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Retail Business Managers' Strategies for Enhancing Workplace Diversity Planning

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Daniel M. Ortiz

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

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by

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MSM, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 2010

BSPA, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Lack of workplace diversity planning leads to negative financial outcomes. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations. The population included a single focus group of retail business employees as well as business managers of 5 distinct retail stores located in the Southeastern United States who have successfully instituted workplace diversity plans for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations. The conceptual framework for this study was cultural intelligence theory, which researchers have used to explore a person's ability to understand an unfamiliar context and assimilate the host culture. Methodological triangulation was achieved from the results of face-to-face individual interviews, a single focus group, and company documents. Interview data were analyzed using a modified van Kaam method. Analysis resulted in 3 themes (a) guiding principles; (b) training, including coaching and communication; and (c) hiring practices. The implication for positive social change includes the potential to provide new insights related to strategies applicable to workplace diversity planning in the retail businesses sector that can create or improve positive business and community relationships while potentially minimizing risk associated with profitability loss.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my wife Nexie and my daughters, Genesis, Charlene, Milexie, and Tay. For the many endless days of sacrifice, missed family events, social events, but at the end, it all paid off. Also dedicate this study to my eternally resting mother and father who laid my foundation. I thank God for the wisdom and the blessings of my family.

This study helped me realize the importance of family, patience, persistence, the strength of prayer, and the value of an having an excellent coach, Dr. Dorothy Hanson. Thank you.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Retail business managers need to promote a multicultural working environment that meets the demands of the cultural differences (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). A manager failing to create a balanced multicultural work environment can lead the business towards negative financial outcomes (Knights & Omanović, 2016). The promoting of a multicultural working environment allows for positive interaction between cultures. Managers can consider the different multicultural perspectives and focus on increasing profitability.

Background of the Problem

Retail business managers are continuously confronted with a challenging and culturally diverse workplace environment. Managers can effectively strategize to enhance workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations by identifying and applying proven strategies (Boehm, Kunze, & Bruch, 2014; Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016; Fox, Brogmus, & Maynard, 2015). As supported by Zhang, Levenson, and Crossley (2014), successful business leaders integrate proven and efficient design processes in their planning. Conversely, other researchers argued that a diverse workplace environment can be harmful to productivity, wages, and innovation (Schullery, 2013). By devising this study, I explored strategies that leaders should use to enhance workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations.

Problem Statement

Lack of workplace diversity planning leads to negative financial outcomes (Knights & Omanović, 2016). The EEOC reported that in 2013, 2014, and 2015 the agency filed more than 274,000 complaints related to workplace diversity violations that resulted in \$1.2 billion paid to public and private sector employees (EEOC, 2016a). The general business problem is that lack of workplace diversity planning can lead to financial loss and negatively influence business profitability. The specific business problem is that some business managers in the retail sector lack strategies to enhance workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations. The population included business managers of five distinct retail stores located in the Southeastern United States who have successfully instituted workplace diversity plans for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations. The implication for positive social change includes the potential to provide new insights related to strategies applicable to workplace diversity planning in the retail businesses sector that can create or improve positive business and community relationships.

Nature of the Study

The three research methods include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A qualitative design is suitable for the exploration of a contemporary phenomenon in its real-world context (Yin, 2014). Moreover, the researchers using qualitative methodology seek to identify and explore answers to a phenomenon in a natural setting. A qualitative method could be the most appropriate approach to exploring the strategies that some business managers in the retail sector lack to enhance workplace diversity planning that potentially influences business profitability. Conversely, quantitative researchers seek to examine relationships and differences among variables (Green & Salkind, 2014). McCusker and Gunaydin (2015) posited that researchers who use quantitative methods seek to quantify issues and test: (a) the significance of the variables, (b) relationships, and (c) differences. Therefore, the quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because the purpose is to explore a contemporary phenomenon in its real-world context. Researchers using the mixed-method combine qualitative and quantitative methods to address a research question (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Also, a researcher employing mixed-method research uses a variety of data sources, strategies, and methods to gather a range of insights otherwise not achievable through a single method. However, the focus of this study did not require mixed method insight; therefore; a mixed method was not appropriate.

