letters that come in, saying 'I couldn’t understand the staff'. That really upsets me, because I know that our staff have a good English knowledge, and that’s something that’s tagged on out of spite. I think it’s unfair, and it’s too easy, a throw away line.*

(Manager C, 5 star hotel).

The presence of diversity education in hotel management courses was considered to be advantageous in reducing any challenge to managing racially and culturally heterogeneous workforces, although the extent to which it exists was not widely known.

*I think everyone would learn from management education.*

(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

It was stated that there are also enormous benefits derived from work experience and on-the-job training.

*Within the hotel colleges, sending people out on placements, they are experiencing diversity there. When they come in and do an induction, or an orientation in a hotel, then that’s where they should be getting it from every employer, every hotelier. I think it’s absolutely essential.*

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).
Section 4.2.10: Support Services

The research determined that there are support services available for hotel managers.

*There is lots of support there, and to be fair it depends on how much you use them. There's lots of information out there - the bottom line is there's lots of support out there available if you want it.*

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

The majority of hotel managers reported using the services of support agencies, including Fáilte Ireland and the Irish Hospitality Institute. It was pointed out that these supports are used in a general sense without distinction by the hotel managers in terms of race. However, it was assessed that Fáilte Ireland training programmes are used mostly for foreign national employees.

*Fáilte Ireland are very supportive. They engage in a lot of teaching with foreign people as well as Irish people, bringing them through training classes, getting them ready for the workforce.*

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).

*For training, definitely, support is available, but in terms of differentiating between who you're training, no. It's a standard mode that they follow. I do know that a lot of Fáilte Ireland’s programs are filled with Eastern Europeans. Most of them actually, I don’t think they have a lot of Irish in them.*

(Manager D, 4 star hotel).

One hotel manager stated that diversity support was readily available to him through the hotel’s own diversity policies.

*We have our own diversity policy. We are not looking for grant aid, you know if anything, we would like to be mentioned for best practices and for our culture, the culture we’re trying to create here.*

(Manager C, 5 star hotel).
4.2.11: Foreign National Employees and the Fáilte Romhat

Half of the hotel managers interviewed are concerned that the traditional ‘Fáilte Romhat’ is becoming a thing of the past. Two of these managers believe hotel managers are to blame, for not attracting enough Irish people into the industry.

*I think in some ways it’s our own fault. Particularly within the hotel industry we haven’t attracted enough of our own population into the industry.*

(Manager B, 4 star hotel).

*It’s a concern, but it’s quite hard to get Irish staff to work unsociable hours. They don’t have to do it anymore, the way they did years ago. It’s our own fault.*

(Manager E, 5 star hotel).

This manager (Manager E, 5 star hotel) also declared that when he travels to Spain, for example, he likes to be greeted by Spanish people, and believes this is how his guests feel about coming to his hotel. Another manager pointed out the fact that hotel services are intangible, and fears dissatisfied guests spreading a bad reputation about the hotel. He believes that foreign national employees are not as ‘warm’ as Irish people, and therefore employs only Irish workers in reception positions.

*I am very much concerned with the traditional Irish welcome. Our guests cannot unwrap a room before they book it and examine it, so at every step I am conscious that we need to impress them and retain their custom. That’s why I have Irish employees in contact positions, for example, at reception. I believe the conversation element is very important, and unless the individual is exceptional, I wouldn’t have a foreign employee in these positions. I think the Eastern Europeans, by their history alone, are very cold people. Granted they work exceptionally hard, but they’re not very pleasant in dealing with hotel guests, well not as pleasant as our Irish staff anyway. If a guest is dissatisfied, you lose him and ten of his friends, that’s human nature, so I want to preserve the Irish feel to the hotel.*

(Manager A, 5 star hotel).

This view is in the extreme among those expressed by hotel managers.

The remaining three managers interviewed held the view that the traditional Irish welcome is different, but not gone. They stressed the fact that a ‘welcome’ is something any nationality can offer.
Chapter 4, Primary Research Results

An Irish welcome - what is it? If you had to make it a tangible product, it’s about a conversation, you’re smiling, it’s about body language – those things would make up an Irish welcome, and you don’t necessarily have to be Irish for that. You don’t have to have red hair and be wearing a tartan skirt.

(Manager C, 5 star hotel).

One manager expressed the view that hotel managers are responsible for assisting foreign national employees in delivering a welcome of the highest standard.

The reality is foreign national employees can give an Irish welcome just as well as anybody else. It’s down to the manager – regardless of where your staff are from, you teach them how to welcome, that’s the bottom line.

(Manager F, 4 star hotel).

It was agreed by these managers that the ‘Fáilte Romhat’ does not have to be delivered by an Irish person to be effective in welcoming hotel guests.

Once you get a warmth... the Irish welcome, yes it’s an intangible. It’s not just something that you have to have an Irish person to have it, it’s a sincerity. You can promote that with whoever is welcoming guests.

(Manager D, 4 star hotel).

4.3: Focus Groups with Foreign National Employees

This section reports the primary research findings from focus groups conducted with foreign national employees. These focus groups were conducted to ascertain foreign national employees’ opinions on working in Ireland, and any issues they have regarding employment.

4.3.1: Duration and Department Employed

The foreign national employees who participated in the focus groups for this research thesis are employed in their current hotel ranging from between three weeks to six years. The majority of these employees are employed in the accommodation department of the hotel. The table overleaf provides a comprehensive breakdown of this information.
### Table 4.2: Foreign National Employees - Duration and Department Employed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group 1</th>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Hotel Star Rating</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Duration Employed</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group 2</th>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Hotel Star Rating</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Duration Employed</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>10 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>Night Porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Day Porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant Duty Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 Star</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kitchen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.2: Motivation to Come to Ireland, and Expectations of Working In Ireland

There are three dominant factors motivating the foreign national employees to come to Ireland seeking employment.

1. to earn money,
2. to avail of better employment opportunities,
3. to learn English.

The majority of the foreign national employees who participated in the focus groups stated these reasons as prevailing factors in their decision to come to Ireland.

_I wanted better opportunities, to get a good job and learn English._

(Focus group 1, participant B).

This employee also cited curiosity as a factor in her decision to come to Ireland, stemming from the fact that a large number of people from her home country Latvia were travelling to Ireland in search of work.

_Many people were going to Ireland; I wanted to see what it was like._

(Focus group 1, participant B).

The majority of the other participants in both focus groups reported the same reasons for leaving their home country and working in Ireland.

_I want to learn English and earn money, to get experience and a new level in my life._

(Focus group 2, participant A).

Only one foreign national employee had been offered the chance to move to Ireland by his employer. He had been employed in the hotel’s sister hotel in the United Kingdom.

_I was offered this job; it was a promotion for me._

(Focus group 1, participant A).
The employee from New Zealand had entirely different reasons for coming to work in Ireland.

*I knew that Ireland was meant to be a fun, friendly place, and I wanted to experience that.*

(Focus group 2, participant H).

It was probed in the focus groups whether the motivation to come to Ireland to work stemmed from a lack of education and thus opportunities in the foreign national employees’ home countries. The majority of the foreign national employees have no qualifications from their home country. They came to Ireland as soon as they had finished secondary-level education.

*I left Poland straight after school.*

(Focus group 1, participant C).

There were only two foreign national employees who reported obtaining qualifications in their home country. Both are from Poland. One employee studied hospitality management, and the work he is doing is related to his studies. However, one employee is qualified in an area she doesn’t use.

*I finished a course in nutritional science completely, but I don’t use it. I don’t think it would be recognised in Ireland. Anyway I make more money here in the hotel than I probably would using the degree in Poland.*

(Focus group 2, participant G).

Foreign national employees were asked about their initial expectations of Ireland before coming here to work, and whether these expectations had been met. The responses varied, but there was one common feature – many foreign national employees did not know what to expect from working in Ireland, but had heard Ireland offered opportunities.

*I didn’t know what to expect. It was meant to be a nice place to live and work so I decided to come.*

(Focus group 1, participant D).
One employee stated she had low expectations of Ireland, and never intended to stay. However, the opportunities she found here led her to stay in Ireland and she has been here for the past five years.

*When I came I had really low expectations. I was happy to come and just get something, to save some money and go back home. But it happened for me, I got a better job and my English got better and I see better opportunities. That's why I stayed.*

(Focus group 2, participant F).

### 4.3.3: Spoken English Ability

The research discovered that in both focus groups there were employees whose standard of English was very basic, with other members of the focus groups translating for them. In the first focus group, one woman who was with the hotel for three weeks needed assistance in answering questions. In the second focus group, two employees who had been with the hotel for two months also needed support to answer focus group questions.

Many of the employees in the focus groups had worked in other hotels before being employed in the hotels used for this research. The majority of employees did not have a good standard of English when they first took up employment in Ireland.

*I had no English. I was shown my work and I just got on with it. Then there were only three Polish people in the hotel. The way we learned English was at work, working with Irish people, and I kept a dictionary in my bag.*

(Focus group 2, participant A).

*My English was very bad, but I am here now five years, it is improved.*

(Focus group 2, participant B).

Besides the employee from New Zealand, only two other foreign national employees had a good standard of English when taking up employment in an Irish hotel.

*I studied English, and have spoken it for years, so it wasn't something that was going to hold me back.*

(Focus group 2, participant E).
Chapter 4, Primary Research Results

I worked in a hotel in the U.K., so I had a good level of English. (Focus group 1, participant A).

To assess the hotels in Cork regarding the provision of English lessons to new foreign national employees, the individuals with a poor standard of English were questioned specifically on whether they had been offered English lessons. Their colleagues answered for them. None of the foreign national employees had been offered English classes as yet.

It is not a problem you know, the manager and supervisor speak very slowly and clearly to us, it is ok. And we can tell things to her if she needs us to, it is not a problem. (Focus group 1, participant D).

They work in accommodation. We tell them what to do if they don’t understand. (Focus Group 2, participant A).

One foreign national employee pointed out how the system works in his particular hotel.

The way it works is that if she goes to management and says she wants to learn English, they will give her money towards English lessons. (Focus group 1, participant A).

A further foreign national employee within the same focus group believes it is not up to the hotel but the individual to seek out ways to improve their own standard of English.

It is up to the individual, there are lots of classes in the city if you want to learn. (Focus group 1, participant B).

The majority of foreign national employees who participated in the focus groups stated that Irish accents and colloquialisms posed no real problem for them.

Some accents are different, but you just need time to get used to them. (Focus group 1, participant A).

For employees in the accommodation departments in the hotels used for research, this was not perceived as a problem, because their interaction with hotel guests is limited.
Chapter 4, Primary Research Results

We wouldn’t work with guests that often, they would just say ‘can you come back later’ when we go into the room. It is not a problem for us.

(Focus group 1, participant D).

Only two foreign national employees reported a problem communicating with hotel guests because of accents or colloquialisms.

We were taught British English, it’s so proper: you can understand every single word. I had problems with some words here.

(Focus group 2, participant G).

I had a headache talking to Irish people at first; I had to try to figure out every word. Sometimes I didn’t know what people were asking me. Then I would ask them again and they would start talking louder, which they think will make you understand them better.

(Focus group 2, participant F).

4.3.4: Relationship with Irish Co-Workers

The majority of foreign national employees stated they have experienced no problems working with Irish co-workers.

It is fine. I have no problem. I think it is the person, not the race that you see, and I work as part of a team with Irish people, we have no problem.

(Focus group 2, participant A).

There are two Irish people who work with us in housekeeping. They are nice and help us when we need it.

(Focus group 1, participant C).

However, a number of foreign national employees expressed the view that they have to work harder than their Irish colleagues. They attributed many reasons for this; that the Irish are not afraid to lose their jobs, or that the changed workplace is new to Irish people, who may not know how to respond.

Working with Irish people is fine I guess but you have to work harder.

(Focus group 1, participant B).
I find some Irish people half-hearted in their work. They say they cannot understand my English, but I think that is part of their ego. I have met some people who look at me and think I am lucky to work here. In other countries, that would not be the case, would not be tolerated, but Irish people are not used to so many foreign people at work. It is new for them.

(Focus group 2, participant E).

Sometimes they say ‘I can’t do that’ or ‘I don’t know how that works’. Then the foreign worker has to do it, but you think they must know how to do it. Irish people are not afraid to lose their job, they think they can easily get another one.

(Focus group 1, participant A).

It’s easier for the Irish people to say “I didn’t learn that in college yet”, “I don’t know how to do it”, “I wasn’t told”. It’s an attitude. For Polish you just go and do it, you try it. I think that attitude comes with the fact that the Irish just don’t have to. They don’t really have to make that effort.

(Focus group 2, participant G).

One employee, who has no problem working with Irish employees, explained that when she first started in the hotel, she did have problems stemming from her own lack of confidence and the differences in culture.

I had problems at the start. My English wasn’t great. Sometimes they couldn’t understand me or I couldn’t understand them. Sometimes somebody was asking me to do something and I was too slow, I was afraid maybe I wasn’t up to standard, I’m annoying somebody. As time went by I understood the language and the culture more, their humour, or sometimes the way the Irish say something – they don’t mean it or it was a joke.

(Focus group 2, participant F).

4.3.5: Racism experienced by Foreign National Employees

When questioned, every employee has either experienced racist behaviour personally or had witnessed or heard about racist behaviour towards one of their co-workers.

Some people make you feel like you are on the floor, or won’t speak to you. I have been told to get back to Poland.

(Focus group 2, participant D).

I feel it on the reception desk. Sometimes a guest will come up to reception and automatically turn to a white person, or ask for an Irish person, even though I am senior.

(Focus group 2, participant E).
It is not just in face-to-face contact that foreign national employees have experienced racism, but also in carrying out their duties, such as at reception or in the accommodation department.

*In housekeeping we had a guest and he wrote on the bed sheets 'go back to Poland.*

(Focus Group 1, participant C).

*I had people on the phone, hearing my accent; I used a wrong tense or something. A woman hung up, but before she hung up she gave out about foreigners. She refused to speak to me, although I had all the information she needed. I was polite, that was racist.*

(Focus group 2, participant G).

One employee attributed racist behaviour to the older generation in Ireland. He stated that the younger Irish people he works with or has encountered as guests show an interest in where he is from. However, he states that the older generation need to remember that foreign national employees make a valuable contribution to Ireland.

*Sometimes people ask to speak to an Irish person instead. It is insulting because I can speak English and am able to take care of them. I think the older generation of Irish people have a bad opinion of foreign workers, but they should remember we are contributing to the gross domestic product, we are paying taxes. The younger Irish people are ok; they are very interested in Eastern Europe. They ask me, should I go to Poland, is it a nice place, what would be good to see and do there.*

(Focus group 1, participant A).

One employee outlined her opinion that Irish people are afraid for their jobs, but believes this is a poor excuse for any negative behaviour.

*They complain that we are taking their jobs, but why don't they work this hard? We give maybe 50% more.*

(Focus group 2, participant F).

The foreign national employees stated that when they reported racist behaviour or comments to managers, the hotel guests were asked to leave the premises, but in many cases the guest had already checked out.

*We told our manager but the guest had checked out.*

(Focus group 1, participant C).

*In our hotel the managers stand up for you. When it happened to me that guy was asked to leave.*

(Focus group 2, participant F).
The attitude of many of the foreign national employees on how to deal with racism is to just ignore it.

*When people ask to speak to an Irish person I say “yes that’s fine”, I don’t care to be honest. It’s one person less for me to deal with. That’s my attitude now.*

(Focus group 2, participant G).

*Yes sometimes you are asked for an Irish person, but the sooner you get over that and just get the Irish person and let them deal with it, the better. You can’t worry about it.*

(Focus group 1, participant B).

One employee, from New Zealand, believes experiencing negative comments and behaviour is part of working in the services sector.

*I think that’s just part of the services sector, part of the job. In the hotel industry you have to deal with idiots and also nice people, but you meet all kinds of personalities.*

(Focus group 2, participant H).

### 4.3.6: Integration Assistance

A further area of assessment in the working experiences of foreign national employees in Ireland is the efforts their hotel managers have made to integrate them into the organisation. Elements of their induction process were deemed important, as this can make working life easier for foreign national employees. Efforts by hotel managers to assist foreign national employees include the following:

- Assistance in sorting foreign national employee’s taxes.
- Signs in the hotel in both English and Polish.
- Staff outings and get-togethers.

*They help you with taxes. Also there is double signage in this hotel; things are written in English and Polish. They also have barbecues where you get to meet the other staff.*

(Focus group 1, participant A).

- Celebrating different nationalities in the staff canteen.
They also have days when they have only Polish or Italian food in the canteen, or other nationalities.

(Focus group 1, participant B).

- English lessons.

We get classes in English, and we have Polish days where we eat Polish food in the canteen, or French days.

(Focus group 2, participant G).

- Assistance opening bank accounts.

My hotel doesn’t want to be giving cheques every week, so they told us how to do things. If you said to them I don’t know how to do it, they showed you the way to the bank.

(Focus group 2, participant G).

However, some foreign national employees were unaware of such initiatives. Regarding the celebration of different nationalities in the staff canteen, one Polish staff member had never heard of it happening.

When was this Polish day? I never heard of it!

(Focus group 1, participant C).

Similarly, the efforts of hotel managers in assisting foreign national employees to sort out taxes and bank accounts was seen as a necessity from the hotel’s perspective, rather than anything done to assist foreign national employees when commencing employment.

They take us to the bank, so what? They have to sort out the banks so they can pay us. It is better than when I started, but they have no choice, they have to help us so we can work.

(Focus group 2, participant A).

A further employee expands on this viewpoint, stating that

So what if the rest of the staff tastes Polish food, that does not mean I will get a promotion or have a better day at work. I think the managers need to understand what it is like to be so far from your home and trying to get ahead.

(Focus group 2, participant G).
4.3.7: Foreign National Employee Concerns

One area of concern for the focus group participants is the ability to gain a promotion. Some foreign national employees who participated in the focus groups believed they are not treated equally in the organisation. Even those who have progressed in their hotels stated that they felt they had to work harder than their Irish counterparts to gain a promotion.

*It was harder to get a promotion, because you have to show more than an Irish person. I wasn’t afraid of any work but maybe an Irish person wouldn’t have to go as far.*

(Focus group 2, participant F).

*I do not think things are equal. You see Polish people working very hard with lots of experience and an Irish person with only one year experience gets to be supervisor. It isn’t fair.*

(Focus group 1, participant B).

One employee stated that he had gone for a promotion and had not been successful. The position went to an Irish person, but he has been given no reason or feedback as to why he was not promoted.

*I do not think it was because I am Polish, but I don’t know. I wish they would tell me why. Perhaps I am not good enough, but they should tell me so I can improve my skills.*

(Focus group 1, participant A).

Others do not believe there is any basis for the argument that they have to work harder than Irish employees, and believe it is up to the individual to avail of the opportunities.

*I think it depends on the person. No one offered me a promotion; I applied to move from one place to another. It happens that way with everybody, if you’re Irish or Polish.*

(Focus group 2, participant G).

*I have opportunities here. Yes it is hard work, and not always easy, but it would not be the same for me at home, I would not have these chances.*

(Focus group 2, participant A).

One employee in each focus group demonstrated insight into why managers may promote Irish employees over foreign national employees.
I think not having English would stop some people from getting promoted. If I thought it was anything other than that I wouldn’t still work here. I also think the managers don’t expect foreign people to stay very long, so they don’t promote them.

(Focus group 1, participant A).

I thought I could work hard and get a promotion, but that is slim. This is because there is always the chance you might not stay, the visa may become changed or more difficult, and the bosses know this.

(Focus group 2, participant E).

A number of employees feel bound by their individual situations to stay in Ireland. One employee sends money home to support her family in Poland.

I would have liked to go to college some day but I cannot do that. My family relies on my wages; I send money home every week, so my money cannot go down.

(Focus group 2, participant F).

An Indian employee feels he is constricted by his visa.

I cannot come and go because my visa is so complicated. It’s not that I’m tied to this place, but it is such a headache to sort out all my documentation to work somewhere else, why would anyone bother to take me on? So I work hard and am glad to have a job, but sometimes I would like to have more options.

(Focus group 2, participant E).

A further employee stated that she will never go home because of the situation in her home country, Latvia. However, she will not necessarily stay in Ireland.

I think I will stay here. I will never go back to Latvia. The government are very corrupt. I would like to live in New Zealand eventually. Things are good here, obviously they could be better, but it is not bad.

(Focus group 1, participant B).
4.3.8: Foreign National Employees’ Perceptions of their Future in Ireland

While some employees felt bound to remain in Ireland, the majority of foreign national employees want to stay in Ireland for the foreseeable future. They stated that they would only consider going home if things improved in their home country.

*I would like to go back to Poland one day, my family is there, but until things get better there I will stay.*

(Focus group 1, participant C).

*I get my money. I work hard, but I am motivated that I can make more of myself and my career, and that if something doesn’t suit me, I can change it. At the moment I wouldn’t get that in Poland. Maybe in a few years I will go back, if things change.*

(Focus group 2, participant G).

Regarding the future of their employment and what they would like managers to do in order to assist them further, foreign national employees offered a variety of things they would like to see change in their hotel.

- Employees would like to see better manners from managers

  *They could say please and thank you a bit more. And not point with their finger when they want you to do something.*

  (Focus group 1, participant A).

- Employees would like greater equality at work.

  *I would prefer if I had the same opportunities as Irish people. I feel that I don’t, that it is easier for Irish people.*

  (Focus group 1, participant B).

  *If you gave me a choice to work with Irish or Polish, I would take Polish no problem. They work harder; they have no ego, just get on with the work. It is hard to take when Irish people with no qualifications get better jobs.*

  (Focus group 2, participant E).

- Foreign national employees would like their managers to show a greater understanding of their culture and situation.

  *Understanding the culture of others is very important, and maybe to put yourself in the place of others, and see it from their point of view. Being so far away from home to earn a good wage and get a good job is difficult.*

  (Focus group 2, participant A).
Managers need to understand where we come from; you know our culture, not just the food we eat. And understand that it is difficult to make friends and work every hour, which some of us have to do because we send money home every week. I don’t see an end to that.

(Focus group 2, participant F).

4.4: Focus Groups with Irish Employees

In this section the primary research results from focus groups conducted with Irish employees are outlined. Assessing Irish employees’ experiences of working with foreign national employees and their opinion on the changing workforce in four and five star hotels in Cork were the main objectives.

The Irish employees who participated in the primary research focus groups have worked with foreign national employees ranging from six months to four years. Just over half of the Irish employees are employed in the hotel bar. Full information is presented in the table overleaf.
Many of the employees reported a sense that foreign national employees have always been a feature of Irish working life.