There are several research designs available for individuals using a qualitative approach to explore a research question. I considered the following designs:

ethnographic, phenomenological, and case study. Researchers using an ethnographic design seek to explore, describe, and interpret shared cultural patterns of a group (Forsey, 2010). A key focus of phenomenological designs is the exploration of the meanings of individuals lived experiences regarding a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Reynolds & Hicks, 2015). However, the purpose of this study is not to describe, interpret, or explore group or individual experiences; thus, the ethnographic and phenomenological designs are not appropriate for this study. A case study design is suitable for studying complex systems (Stake, 2010; Yin, 2014). I used a case study design because a case study design is most appropriate for exploring strategies that some small business owners use to develop plans for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations.

Research Question

What strategies do business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning to assure compliance with EEOC regulations?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies have you used to enhance your workplace diversity plan?
2. How have your previous experiences with workplace diversity affected your strategies?
3. What method did you find worked best to enhance your workplace diversity plan?
4. How did your employees respond to your strategies involving workplace diversity?

5. What policies and processes have you or the organization established, if any, to mitigate financial losses due to failure to adhere to workforce diversity laws?
6. What additional information would you like to add regarding this topic?

Conceptual Framework

The cultural intelligence theory (CQ) was developed by Earley and Mosakowski (2004). Earley and Mosakowski suggested that CQ theory is useful when managing national, corporate, and vocational cultures. Furthermore, the application of CQ represents the person's ability to understand an unfamiliar context and assimilate the host culture. Earley and Mosakowski described three sources of CQ: cognitive, physical, and emotional, also known as the head, the body, and the heart. Particularly, a manager's awareness of CQ can be useful to navigate through habits, gestures, and assumptions that define their employees' differences. Earley and Mosakowski (2004) posited that interactions with people require perceptiveness and adaptability. To that end, managers with high CQ can better understand a person's or a group's behavior and respond. Optimally, a diverse workforce should consider managers who can effectively act in unfamiliar backgrounds. A manager who understands CQ can mitigate diversity concerns that could potentially result in financial losses.

Earley and Mosakowski (2004) recommended that to achieve an acceptable standard of CQ, the six-step approach is essential. Managers should begin by examining their CQs strengths and weaknesses, participate in training to address their weaknesses, apply the training, organize support to the organization, enter the cultural setting, and

conduct a 360-degree evaluation. Earley and Mosakowski's (2004) CQ theory potentially aligns with this study because I will explore the strategies that business managers use to enhance workplace diversity planning to comply with EEOC regulations and avoid derivative financial losses.

Operational Definitions

Cultural diversity: Refers to people who migrate and attempt to evolve and succeed in other host nations (Taylor & Kachanoff, 2015).

Cultural intelligence (CQ): The the ability to cope with national, corporate, and vocational cultures (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004).

Six-step process: An examination of a person's CQs strengths and weaknesses (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004).

Voluntary mediation: An informal form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) that allows grieving parties to voluntarily agree to settle the differences (EEOC, 2016c).

Workplace diversity: Similarities and differences among employees including age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation (Martin, 2014).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Some scholars described assumptions as facts that although, given a real value, are not subject to verification (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Other researchers suggested that an assumption is a condition where the practitioners do not exercise any control, is

logically unjustifiable, and is the acceptance of proof that leads to deception (Grant, 2014; Holian, 2015; Krause, 2016). In this study, I assume that participants will provide honest and unbiased responses. Secondly, I assumed that my research approach and data sources would contain enough data to address the main research question. And thirdly I assume that the findings of my study will benefit employees and business leaders.

Limitations

Limitations can be the equivalent of shortcomings deriving from conducting a research study. Limitations also represent the probable deficiencies or weaknesses of a study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers conducting qualitative studies suggested discussion of the study limitations to confirm dependability of findings (Laura, 2016; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016; Yin, 2014). In my study, a limitation was the bias that the researcher could introduce during the interview process. Another limitation was the small sample size of business managers at five retail stores. Because of the small sample population, the findings are not conducive to generalize to the larger population of retail business managers. The geographical location represents a limitation because of its size, and population limits the generalization to other demographics. The findings of other studies from different locations could vary from those of this study.