*I have always worked with foreign people, even when I worked in Dublin in a bar, they were always there.*

(Focus group 1, participant B).
4.4.1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Working with Foreign National Employees

All Irish employees who participated in the focus groups reported that foreign national employees are very hard working. It was a common response when asked what contribution they bring to the organisation. The work ethic of foreign national employees was applauded by every Irish participant in the hotels used for research.

*It's great to see so many foreign people who are genuinely working hard to get a good job and get on with it. You never have to ask them to do anything; they're just always working.*

(Focus group 2, participant B).

*They're fine to work with, they work really hard*

(Focus Group 2, participant C).

*I think they work very hard, you never have to ask them to do anything; they're never standing around with their arms crossed.*

(Focus Group 1, participant B).

One Irish employee highlighted a further advantage that foreign national employees bring to the organisation.

*There's a guy in the kitchen from France. He's done loads for the hotel. He does wine tasting, food tasting, he's been in loads of magazine write-ups. That's his culture, and he's bringing that here, which is really great.*

(Focus group 1, participant F).

The negative aspects of working with foreign national employees relate to problems with the spoken English of their foreign national colleagues in the early stages of employment. It was felt, in the majority of cases, that the standard of English is not always sufficient at the beginning of employment. When that occurs it puts pressure on the Irish employee.
In the bar I definitely feel like a babysitter. You have to show them everything, because their English wouldn’t be good enough to just tell them. That’s just at the start though, obviously they get better at things.

(Focus group 1, participant B).

The effects of a low standard of spoken English on Irish employees was then outlined, and includes added pressure at work and the Irish employee taking on the role of trainer.

I have worked with people whose English wasn’t that good. That is difficult to work with at times. It puts you under pressure.

(Focus group 2, participant D).

I don’t think it’s fair that sometimes you nearly become a trainer, instead of just getting on with your own work. But it’s the way the world has gone. I presume if I went to work in France or somewhere, it’d be the same for me.

(Focus group 1, participant F).

However, those who complained conceded things had improved.

To be fair most of them have good English now.

(Focus Group 2, participant D).

One employee disputed the fact that the standard of English might be poor for foreign national employees, suggesting they are able to speak the language when necessary.

I work in admin and I know. They have fantastic English. If I make a single mistake in the wages, they’re up to the office going on about their entitlements. An Irish person wouldn’t know half of their rights. The Polish here know every benefit they’re entitled to such as rent allowance, and they’re well able to fight for it if they have to, so don’t think they have bad English.

(Focus group 1, participant A).

A further area of concern in the working environment was highlighted by two focus group participants; that is the tendency for foreign national workers to remain in the background when it comes to customer service.

They step back when it comes to customer service and helping customers with problems, but I guess that could be because they’re not that confident at speaking English.

(Focus group 1, participant B).
Some problems were outlined regarding the general relationship between Irish and foreign national employees. One employee complained about what she perceives to be foreign national employees' deliberate lack of interaction with Irish people.

_They seem to make little effort to speak English to us. Maybe they're sick of having to speak it, but they work with you and are quiet all day, then they meet their friends, and speak in a language that you can't understand. That's really annoying._

(Focus group 1, participant D).

She later reiterated this, and believes it is just down to rudeness. She was however the only participant to make this complaint, which prompted other Irish employees in the focus group to point she was being unfair.

_Some of them don't even say hello in the corridor, let alone when you work together. That's not a language thing, everyone knows the word for hello. It seems so ignorant. Even if I go to Spain on a holiday, I'd make an effort to say Ola. Some of them are just rude._

(Focus group 1, participant D).

There were further negative perceptions evident about the behaviour of foreign national employees.

_The accommodation staff here, at the first break, pile all the free fruit and muffins from the canteen into their lockers to eat later. I was thinking I'd do that too if I was in their position, but we're not loaded, we have mortgages and kids to feed and we don't do that. I think that's really selfish._

(Focus group 1, participant E).

_The foreign national workers stick together, they don't mix. It gets a bit annoying._

(Focus group 2, participant A).

On hearing some of the negative attitudes being put across, one employee was keen to point out the need to avoid stereotyping foreign national employees.

_I think there's bad feeling seeping into us, because you read such negative reports in the newspapers about Polish people. Then you go into work and they don't even speak to you. But I think that you can't generalise. I know some lovely Polish and Chinese people, they're really friendly. I think it depends on the person._

(Focus group 1, participant F).
The foreign national employees’ opinion that Irish workers relax and leave the hard work to foreign workers was expressed to the Irish staff. A number of employees agreed that this happens.

I’d agree with that. I hate to say it, but we do tend to relax.

(Focus group 1, participant A).

However, one employee, although agreeing that it does occur, insisted that it has nothing to do with the race of the individual, but the fact that they are new. Once he had made this point, the other participant in the focus group agreed.

That does happen. But I wouldn’t say it’s because of the fact that they’re not Irish. It’s with any new employee; you do it to the new person because you can get away with it. It has nothing to do with the fact that they’re not Irish.

(Focus group 2, participant A).

Just one employee contested the tendency for the Irish to leave less desirable tasks to foreign national employees.

We ring down to maintenance every day and ask them to bring up the hoover. A Lithuanian man brings it up. We hoover our own area but he always wants to do it, I don’t know why. It’s not like we are asking them to do our work.

(Focus group 1, participant D).

Another employee contended it was just the result of misunderstood body language.

I think they think they have to be working all the time, and they see us not being so stressed about it, and take it up the wrong way.

(Focus group 1, participant C).

Participants demonstrated empathy for foreign national workers, and their observed difficulties at work in Ireland.

I’d say they’d never slacken off, they’d be afraid to lose their jobs, which is really sad.

(Focus group 2, participant D).

Many acknowledged that one cannot generalise, that it depends on the individual.

Some are rude, others are really nice. They all work really hard and help out, and I don’t begrudge them a better life.

(Focus group 1, participant D).
The one employee who was overtly negative throughout the focus group would have concerns for the future, while wishing the foreign national workers well.

In a way I feel sorry for foreign people working here, and I wish them well, they’re fantastic workers, but I also really believe there needs to be a cap put on the numbers allowed in. Is our economy that good? I’m a bit worried about the future, about my kids getting jobs.

(Focus group 1, participant A).

4.4.2: Irish Employee Attitudes towards further Immigration

Irish employees were asked the question posed in an Irish Times survey published in 2006: “Should Ireland allow more international workers to come here” (Irish Times/TNS MRBI survey 2006 cited in Brennock 2006:5). The results of that survey showed that 41% of Irish people felt that no more foreign national employees should be allowed enter Ireland. This question was put to the Irish hotel employees to gain insight into their concerns, if any, on future employment prospects. The vast majority of respondents did not think there needs to be a decrease in the number of foreign national employees entering Ireland. The focus group participants who had no problem with the amount of foreign national workers in Ireland, and the prospect of more entering, appeared unconcerned about their own future employment prospects in the face of an enlarged work pool.

It doesn’t bother me. I don’t want to work here for the rest of my life, it’s just to get me through college.

(Focus group 2, participant A).

I’d say yes to more foreign national employees coming in. I don’t see anything wrong with it. The Irish were welcomed all over the world. Maybe it’s just the way the world is going, but I don’t think it’s necessarily a bad thing.

(Focus group 1, participant B).

One employee highlighted the current skills shortages in the hotel industry.

I think it’s necessary because you just can’t get Irish people to do certain jobs, spa attendant or accommodation work. Foreigners are the only people who apply for those jobs, and we need someone to do it.

(Focus group 1, participant C).
However, two employees demonstrated an element of concern for future employment. While not stating that foreign national employee numbers should be reduced, they outlined a concern for the future.

*It’s not just housekeeping they are in anymore, they are getting educated and working very hard in their jobs. I think Irish people should wake up a bit.*

(Focus group 2, participant B).

*I’d be slightly concerned about the future. Fair enough they do the low skilled jobs now, but they won’t forever. I’m going to college with Polish and Chinese people. If they are going to work for less than us, and can do the same jobs, you’d wonder where we will be in ten years.*

(Focus group 1, participant D).

### 4.4.3: Treatment of Foreign National Employees

The majority of Irish employees believe that foreign national employees are treated well by hotel customers, and have never witnessed any racist behaviour. They also said they would be quick to report it to management if it did occur.

*I’ve never seen any racism but if I did come across it, I’d tell a manager straight away.*

(Focus group 2, participant F).

Just one employee reported observing racism towards foreign national employees.

*I have seen a Polish colleague suffering racist abuse. We asked the customer to leave.*

(Focus group 2, participant B).

Irish employees who participated in the focus groups differ in opinion on whether or not future progression for foreign national employees within the hotel necessitates that they work harder than their Irish colleagues. Each focus group was split almost in half when it came to this issue. Irish employees who agreed they must work harder cited a number of reasons:

*It would make sense if they wanted a promotion to the reception desk, then they obviously have to work harder because they need English, and it’s not their first language.*

(Focus group 2, participant C).
Chapter 4, Primary Research Results

I think if you asked any business owner they might not admit it in case you thought they were racist, but they’d want to keep their company predominantly Irish. I would anyway

(Focus group 1, participant D).

One of the things we have to remember is that the majority of these people are going to go home in a few years anyway. A lot of them are here for the money and that’s it. So why would you promote them if they’re just going to leave?

(Focus group 1, participant F).

However, there was disagreement that foreign national employees need to work harder to gain a promotion among half the participants of each focus group.

I don’t think that’s true. When I worked in a well known traditional Irish pub in Dublin, Chinese people collected glasses for us. I was up there last weekend and all the staff were Chinese. The guys who had collected glasses were serving pints of Guinness, and one of them was the night manager.

(Focus group 1, participant B).

I wouldn’t say that’s true from my own experience.

(Focus group 2, participant A).

One employee had a different viewpoint as to why he disagreed with the idea that foreign national employees have to work harder to earn a promotion in the future.

I’d say it’s probably cheaper to promote foreign workers. Irish people would want their yearly pay rise, but you get the impression that foreign people wouldn’t want to jeopardise their job.

(Focus group 2, participant F).

The majority of Irish employees who participated in the focus groups were unable to say whether or not foreign national employees are exploited in Ireland. They felt unable to tell if exploitation was an issue, and believed it differs with each employee’s situation.

You hear about workers working 16 hour days and getting a pittance for it. Then you hear that they are far better off here than back in Eastern Europe. I suppose only they can answer that question.

(Focus group 2, participant A).

A minority of Irish employee participants believed that foreign national employees are exploited.
For the work they do, they should be earning more. I heard on the radio about Brazilians in Gort. They stand in the main square every day and wait to be picked up by farmers and builders, who give them a day's work. There were so many of them that one guy asked them to name their best price. They did a day's work for €40 just to be working. They have a manager there, who said they shouldn't sell themselves short. I guess you have to ask, does anyone monitor things.

(Focus group 1, participant F).

Also, a minority believed that they are not exploited, because Ireland offers greater opportunities than foreign national employees could avail of at home.

They wouldn't earn this much at home, and lots of them are able to go home after a few years with enough money to buy a house. It was the same for the Irish years ago.

(Focus group 2, participant F).

Minimum wage to us is a fortune to them.

(Focus group 1, participant D).

4.5: Interview with Minister Micheál Martin T.D.

This section details the findings from the interview with former Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Micheál Martin T.D. This interview was conducted to ascertain a government minister's opinion and insight into the increasing racial and cultural heterogeneity in the Irish workplace.

4.5.1: The Benefits and Problems of Employing Foreign National Workers

Minister Martin T.D. outlined the benefits as perceived by government that foreign national employees continue to bring to the Irish workforce.

I hear a very positive picture from employers regarding foreign national workers, in terms of hard work, good quality workers, and commitment.

He outlined that in a number of cases, foreign national employment is necessary to respond to skill shortages in certain industries.
In many cases, there is a real skills shortage in certain areas, and the need exists to recruit from abroad. One challenge is to upskill the workforce, in terms of training at work, an initiative which FAS is involved in.

The Minister was able to name Dell and Google as companies who have demonstrated satisfaction in the experiences of employing foreign national workers.

I spoke to representatives from Dell recently who employ one Eastern European worker for every Irish employee. They have found the Irish workforce very accommodating, and have found employing foreign national workers a very positive experience. Human resources is important here, and the HR function in multinational companies tends to be very strong; U.S. companies are typically advanced in this area. Google, for example, have 40 different nationalities at work for them, and find it a very creative experience.

Furthermore, Minister Martin T.D. believes that Ireland is becoming progressively more multicultural, and that foreign nationals have the ability to integrate well into local communities.

Ireland is becoming increasingly multicultural. Galway has a high Brazilian population, and the community loves them, they are integrating well with local communities.

The minister believes difficulties that may arise related to employing foreign national workers would pertain to communication problems regarding health and safety issues.

Minister Martin T.D. outlined that the provision of multilingual information booklets could alleviate any communication concerns.

Health and safety obligations in organisations might provide a challenge, in terms of a communication challenge, but leaflets in the native language of foreign workers can help.

Minister Martin T.D. also praised the FÁS Know Before You Go initiative for providing information to foreign national employees.

Regarding the problems experienced by workers employed by ZRE Katowice at the EBS plant in Moneypoint and other examples of ill-treatment, the Minister believes more care is needed to safeguard foreign national employees’ rights.

I believe more vigilance is needed to ensure workers are receiving their entitlements in full.
4.5.2: Foreign National Employees and a Management Challenge

Minister Martin T.D. does not believe that the increased number of foreign national employees in Ireland should pose a challenge to organisational management. At the time of the interview his department had not been approached by any management organisations seeking assistance with how to manage diverse workforces.

*It is important to bear in mind that Ireland is the most globalised country in the world and has been for the last three years. We have a high degree of interaction in terms of business and society. And further to that we have long been an export nation with a necessity to mix well.*

Minister Martin T.D. believes the future of Ireland entails an increased number of foreign national employees, as long as the opportunities are here for them. He contends that as a nation, our organisations are equipped to deal with increased numbers.

*Different pull factors globally suggest an increase in migration to Ireland. The question is, if the opportunities here dry up, will migration continue? Foreign national workers from all over the world are settling in to Irish society, bringing over their families, telling friends about the opportunities available in Ireland, so I think the present number of about 150,000 will increase.*

4.6: Interview with Adrian Gregan

In this section the primary research findings from the author’s interview with Adrian Gregan are detailed. An interview was conducted with Mr. Adrian Gregan to gain the insight of an industry professional. Mr. Gregan is a former council member of the Irish Hospitality Institute, and has been involved in hospitality management and education for many years. He is directly involved in the education of current and future hotel employees and managers, and his insight is considered important in answering the research question.
4.6.1: The Benefits and Problems of Employing Foreign National Workers

Mr. Gregan believes that foreign national employees make a very significant, positive and beneficial contribution to the Irish Hospitality sector.

*The foreign national workers generally have brought both professionalism and a work ethic. The job pays well, they're prepared to do it, they'll do it well, and they have pride in the skill of that profession.*

Mr. Gregan described his experiences with a foreign national employee of CIE on a train to Dublin, outlining the pride and excellent work ethic of the foreign worker he encountered.

*Absolute pride, the uniform was immaculate, his presentation was immaculate, and his dealing with people on that train was superb, all of the pleasantries, he's doing an inspectors job and yet he had time to say to everybody 'Good morning', comment on the weather.*

Mr. Gregan acknowledged that the hospitality sector is not as attractive to Irish employees. In this case, there is a greater need to employ foreign national employees.

*In my opinion, as tourism and service industries are expanding, as a country we cannot meet the need with the kind of people that are available. There tends to be in the Irish psyche 'ah sure anybody can do tourism', 'anybody can wait tables', and actually it is very difficult.*

Mr. Gregan believes that negative aspects to employing foreign national employees include the lack of local knowledge, and cultural differences such as the lack of eye contact or casual conversation when delivering a service.

*One disadvantage is that foreign national employees don't necessarily have the local knowledge. Also, eye-contact or chat is not part of the ethos of those countries.*

However, Mr. Gregan did not attribute the lack of local knowledge solely to foreign national employees. He outlined that one does not have to be a foreign national to lack local knowledge about a particular place.

*You talk about somebody from Eastern Europe being a foreigner in Killarney; somebody from Belfast or Dublin can actually be considered a foreigner as well.*
4.6.2: Foreign National Employees and a Management Challenge

On the issue of a management challenge posed by foreign national employees, Mr. Gregan expressed the opinion that managers of foreign national employees are largely positive and view them as a:

*solution to a problem: they wouldn’t be able to operate if they didn’t have the foreign national workers.*

Mr. Gregan outlined the need for training and induction within Irish hotels. He believes more care is needed by hotel general managers to ensure the commitment to training foreign national workers is being adhered to.

*Managers may think the training systems are in place, they think they are being applied, but I would say lower level managers are not implementing these training systems.*

Mr. Gregan attributed this to lack of experience and the necessary skills of young hotel managers. On the issue of training, he outlined the need to look beyond training in purely cost terms, and start to assess it in the form of benefits gained.

Regarding any concern over the erosion of the Irish Fáilte Romhat, Mr. Gregan explained that the increased number of foreign national employees in Irish hotels means there is a resulting:

*difficulty with the original service promise.*

He argued that a problem arises if hotel guests expect the ‘*craic agus ceol*’ with hotel employees. However, his opinion on this issue is that the world is moving on, and with that comes the changing needs of customers. Mr. Gregan contends that hotel guests’ wants are changing. He expressed the view that many hotels are now frequently catering to younger clients, as well as increased numbers of business travellers. Mr. Gregan spoke about the needs of such guests, which include speed of service delivery, efficiency, quality and value for money. He cited a study carried out by the Marriott
Hotel in New York, which found that guests valued a faster, more efficient system of check-in and check-out, and were less concerned with the friendliness of staff.

_The Marriott study is very interesting because it outlines that hotel guest's needs are changing. The world is changing, and so is what hotel guests want from a service. Nobody wants to spend twenty minutes in a queue because the receptionist is chatting to a guest about the weather._

Mr. Gregan outlined that it is the skills the employee brings to the hotel that are important, and not where that employee is from.

_I think it isn't about where a person is actually from it's about how they portray their skills, and about how they interact._

### 4.7: Conclusion

From the interviews and focus groups conducted the researcher gained valuable insight into the effects of seeking to manage a culturally diverse workforce. Problems were reported, as well as the many benefits that foreign national employees bring to the organisation. Drawing from the results of this research the author concludes that while many managers are positive regarding the employment of foreign national employees, concerns and problems exist. Furthermore, there is evidence of dissatisfaction among both foreign national and Irish employees, of which hotel managers seemed unaware.

While the managers interviewed identified areas of concern, such as the longevity of foreign employee tenure, they remained largely positive about managing heterogeneous workgroups. Minister Martin and Mr. Gregan are also very positive regarding the employment of foreign national workers and provided the author with valuable insight into the research question.
However, upon conducting the focus groups, the researcher has become aware of issues which need to be brought to the fore in order to make significant recommendations for managing culturally dissimilar employees. One such issue is the fact that some managers invest time and resources into ‘diversity days’, celebrating diversity and seeking to integrate employees – however, some foreign national employees were unaware of such programs. Furthermore, the fact that a number of foreign national focus group participants required assistance to understand and answer questions is an important concern. These concerns will be further analysed in Chapter 5.

The researcher is satisfied that the primary research has yielded valuable attitudes, opinions and insights which will enable her to make recommendations following analysis of these research findings.
Chapter Five

Discussion of Results
5.1: Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings in Chapter Four, in order to answer the research objectives as presented in the Introduction chapter. Each objective will be discussed separately with supporting arguments from the interviews and focus groups conducted. The discussion of the research results from the interviews with hotel managers and focus groups are presented under the categories used to code the data collected. The discussion of the interviews with Micheál Martin T.D. and Adrian Gregan are presented under the themes used to conduct the interviews.

5.2: Research Objective 1

To explore the opinion of managers working in four and five star hotels in Cork on employing foreign national employees.

Assessing the composition of the workforce in each hotel ensured the managers interviewed could contribute meaningful insights to the research by ensuring they had significant contact with foreign national employees. The author also wanted to verify secondary data, i.e., that a significant number of foreign national workers are employed in the hospitality sector, and that a declining number of Irish employees are entering this industry, as outlined in the Introduction chapter. All hotel managers employ 50% or more of their workforce from abroad. This assured the researcher that the hotel managers who participated in the research are experienced at managing a heterogeneous workforce, diverse in race and culture. The author is satisfied that all hotel managers who participated in the primary research have considerable experience of managing
foreign national employees, and are in a position to contribute to this research thesis with opinion and insight valuable to answering the research question.

5.2.1: Workplace Communication

The importance of spoken English ability by foreign national employees was assessed, and many of the hotel managers expressed the view that English ability is vital if the employee is in front-line positions, serving customers. Interestingly, it was implied and in one case explicitly stated, that if the foreign national employee is not working directly with customers, English ability may not be as important.

Thus it appears that the primary concern for the hotel managers interviewed is the guests' satisfaction, and not effective communication with foreign national employees. This is supported by the claim that spoken English is very important if the foreign national employee is working directly with customers, but perhaps less important if not. It is evident from the primary research results that if a foreign national employee is working in the accommodation department with a poor standard of English, management are not concerned. This lack of concern over the ability to converse with employees in background positions within the hotel suggests managers do not perceive a communication barrier to exist. When discussing spoken English at the interview stage, the only importance it was given was in relation to communicating with hotel guests. The foreign national employees' ability to communicate with the hotel's guests was the only concern mentioned by hotel managers, not communicating with other employees or managers, or understanding management direction. As outlined in the Literature Review, in section 2.3, effective communication is vital in a heterogeneous environment. The effects of an inability to communicate with one's employees do not
appear to cause too much concern to the hotel managers interviewed. However as Sadri and Tran (2002) highlighted, effective communication strategies are deemed to promote both integration and equality in the work environment. The researcher believes the impact of poor communication between managers and foreign national employees can be answered during the focus groups with culturally diverse workers. In these focus groups foreign national employees expressed a desire for better manners and understanding from their managers, and some believe they lack promotion opportunities and are thus demotivated. These concerns could be assuaged if managers were able to communicate effectively with foreign national employees.

5.2.2: English Lessons

While all hotels offered foreign national employees English lessons, they are not without stipulations, which mainly concern the loyalty and longevity of the foreign national employees' tenure in the hotel. It appears managers may be unwilling to invest in the future of foreign national employees if they feel they are in Ireland for the short-term. There is no mention of English lessons being provided to alleviate any challenge to effective management; rather they are offered if employees have proved loyal. Again there is an apparent lack of concern over the ability to converse with foreign national employees who may not have a high standard of English.

Considering that every hotel manager interviewed employs over 50% of their workforce from abroad, the issue of how managers communicate with foreign national employees with a low standard of spoken English – those in non-customer contact positions as it would appear in the majority of cases – is raised by the researcher. The research suggests that this is not considered a significant problem for hotel managers, since
English competence is not always sought at interview level. When spoken English is considered important by the hotel manager, it is to assist with the guest's experience, and not in any way to assist in the communication of organisational goals or other management activities, such as motivating or leading employees.

The failure to provide English lessons universally in the organisation suggests again that communicating with foreign national workers is not a significant challenge to hotel managers, or perceived to be of vital importance. While it is inevitably easier to communicate organisational objectives to foreign national employees with a high standard of English, the research suggests that the inability to communicate with foreign national employees without a good comprehension of English is inconsequential.

A distinction was made by the hotel managers interviewed between those considered eligible for language training, regardless of any communication problems. Foreign national employees who show loyalty to the hotel and appear willing to stay with the organisation are treated more favourably when it comes to providing English lessons.

Again, the researcher believes that the focus groups with foreign national employees provide insight into the effect of the apparent lack of management concern over the level of spoken English ability. In these focus groups it emerged that a number of participants had such a low standard of English, questions had to be translated for them. They survive the work environment through translations from friends and colleagues until their own English ability has improved. Managers are either unaware or accepting of this occurrence, which explains their lack of concern over the spoken English ability of background employees.
5.2.3: Integrating Foreign National Employees

Half of the hotel managers interviewed reported offering varying degrees of support to foreign national employees, geared towards integrating them into the organisation. Such support includes social committees, induction programmes, and a Buddy or mentoring system, which is highlighted by Webb (1995) as a popular tool to enhance communication in the organisation, and can facilitate greater employee integration into the workplace according to Sadri and Tran (2002). Further assistance is offered with practical issues such as opening a bank account, and regular employee meetings. These initiatives follow advise by Melia and Kennedy (2005) and Fáilte Ireland (2005a), outlined in section 2.4.1, on integrating foreign national employees into the workforce.

Half of the hotel managers interviewed recognised a need for these policies and initiatives, and appeared committed to celebrating diversity. The activities are not just geared towards celebrating the differences in the hotel, but towards interaction at a social level between all cultures in the organisation.

Some managers had experienced cultural differences when working abroad themselves, which was a factor in their decision to implement the diversity initiatives outlined.

Half of the managers offer no assistance to their foreign national employees. However, within this group, there appeared to be a growing realisation that foreign national employees may need assistance upon commencement of employment in Ireland, and managers expressed their desire to do so in the future. While some of them are considering such initiatives for the future, one manager had a very different viewpoint, believing such initiatives are not needed.
The researcher discovered that the general view of hotel managers is that foreign national employees do need some level of assistance to cope with difficulties when commencing employment in Ireland. However, the managers’ willingness to offer such assistance is varied. This, coupled with the fact that English lessons are not universally offered to foreign national employees, suggests a lack of understanding by some hotel managers of the difficulties their foreign national employees may face. Further understanding of this is gained when analysing the findings from the focus group research with foreign national employees. The researcher discovered that some of the foreign national focus groups participants are more interested in equal opportunities and greater understanding from their managers. Indeed, some participants were not even aware that initiatives such as Diversity Days took place. It appears managers are struggling to satisfy these foreign national employees, despite efforts to assist their integration into the organisation.

Integrating culturally diverse employees is something that hotel managers must recognise as a vital element of diversity management. The benefits to be gained include a faster settling-in period for culturally diverse workers, employee retention and increased comfort in one’s surroundings (Fáilte Ireland, 2005a; Devine et al., 2005). There were no reported problems by the hotel managers in the area of employee interaction. It was outlined that many positions are filled primarily by foreign national employees, such as background positions. Thus interaction would be limited. The opinion of hotel managers was that interacting with different cultures is not a new occurrence for Irish people, and it does not cause undue stress or problems.
Insight is gained from the analysis of both the focus groups with Irish and foreign national employees. From both focus groups the researcher found little evidence overall of good working or social relationships among Irish and foreign national employees, despite working together in some instances. This contradicts the managers’ accounts of their working relationship.

5.2.4: Equal Opportunities for Foreign National Employees

In the vast majority of cases, the findings show that managers of hotels in Cork are quite prepared to promote foreign national employees to supervisory and management levels, and that their ethnic background poses no obstacle. This provides an interesting insight into the attitude of hotel managers regarding foreign national employment. The majority of foreign national employees in supervisory positions had progressed internally, again an indication of the hotels’ equal opportunities policies. As outlined in the Literature Review section 2.2.3, providing equal opportunities to minority group employees is a vital tool in integrating them into the workforce (Pollitt, 2005), and some hotels are taking positive steps in this regard.

As previously discovered when managers expressed their understanding of the difficulties of working in a foreign culture, one hotel manager showed insight into the situation of many foreign national employees. He expressed his understanding that many foreign national employees are over-qualified for the work they are currently involved in. However, he was the only manager who expressed such an understanding.

Again, the issue of foreign national employee longevity of tenure and loyalty to the hotel was raised. This issue appears to be a significant management concern. There is
clear frustration at having trained foreign national employees who then returned to their home country or left the organisation, which proves a waste of resources to the hotel. The one manager who was openly reluctant to promote foreign national employees cited this reason as the basis for his decision – the foreign national employees he had trained and promoted soon left the hotel. Interestingly, the issue of employee longevity of Irish workers was not raised; thus the researcher concludes that Irish hotel managers believe foreign national employees lack loyalty to their employer and that retention is an issue for the future of foreign national employment. Interestingly, the foreign national employees who participated in the focus groups want to stay in Ireland for the foreseeable future, and outlined equal opportunities and better treatment in the workplace as factors that would secure their loyalty to the hotel.

5.2.5: Advantages and Disadvantages Associated with Employing Foreign National Workers

The overall attitude of the hotel managers interviewed is that foreign national employees make a very positive contribution to the hospitality industry, and will continue to do so in the future. The changes the industry has undergone in terms of workforce composition were discussed, however, there were many advantages associated with hiring foreign national employees, beyond filling job vacancies. As well as the fact that foreign national employees fill a significant employment shortage in the hotel sector, managers were impressed with their work ethic and reliability, among other factors. These findings comply with some of the benefits of hiring diverse employees, as outlined by Cox (1991) Cassell (2001), Anderson and Metcalf (2003), the IRS Employment Review (2003) and the Fáilte Ireland “Cultural Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan” (2005a), as detailed in section 2.2.
One hotel manager mentioned the economic advantage of hiring foreign national employees. When questioned further on this, he made the distinction between Irish attitudes to 'background' positions in the hotel industry and foreign national worker's attitudes. Considering over 50% of the workforce in his hotel is made up of foreign national employees, of which only two have ever been promoted to customer contact positions, the assumption can be made that the majority of foreign national workers are employed in low-skilled, low-paid positions. The economic advantages thus become evident; by keeping foreign national employees in background positions, this hotel manager has a pool of hardworking employees receiving a minimum wage.

Overall, the impact foreign national employees have had on the industry was considered by all hotel managers to be positive. The advantages they have brought are varied, but the contribution they make was considered wholly beneficial to the industry. The work ethic of foreign national employees was consistently praised.

The negative attitudes towards employing foreign national workers outlined by the managers interviewed include different ways of doing things within the organisation, the development of 'cliques', and lack of localised knowledge. A number of managers made reference to the fact that the communication barriers exist beyond spoken English, pertaining to non-verbal language and local colloquiums. As was outlined in section 2.3, the Fáilte Ireland “Cultural Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan” (2005a), slang and colloquiums are frequently used in the Irish workplace, and this is observed by hotel managers as a problem related to employing foreign national workers. Non-verbal language was also mentioned as an area of concern for managers of culturally diverse
workgroups. Thus it is evident that cultural communication barriers are not limited to spoken English in Irish hotels, and weight is given to the theories of Hodgetts and Kuratko (1991) and Hodgetts et al. (2006). These theorists discuss differing proxemics and kinesics across culture, outlined in section 2.3. Proxemics refers to the way individuals use physical space to communicate messages, while kinesics is using facial expressions and body movements to communicate. There is significant evidence that cultural diversity in relation to physical behaviour, body language and other language barriers such as colloquiums is a concern for hotel managers.

Some managers also mentioned the tendency for employees to remain within their own groups, or 'cliques'. While managers had previously reported no integration problems between Irish and foreign national employees, on further discussion and elaboration some did mention the tendency for foreign workers to remain within their own groups. The propensity for minority group employees to remain within their own groups was highlighted by Prince (2005) in section 2.4.1, and can seriously hinder employee integration. The need for culturally diverse employee integration is again highlighted. However, the strength of these negative factors was not considered to outweigh the advantages foreign national employees bring to the workplace. It remains evident that the attitude of hotel managers towards employing foreign national workers is largely positive. While the managers are fully aware of the problems associated with culturally heterogeneous workforces, they believe there are many benefits available to the hotel industry by employing foreign national workers. The benefit of conducting foreign national employee focus groups is also evident, to allow for elaboration on these highlighted areas. For example, while managers observed slang and colloquiums as problem areas for foreign national employees, few of the focus group participants had
communication problems because of them. However, hotel managers were accurate in their assessment of the ‘cliques’ that form in the organisation.

5.2.6: Employing Foreign Nationals – Current and Future

Management Challenges

The interview participants believe that managing foreign national employees poses some management challenges; namely concerns over appearing racist and the retention of employees in the hotel. For a minority of managers interviewed, there is a fear that being accused of racism or being overly concerned with it would pose a challenge to effectively communicating with and leading foreign national employees. However, this was a minority viewpoint, but a challenge that obviously would not arise in a culturally homogenous workforce.

However, a sense of the hotel manager profession was gained – that to reach the position of general manager, one has vast experience both at home and abroad. This inevitably brings hotel managers into contact with a variety of cultures throughout their career, something which appears to be of significant advantage when managing culturally heterogeneous workforces in the hospitality industry.

Other future challenges outlined in the research interviews included the lack of Irish employees entering the industry, and the corresponding lack of local knowledge. This corresponds with the concern expressed in the Irish Hotels Federation’s “Blueprint for the Future” in 2001, detailed in Chapter One, in which they expressed a need to maintain a distinct Irish identity in the hotel sector.
The hotel managers discussed how the presence of diversity education in hotel management courses was considered to be advantageous in reducing any challenge to managing racially and culturally heterogeneous workforces, although the extent to which it exists was not widely known. Managers discussed how education could assist future managers by giving them prior knowledge of cultures and working with difference, as could on the job training. In this instance, future managers work alongside a variety of different cultures, and thus the challenge of managing foreign national employees is eased when they take up a general management role.

One manager stated his concern that his foreign national employees may be subject to abuse from customers, and that they may not be very receptive to foreign employees. It is interesting that this was a concern for only one hotel manager. Insight into racist incidences is gained during the focus groups with foreign national employees; it was discovered that every foreign national employee focus group participant had been exposed to racism, either personally or through awareness of colleagues' racist experiences, while at work in Irish hotels.

The issue of foreign national employees' longevity in their employment was again raised. Once again, it appears this is a real concern for hotel managers.

The majority of hotel managers interviewed use support services within their industry. The use of support services to ease the challenge posed to managers of culturally diverse workgroups is a positive step, although not used in a small number of cases. However, most managers were aware of the availability of assistance courses, and
expressed positive views towards their use. This signifies that the availability of such courses is satisfactory, and the use of support services is at management’s discretion.

5.2.7: Foreign National Employees and the Fáilte Romhat

The traditional Irish welcome, the ‘Fáilte Romhat’, has long been an attractive feature of Irish tourism, a fundamental strength of the hospitality industry, and a source of competitive advantage. In fact, the Irish Hotels Federation (2001) has stated that the Irish hotel industry needs to preserve a distinctive Irish identity to sustain competitive advantage in the future. With Irish hotels relying more and more on foreign national employees, maintaining this Irish identity is an added challenge. The opinion of managers regarding whether or not foreign national employees weaken this competitive advantage or affect the perceived attractiveness of their hotel within the industry is valuable, as it provides insight into their overall opinion on employing foreign national workers.

In this regard, management opinion is divided. Half of the hotel managers are very concerned that the traditional Irish welcome is now a thing of the past, and half of the hotel managers believe Irish hotels now offer a different, but still tenable, welcome to hotel guests. These viewpoints outline that half of the managers interviewed believe their foreign national employees are not deterring in any way from the guest’s experience of staying in an Irish hotel. Going forward for the future, these attitudes portray managers committed to investing in foreign national employees without hesitation or fear that it would in any way be bad for business, or make their hotel less attractive for visiting guests.
5.2.8: Summary of Findings – Objective 1

Overall the insight offered from the research is that managers of four and five star hotels in Cork believe that employing foreign national workers does not present a significant challenge. Although some problems are evident, such as the longevity of foreign national employees in Irish hotels, the formation of foreign national employee ‘cliques’, some communication problems and the feeling among some managers that the traditional Irish welcome is eroding, managers feel they have the necessary skills and experience to deal with any negative aspects of employing foreign national workers. To alleviate the problems discussed in the interviews, hotel managers can implement the recommendation of theorists outlined in the Literature Review. These include operating a mentoring program, outlined by Webb (1995) as a valuable tool in promoting greater communication and helping employees integrate into the organisation. Furthermore, managers can take on board the needs of foreign national employees, discovered in the focus groups, for greater equality of opportunity and better understanding from managers of their situation. These will be further expanded on in Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations.

5.3: Research Objective 2

*To explore the needs, concerns and attitudes of foreign national workers employed in four and five star hotels in Cork.*

From this research the author was able to determine how long the foreign national employee participants have worked in Ireland, and in which hotel departments they are employed. A large portion of the foreign national workers are employed in the accommodation department of Cork hotels. This supports the findings of the interviews
with hotel managers, in which some managers expressed concern over lack of local knowledge and the lack of an Irish presence as negative aspects of employing foreign workers – thus they chose to employ foreign workers in background positions.

5.3.1: Motivation to Come to Ireland and Expectations of Working In Ireland

Assessing the motivation to come to Ireland seeking employment revealed three predominant reasons: financial gain, to avail of better opportunities and to learn English. The employee from New Zealand cited wanting to experience a ‘fun, friendly place’ as his motivation to come to Ireland. This could not have highlighted the disparity of opportunity in developing countries better. These findings point to the lack of opportunity in Poland, India and Latvia for these individuals. The motivation to improve their life and learn English was very strong. Experiencing new things motivates the participant from New Zealand. He feels under no pressure to improve his job opportunities. He is in an entirely different situation to the other participants in the focus groups. The majority of employees from Eastern European countries are migrating to Ireland to seek a better life, while the employee from New Zealand is seeking, in effect, a working holiday.

Foreign national employees stated that they did not know what to expect from working in Ireland. They had heard it offered opportunity, and based their decision to come to Ireland seeking employment on this basis. This highlights the importance of the initiatives some of the hotel managers interviewed have in place. Being completely unfamiliar with one’s country of employment is undoubtedly daunting; therefore any
efforts such as assistance with opening bank accounts and obtaining PPS numbers is extremely legitimate.

5.3.2 Spoken English Ability

Many foreign national employees reported that they had poor English when they entered Ireland, but that over time their English has improved. Discounting the hotel managers' views on the difficulty of understanding colloquiums, the majority of foreign national employees stated they did not find Irish slang or colloquiums a problem.

During each focus group the researcher met foreign national employees whose level of spoken English was so poor their colleagues had to assist them in understanding questions and relaying their answers. None of these employees had been offered English lessons. This corresponds with the findings from the hotel manager interviews. The foreign national employees in question are employed in the accommodation department and have only been in Ireland a short period of time: three weeks and two months. The majority of managers interviewed stated that English lessons were offered to the foreign national employee if they had shown longevity, and spoken English was considered more important if the employee worked in a customer contact role. The failure to provide English language classes to these employees corresponds with these findings. What appears to be the case is that other foreign national employees are translating to the employees until their English improves and they can take direction from management.

Thus the researcher is in a position to understand why the level of English among new foreign national recruits is not considered vital unless the employee is to work directly
with customers. Foreign national employees in background position with a poor standard of English communicate through their colleagues who have developed a good understanding of the language – therefore communicating with foreign national employees is not considered a significant challenge for managers because it is alleviated by their co-workers.

5.3.3: Relationship with Irish Co-Workers and Experiences of Racism

The majority of foreign national employees reported no problem working with Irish colleagues. The small number that did report some problems believed they have to work harder than their Irish co-workers. The foreign employees who participated in the focus groups perceived their Irish colleagues as less afraid to lose their jobs. Insight into this relationship from the perspective of Irish employees will be discussed later, in which it will be detailed that there is evidence of real strain in the working relationship between Irish and foreign national employees.

A further area of interest in assessing the experiences of foreign national employees at work in Irish hotels pertains to racist treatment they may have suffered. When questioned, every employee has either experienced racist behaviour personally or had witnessed or heard about racist behaviour towards one of their co-workers. It has been a feature of all of their working lives in Ireland.

The racism they have encountered ranges from requesting to deal with an Irish person, to racist comments, and even writing racist comments on bed sheets. Most reported it in the form of being asked by a hotel guest to get them an Irish person to deal with. They
Chapter 5, Discussion of Results

were satisfied with their manager’s responses to this behaviour, although in many cases the guest had left the hotel before the matter could be dealt with. Some employees stated that the only way to deal with racism is to ignore it.

This is a disappointing feature of Irish work life for these foreign national employees. Some appeared resigned to the fact that it occurs, should be dealt with, and forgotten about. During the hotel manager interviews, it is significant that only one manager outlined his fears that his foreign national employees will be subject to racist abuse.

The foreign national employees did not report racism from their managers or co-workers, rather from hotel guests, illustrating that racism is not a problem among co-workers. While the foreign national employees were satisfied with how their manager had dealt with racist abuse, racism from hotel guests is not something the hotel manager can control, and thus eradicate.

5.3.4: Integration Assistance

The efforts of hotel managers are outlined by the foreign national employees, and appear comprehensive and varied. While these initiatives are in place in the hotels where the foreign national employees work, there is evidence that they do not make as positive an impact on the employees as managers would like.

While some foreign national employees were happy with the efforts their managers make, others were not so satisfied. One employee was not even aware that Polish days in the staff canteen took place, which highlights a serious lack of management communication in that particular hotel. Others expressed the view that taking employees
to the bank and providing diversity days are an empty gesture, and that management lack empathy and understanding of their situation.

This is a significant issue for hotel managers to take on board. Firstly, it appears their integration efforts are not reaching all the intended targets; the employee who was unaware of the Polish days is evidence of this. Secondly, the projected benefits of such initiatives may not be materialising – rather than making foreign national employees feel integrated and included, it seems some feel let down by empty gestures that do nothing for their overall situation.

5.3.5: Foreign National Employee Concerns

The previous section has highlighted some foreign national employee concerns in the Irish workplace. One further concern, on which opinion was divided, was the fact that foreign national employees may have to work harder than Irish employees to gain a promotion. Some foreign national employees felt disappointed by their past experiences at work, in which Irish employees were promoted above them. This supports findings by Redmond and Butler (2003), who discovered that some foreign national employees felt they do not have the same chances to succeed in the organisation as Irish workers, as outlined in section 2.4.1. It also supports the findings of Connolly and McGing (2006), which discovered that foreign national employees perceived their Irish co-workers as having better promotional prospects, and the Diversity At Work Network Report in 2004 which found that foreign national employees believe employers are reluctant to give them the same opportunities as other workers, despite qualification and experience.
Chapter 5, Discussion of Results

While the hotel managers interviewed largely stated they had no problem promoting foreign national employees, the issue of employee longevity and frustration of training new employees did arise on a number of occasions. This may be a factor in why some foreign national employees feel they cannot gain a promotion. Two of the foreign national employees appeared to empathise with hotel managers in this regard.

Further areas of concern related to the foreign national employees’ individual situations, such as being bound by visa constraints or the need to support family members at home. These factors, in effect, restrict employees from changing jobs. The author believes that if management were to take the time to understand their employees’ personal situations, they may be less concerned with employee longevity. Following from this, further effort could be invested into foreign national employees promotion and training.

Management fears over employee longevity may be alleviated by the findings that the majority of foreign national employees who participated in the focus groups want to stay in Ireland for the foreseeable future. They would, however, like to experience greater understanding and courtesy from their managers.

5.3.6: Summary of Findings - Objective 2

To learn English, financial gain, and to avail of better opportunities are the dominant reasons the focus group participants came to Ireland. All have experienced racism, although report no major problems working with Irish employees. Some feel they have to work harder than Irish employees to gain a promotion, and foreign national employees would like their managers to demonstrate greater understanding and manners. However, it is evident to the researcher that managers cannot demonstrate
greater understanding and manners unless they can communicate effectively with foreign national employees. The fact that English was mainly seen as a requisite for employees working in front line positions entails that foreign national employees in background positions, of which most of the focus group participants were, may not communicate directly with their managers. This fact may contribute to their negative perceptions. However, the issue of retaining foreign national employees to ensure hotel managers are not constantly recruiting and training new employees can be somewhat assuaged by listening to the views of their foreign workers. They are largely motivated by equality and availability of promotion, and managers can further ensure their loyalty by demonstrating greater understanding of their situation and greater courtesy. Of course, the necessity for effective communication between managers and employees again comes to the fore; providing English lessons is an unavoidable facet of ensuring greater work communication.

5.4: Research Objective 3

To investigate the needs, concerns and attitudes of Irish employees in four and five star hotels in Cork towards the changes in their workplace, and their opinion on working with foreign national employees.

In order to ensure significant insights into the experience of working alongside foreign national employees, it was deemed necessary to assess the length of time each Irish employee has worked with foreign national employees. The responses varied, but the vast majority have a good deal of experience working with foreign national employees. As well as working with them, the Irish employees expressed the viewpoint that foreign national employees have long been a feature of Irish work life. This assured the
researcher that the focus group participants were suitably experienced with foreign national employees to give meaningful insights and opinions.

5.4.1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Working with Foreign National Employees

The work ethic of foreign national employees was praised by hotel managers during the interview stage, and again by the Irish employees who participated in the focus groups. This was, in fact, the main advantage outlined by the Irish hotel employees. One employee highlighted the cultural variance foreign national employees have brought as an advantage, but their work ethic was consistently praised. There is no doubt from these findings that foreign national employees are exceptionally hard working and an asset to the work environment in this regard.

The negative aspects of working with foreign national employees relate to problems with the spoken English of their foreign national colleagues in the early stages of employment. It was felt, in the majority of cases, that the standard of English is not always sufficient at the beginning of employment. When that occurs it puts pressure on the Irish employee. The working relationship between Irish workers and foreign national employees also appears somewhat strained in a number of cases. This pertains to negative aspects of working with foreign national employees, but there was also evidence of strain in the general relationship between the two groups. Areas that are contributing to this are differences in social interaction and modes of behaviour, as demonstrated by the example of foreign national employees taking the free food at break times, the perception that foreign workers step back when it comes to customer
services, and the fact that they make little effort to engage with their Irish colleagues. The last point supports the managers' opinion that foreign national employees stay within 'cliques' or their own groups, and highlights the need to integrate culturally diverse employees for effective diversity management and productivity.

Throughout this area of discussion some of the Irish employees demonstrated empathy with their foreign co-workers. However, it appears that where the standard of English among foreign national employees is low, Irish employees are being placed under greater pressure at work, which appears to lead to negative feelings toward foreign national employees. Therefore the need for English lessons for foreign national employees is again highlighted, lessons which were not widespread among the majority of the hotels used in the management interview process. A minority of foreign national employees reported difficulty understanding Irish accents and local colloquiums. This might contribute to their tendency to take a step back from customer contact, an area of concern mentioned by the Irish employees. A further reason for this might be explained by the fact that some foreign national employees reported being asked for an Irish person to deal with by hotel guests on occasion, and may now simply step back and leave the task to an Irish person instead. Again, the researcher believes that universal English lessons can alleviate this problem.

The need for employees to work as a team is paramount in every organisation and that task in undoubtedly made more difficult by language and cultural barriers. There are areas of concern in the working relationship between Irish and foreign national employees - a fact that hotel managers do not seem aware of, as none reported it during the interview process; in fact they stated there were no problems between the two
groups. The social outings and other integration efforts instigated by hotel managers can go a long way toward improving work relationships in a heterogeneous environment, and the majority of Irish employees conceded that things had improved in their organisation. However, further social interaction and team building may be an area for management to invest in, as the relationship between Irish and foreign national employees appears non-existent in some cases.

5.4.2: Treatment of Foreign National Employees

The majority of the Irish focus group participants are not aware of racism towards their foreign co-workers, and believe they are treated well at work. This differs vastly from the experiences of foreign national employees; the majority of whom had either witnessed or personally experienced racism at one time.

This might be explained by the nature of some of the reported racism. For some of the foreign national employees it occurred in the accommodation department when guests had written racist remarks on the bed sheets – none of the Irish employees who participated in the focus groups, and indeed very few Irish employees in general, work in this department. Other foreign national employees reported racist comments on the telephone or in direct personal contact with customers.

However, there were some racist instances which Irish employees would be expected to be aware of, such as guests automatically turning to a white receptionist, or the customer’s requests to deal with an Irish person. However, within the Irish focus groups, employees reported a lack of interaction with foreign national employees, a lack of casual chat or social relationship. This may add to the fact that the Irish employees
appear ignorant of racist attitudes directed at foreign national employees. Furthermore, the majority of Irish employees who participated in the focus groups were unable to say whether or not foreign national employees are exploited in Ireland. They felt unable to tell if exploitation was an issue, and believed it differs with each employee’s situation. Again, the apparent lack of personal relationship between the Irish employees and foreign national employees may explain their uncertainty – were both employee groups interacting at a personal level, feelings and opinions regarding racism and exploitation may be expressed by the foreign national employees.

Irish hotel employees demonstrated an understanding of the hospitality sector. The future promotion prospects of foreign national employees were under discussion, and those that agreed it is difficult for them to progress cited the concerns previously expressed by hotel managers; good spoken English, an element of local knowledge and longevity with the organisation. Others disagreed with this perception for various reasons stemming from their own experiences working with foreign national employees and the financial benefit they can bring to the workplace.

Concern for future employment was expressed by a minority of employees. Just two Irish employees expressed concern over the number of foreign national employees in Ireland, and for the future. The vast majority of respondents did not think there needs to be a decrease in the number of foreign national employees entering Ireland.
5.4.3: Summary of Findings – Objective 3

The Irish focus group participants concurred largely with the managers interviewed in praising the work ethic of foreign national employees. The effects of poor standards of spoken English were expressed by the Irish employees, who often have to carry an extra workload when working with foreign national employees, although they conceded this had eased. Perhaps because of this fact, the working relationship between Irish and foreign national employees appeared tense, and the researcher found little evidence to suggest social interaction between the two groups of employees. This lack of interaction in both work and social settings contributes to the Irish employees’ ignorance of the racist treatment suffered by their foreign co-workers. The evidence of ‘cliques’ of employees gained weight following the Irish employee focus groups, highlighting the need for employee interaction again to hotel managers. In general, the Irish employees were not overly concerned about the future in relation to foreign national employees in the workplace. This may stem from the fact the focus groups were conducted within the context of the Irish hospitality sector, an area from which Irish employees are leaving for other industries, as outlined in Chapter One. The majority of the Irish employee participants do not anticipate working in the hospitality sector in the future; they largely intend to move on from their current positions. Thus they are not concerned about losing future jobs to foreign nationals, indicating that foreign national employees are very much associated with low-skilled positions.
5.5: Research Objective 4

To gain the insight of Mr. Micheál Martin T.D., former Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, on the increasing cultural heterogeneity in the Irish workplace.

5.5.1: Government Insight into the Employment of Foreign Nationals

The former Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment demonstrated a very positive outlook regarding foreign national employment, believing such workers make a valuable contribution to the Irish workforce.

The issue of health and safety at work was a concern for Minster Martin T.D. in relation to the employment of foreign national workers. This concern is rational in light of a recent RTÉ Prime Time report on 6th March 2007 detailing the Irish Ferries case. Customers of Irish Ferries reported fears over foreign national workers directing them to park in front of lifts, and the fact that emergency-action signs on board the Irish Ferries vessel are only in English.

The opinion of managers who were interviewed, that foreign national employees present no significant management challenge, is reflected by Minister Martin T.D., who details the multicultural nature of Ireland. However, in light of recent mistreatment of foreign national employees, such as the Gama Construction case, the Minister does concede that more vigilance is needed. He also recommends that the human resource department be competent at managing diversity; providing multi-lingual booklets to foreign national employees will assist them and ensure their safety at work.
As the government Minister who was responsible for employment in Ireland, the insights of Minister Martin T.D. are valuable. He is both positive and optimistic regarding the future of diverse cultures in Ireland, and recognises that foreign national employees are beneficial to the Irish economy.

5.6: Research Objective 5

To gain the opinion of an industry professional regarding the increasing number of foreign national employees in the hotel industry in Cork.

5.6.1: Opinion of an Industry Professional

Mr. Adrian Gregan, former council member of the Irish Hospitality Institute, has long been associated with hospitality management and education. The insights he offered conform largely to those of the majority of managers interviewed, as well as the former Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Supporting the opinion of many hotel managers interviewed, that Irish people are less inclined than before to enter the hotel industry, and the opinion of Minister Micheál Martin T.D. who recognised skill shortages in certain industries, Mr. Gregan acknowledged that the hospitality sector is not as attractive to Irish employees and therefore more reliant on foreign national employees.

Regarding any negative aspects to employing foreign national workers, the opinion of Mr. Gregan is similar to the concerns expressed by a number of hotel managers interviewed. However, like the managers who participate in this research, and Minister
Martin, Mr. Gregan appears positive overall to the changed composition of the workforce in the hospitality sector.

Mr. Gregan’s views reflect in many ways the opinion of the hotel managers interviewed, where the benefits that foreign national employees bring to the Irish hotel sector are viewed as contributory to its continued success.
Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations
6.1: Introduction

This thesis set out to evaluate the challenge posed to managers of culturally heterogeneous workforces in four and five star hotels in Cork. The majority of hotel managers interviewed do not believe that employing foreign national workers presents a significant challenge to carrying out their duties. The hotel managers interviewed believe the level of experience they have gained working abroad with other cultures assists them in managing diverse cultures in Ireland. However, concerns were expressed by the hotel managers, including the longevity of foreign national employees in the hospitality sector. Furthermore, during the focus groups with foreign national and Irish employees a number of issues of which managers may not be aware or willing to discuss during the course of the interviews were highlighted, which may present a management challenge in the future. This section outlines the conclusions from the primary research and makes a number of recommendations for hotel managers.

6.2: Language and Communication

During the management interviews it was largely reported that there was no significant challenge communicating with foreign national employees. However, in the focus groups with foreign national employees some participants were unable to speak English to the extent that other members of the focus groups had to translate questions for them and relay their answers. In the Irish employee focus groups some employees expressed feelings of frustration; they felt that at the beginning of their employment many foreign national employees did not have enough English to do their job competently, but needed a greater level of supervision. It appears that hotel managers may not have full information regarding communication within their workforce and the effect diversity can render upon it. Furthermore, the hotel managers interviewed do not provide English
Chapter 6, Conclusions and Recommendations

lessons to their foreign national employees unless they have shown longevity to the hotel or are about to be transferred into a customer contact role. It can be concluded that hotel managers appear unaware of any employee-related tensions this can cause, not to mention the ultimate effect it can have on service delivery.

One possible service delivery effect is that if Irish employees are taking extra time to demonstrate work methods to foreign national employees with a basic standard of English, customer service can suffer. The tension this can cause may have an effect on the service delivery. A frustrated and tense employee may not deliver the service to the required standard. Thus the necessity for foreign national employees to have a good standard of English to be able to converse with hotel guests is further emphasised.

It is necessary that foreign national employees understand their role and responsibilities in a hotel to ensure its smooth running and the satisfaction of its guests. One issue for managers of culturally diverse employees is to ensure all employees understand the company's health and safety policies, as pointed out by Minister Micheál Martin T.D.

Thus it is recommended by the researcher that a basic standard of English is sought at interview level, at a minimum. English language training should then commence immediately for new foreign national employees. English lessons should be made available to all employees, regardless of tenure or position. This would serve to assuage any negative feelings between Irish and foreign national employees, facilitating greater employee integration, and greater workplace productivity.

An added benefit of ensuring a high standard of English and providing English language training is the hotel manager's ability to properly manage his or her staff. The ability to
motivate the workforce to be more productive, to lead the organisation to achieving management objectives, and to control employees cannot be facilitated if managers cannot effectively communicate with their employees. As outlined in section 2.3., Euske and Roberts (1987) proffer that superior organisational communication can lead to greater job satisfaction and an increase in productivity. The ability to communicate with all employees is thus paramount, and can only be facilitated in diverse organisations through ensuring a high standard of English and providing training to all foreign national employees.

Mentoring of foreign national employees is also recommended. As detailed by Webb (1995) in section 2.2.3., mentoring is a valuable tool to increase employee cooperation, and can also be used to steer all employees towards achieving the organisation's objectives. In the primary research conducted for this thesis, a minority of hotel managers operated mentoring, or 'Buddy' programs. The relationship between Irish and foreign national employees may be improved through the mentoring process, where employees work together and may eventually develop mutual understanding and a better working relationship; thus is it recommended as a management tool to enhance communication and more effective management of culturally heterogeneous employees.

There is significant evidence from the primary research that culturally diverse employees in 4 and 5 star hotels in Cork are not sufficiently integrated into the workforce. This is evident by managers' descriptions of foreign national employee 'cliques' and the apparent lack of social or working relationships expressed in the focus groups conducted with both Irish and foreign national employees. The importance of an integrated culturally diverse workforce is detailed in section 2.4.: indeed integration is
considered a key element of successfully managing diversity. While some hotels researched are following the integration guidelines outlined by Melia and Kennedy (2005) and Fáilte Ireland (2005a), in section 2.4.1., other hotels are not embracing such initiatives. The researcher recommends strategic commitment to initiatives geared toward integration, which should be on-going, and communicated effectively to all employees. For example, induction programs, pre-arrival packs and English language training can prove beneficial, as can mentoring. The researcher believes that for hotels to successfully integrate culturally diverse workers, and reap the benefits they can bring, such activities are vital components of the cultural diversity management strategy.

6.3: Foreign National Employees’ Perception of a Foreign National ‘Glass Ceiling’

There is concern over a perceived foreign national ‘glass-ceiling’ by some foreign national employees, despite the fact that the vast majority of hotel managers asserted that their hotel had an equal opportunities policy. This was a cause of some frustration among foreign national workers, who believed Irish workers do not face the same difficulties when seeking to progress within the hotel. This supports the findings of Connolly and McGing (2006), the Diversity At Work Network Report (2004) and Redmond and Butler (2003), outlined in the Literature Review.

In order to alleviate these perceptions by foreign national employees it is advised to incorporate equal opportunities into the organisation’s mission statement and communicate the message of equal opportunity to all employees. Training in the English language is tied into this, in that employee promotion often involves increased contact with hotel guests, and a poor standard of English is an obvious setback for
foreign national employees. Furthermore, clear explanations should be given to all employees, in particular foreign national workers, when one is unsuccessful in their attempts at promotion. This recommendation stems from the de-motivation of one foreign national employee who had not been successful in his attempts at promotion, but was never given a reason why. Providing feedback to foreign national employees on the issue of promotion is a form of enhanced communication which can help to relieve stress and tension, and negative perceptions of discrimination.

6.4: Retention of Foreign National Employees in Irish Hotels

A further conclusion is that the majority of hotel managers interviewed are concerned about the longevity of foreign national employees in the hospitality sector, and perceive this to be a possible challenge in the management of culturally diverse employees. They conveyed the attitude that the short-term nature of foreign national employment was a cause for frustration, and would necessitate constant training of new staff. This appears to be related to the foreign national employees’ perceived foreign national ‘glass-ceiling’. While some foreign national employees believed they are not treated equally in terms of promotion, a possible reason for this is outlined by the hotel managers, who fear that if they train foreign national employees in other areas of the hotel, it will be a waste of time and resources because of the short-term nature of foreign national employment. Contrary to the managers’ opinion in this regard, the majority of foreign national employees who participated in the focus groups want to stay in employment in Ireland. To avoid the frequent costs of training new employees in the face of high levels of employee turnover, managers need to put in place motivational incentives to encourage foreign national employees to stay in their hotel. This increases in
importance as foreign national employees are seen as vital to the future expansion of this sector. Such motivational incentives can be linked to the fact that foreign national employees expressed a desire for better manners and greater understanding from their managers. The researcher recommends visible promotion of foreign national employees within hotels, documented on staff newsletters, and for attention to be drawn to the hotel’s equal opportunities policies. Managers that empathise with foreign national employees can satisfy their needs for greater manners and understanding, especially if such empathy is extended into opportunities for promotion. An understanding of culture can also assist managers in this regard.

6.5: Greater Cultural Understanding needed by Managers to Motivate Foreign National Employees

Greater understanding of the foreign national employees’ culture and situation is sought by culturally diverse employees in the hotels used for research. Half of the hotel managers interviewed are investing resources in embracing different cultures through ‘diversity days’ and other initiatives. The message from some foreign national employees is that cultural days in the staff canteen are not enough to motivate them in their job performance or retain their loyalty to the hotel. In fact, some foreign national employees in the focus groups were not aware that initiatives such as Polish days in the staff canteen even took place. Others felt such activities were empty gestures, which did nothing to ensure them a better day at work or a promotion.

To facilitate managers’ cultural awareness, ensure a more productive working environment and engender greater employee loyalty, diversity management needs to be
actively focused upon in the organisation. Each function of the organisation, and each facet of management, should support the integration of diverse employees. Management education with particular emphasis on cultural diversity can assist managers in understanding diversity, and allow them to put initiatives in place that will be truly valued by foreign national employees. From the outset, such initiatives should be geared toward helping foreign national employees to settle into employment and life in Ireland – providing assistance in opening bank accounts and obtain PPS numbers are just two examples. Greater cultural understanding by managers is also linked to providing opportunities for promotion and better working conditions for foreign national employees, factors which are more important to them than diversity days in the staff canteen.

The foreign national employees who took part in the focus groups stated that ‘diversity days’ are not enough to motivate them to work harder. This lack of motivation may contribute to the concerns hotel managers have of foreign national employee retention. Understanding the motivational factors of foreign national employees may be facilitated by a greater understanding of their culture. The work of Hofstede (1980), Ronen and Shenkar (1985), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) may be of benefit to hotel managers to aid in their cultural understanding. The work of these theorists details their exploration of the elements of national cultures and their implication for managers in the working environment. An in-depth understanding of these cultural differences can help managers to better motivate their staff. For example, if a manager were to examine Hofstede’s (1980) work, he or she would know that employees from collectivistic cultures such as India will not be motivated by individual promotion opportunities, but by a more collective, group based-reward.
Chapter 6, Conclusions and Recommendations

6.6: Summary

There are a number of steps the researcher believes can be taken to ensure more effective management of culturally heterogeneous employees in the hospitality sector. Because such an industry relies heavily on service delivery by employees, it is vital that all new recruits have a desirable standard of English. From commencement of employment the researcher recommends English language training should be initiated to enhance customer service. Further benefits of ensuring language standards are the ability of management to accurately communicate with their employees, and to relieve undue tension between Irish and foreign national employees. As well as language training, and as a means to enhance it, mentoring is recommended between Irish and foreign national employees. This can greatly assist with the integration of culturally dissimilar employees, which has been attributed to effective diversity management. Understanding the cultural differences of heterogeneous employees is vital to demonstrate commitment and consideration to diversity, as is communicating the message of equal opportunity for all. As retention of foreign national employees was highlighted as a management concern, steps must be taken by hotel managers in this regard. The researcher believes that ensuring equality of opportunity in the organisation, and communicating the organisation’s commitment to this, would greatly enhance retention of foreign national workers. This was an area highlighted during the focus groups, and a significant factor in their motivation and loyalty to their employer. The researcher believes these recommendations can assist hotel managers to retain and satisfy their foreign national employees.
6.7: Recommendations for Further Research

This thesis has concentrated on the challenge to managers of cultural diversity among employees in four and five star hotels in Cork.

The Diversity Awards were launched in 2006 in association with the National Action Plan against Racism. None of the hotels used for primary research had entered the award. Therefore this thesis was unable to document the benefits, if any, to hotel managers and employees of entering the Diversity Awards, or how meeting the award criteria impacted on foreign national employees. However, many of the managers interviewed for this thesis aim to enter the Diversity Awards in 2007 and into the future. Further research in this area could yield insights into diversity policies of competing hotels, and the real benefit to foreign national employees of such policies. Analysis of improvements in productivity and employee motivation levels following participation would further yield insight into the value of diversity initiatives.

Racism was discussed in this thesis, although time constraints limited the examination in detail of racism in the hospitality sector in Ireland. Further research in the area of racism in this sector would be beneficial to supplement publications by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism and other bodies. The research conducted for this thesis found a disparity in foreign national employees' claims of racist abuse and Irish employees' awareness of it occurring. Further research could concentrate on the experiences of foreign national employees in Ireland, and on Irish employees' perceptions and lack of awareness.
While this thesis examines the work of Hofstede (1980), Ronen and Shenkar (1985) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993), the work of other theorists may also be of significance. A complete thesis on the theoretical work on divergent cultures, and its application to the workplace, may be considered by future students. The effect of cultural mores may also be considered.

Future research could document the attitudes and opinions of guests in Cork hotels in relation to the supposed erosion of the traditional Irish welcome and any positive or negative impacts of being served and assisted by foreign national employees.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

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Appendices

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Appendices

Appendices


204


APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Unstructured interviews were conducted with six hotel managers, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Micheál Martin T.D., and Mr. Adrian Gregan. Below is a list of themes and questions that were covered during the interviews.

Themes for Interviews with Hotel Managers

• Discover the number of foreign national workers employed in each hotel, which countries they come from if possible and the ratio of foreign national employees to Irish employees.

• Discover if there are foreign national employees in supervisor/management positions within the hotel.

• Determine the standard and importance of English among foreign national employees.

• Explore the hotel managers’ opinion of employing foreign national employees.

• Regarding Irish and foreign national employees, explore the level of integration in the hotel.

• Explore the management challenge foreign national employees present? How can this challenge be alleviated?

• Support services available.

• Managers’ opinion On Diversity Awards 2006.

• Assistance given to foreign national employees.

• Future concerns.
Themes for Interview with Minister Micheál Martin T.D.

• Explore the Minister’s opinion on the employment of foreign national workers in Ireland.

• Explore the Minister’s opinion on whether the increased number of foreign national employees in Ireland is presenting a challenge to Irish managers.

• Discover the Minister’s opinion on the future for the Irish employment landscape.

Themes for Interview with Mr. Adrian Gregan

• Explore Mr. Gregan’s opinion on the employment of foreign national employees.

• Explore the challenge Mr. Gregan believes foreign national employees present to hotel managers.

• Discover Mr. Gregan’s opinion on the need to preserve the traditional Irish welcome.
APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINES

Four focus groups were conducted in total. Two were conducted with foreign national employees, two with Irish employees. The guidelines for the focus groups follow:

Themes for Focus Groups with Foreign National Employees

- Discover where the participants are from originally.
- Discover how long they have been working in Ireland, and in which department they are employed in the hotel.
- Explore the foreign national employees’ motivation for seeking employment in Irish hotels.
- Assess their experiences working in Ireland; what were their expectations before coming to Ireland, have these expectations been met?
- Discover their proficiency in English.
- Discover the opinion of foreign national employees’ regarding working with Irish co-workers.
- Discover if any of the foreign national employees have experienced racism.
- Discover what level of assistance the foreign national employees have had from their managers in settling in to Ireland, integrating with the workforce etc.
- Explore the foreign national employees’ concerns for the future.
Themes for Focus Groups with Irish Employees

- Discover which departments the Irish employees are working in, and how long they have worked with foreign national employees.
- Explore their opinions on their experiences working with foreign national employees, any positive or negatives they have observed.
- Discuss the Irish Times survey’s question “Should Ireland allow more international workers to come here”.
- Explore Irish employees’ insight into the treatment of foreign national employees.
- Assess Irish employee concerns for the future
## Appendix D

### The Countries used in Hofstede’s (1980) Research

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(Adapted from Hofstede, 1991 cited in Hodgetts et al., 2006:103).