Delimitations

Delimitations can represent boundaries or constraints. For instance, some researchers agreed that delimitations are the boundaries of the study research (Bentivegna, 2014). Other researchers suggested that research study delimitations refer

to time constraints, permissions, and geographical locations (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). For example, a researcher could introduce biases during the interview process and the participants may experience difficulties in recalling events as they occurred. Another key delimitation to this study was that perceptions will come from a pool of selected participants within a specific region. The delimitations of my study included a population of five retail business managers in the Southeastern United States geographical area.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

The expected contribution of this study is to provide business leaders with new insights on potential strategies to minimize financial losses associated with diversity issues in the work environment. Most successful organizational leaders seek to drive effective decision-making initiatives and processes that integrate the findings of an efficient design process (Zhang et al., 2014). Therefore, findings of this study could serve as a framework for retail businesses to create strategies that enhance their workplace diversity planning strategies and implementation processes.

Implications for Social Change

Implications for social change of this study could provide managers with strategies that foster intercultural communication and relationship building skill sets. Skilled leaders respect human values, understand the demographics of the cities where they operate, and consider the good of the broader community (Ali & Ivanov, 2015;

Supanti, Butcher, & Fredline, 2015). Business leaders that respect the human values and understand demographics also support social change by serving the environment, practicing fairness, and by acting socially responsible (Ament et al., 2014; Vermeulen, 2015). Business managers within the retail sector in the Southeastern United States could benefit from strategies that are conducive to positive relationships and gain an understanding of the cultural differences. The results from this study could foster social change by improving workplace and community engagement while meeting its diversity needs.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations. The targeted population included five retail business managers at five retail stores located in the Southeastern United States who have successfully instituted workplace diversity plans. For this study, I selected a qualitative case study approach to research.

This literature review contains information suggesting that the lack of workplace diversity planning leads to adverse financial outcomes (Knights & Omanović, 2016). The EEOC reported that in 2013, 2014, and 2015 the agency filed more than 274,000 complaints related to workplace diversity violations that resulted in \$1.2 billion paid to public and private sector employees (EEOC, 2016a). Some researchers evidenced that the lack of diversity planning is harmful to productivity, wages, and innovation (Ersoy,

2014; Garnero, Kampelmann, & Rycx, 2014; Zhan, Bendapudi, & Hong, 2015). Therefore, the lack of workplace diversity planning can lead to financial loss and negatively influence business profitability. This literature review serves as the background to understand the concepts surrounding CQ as a venue to strategize diversity planning efficiently. Cultural intelligence represents the lens to understand better diversity in the workplace.

The analysis of this literature review provided the contextual information regarding the role of cultural intelligence and how to improve productivity by maximizing its effectiveness in a multicultural setting. I explored the body of literature concerning workplace diversity because of the need to develop strategies to cope with a diverse and expanding business population. Because of the recent growth in diversity activity and its relationship to business, review of literature in this field is relevant. I also explored the topics of EEOC as well as leadership because of the role of the regulatory piece and the role of retail business managers in enhancing diversity planning for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations.

In the process of identifying the literature for this study, I relied on several databases and sources. Among the databases used to locate peer-reviewed articles included the Walden Library, Business Source Complete, ProQuest, EBSCOhost, Emerald Management, Google Scholar, SAGE Premier, and Thoreau: Search Multiple Databases. In searching peer-reviewed articles, I used keywords and phrases such as *case study*, *diversity*, *business profitability*, *business managers*, *cultural intelligence*,

equal opportunity, financial implications, management, planning, qualitative, profits, strategies, workplace discrimination, virtual teams.

I used the following information sources: (a) books, (b) peer-reviewed articles, (c) dissertations, and (d) online data sources to include United States government websites. The current literature review is inclusive of 221 sources of scholarly peer-reviewed, and non-peer-reviewed journal articles. Of the 221 total sources, 24 sources or 11% of the sources are five years older from my anticipated completion date (CAO approval). Therefore, 89% of the publications date 5 years or less from the expected completion date (CAO approval). The sources breakdown is inclusive of one doctoral dissertation, 209 articles, and 11 books. The literature review contains 119 sources; 115 sources or 96.6% of the sources are peer reviewed.

Cultural Intelligence

The conceptual framework known as cultural intelligence (CQ) is inclusive of similarities as well as differences from that of emotional and social intelligence conceptual frameworks. CQ compliments the theories and research conducted on emotional and social intelligence (Aslam, Ilyas, Imran, & Ur Rahman, 2016). Aslam et al. (2016) conducted a study regarding emotional, social, cognitive, and cultural intelligence on a population of 202 Pakistani insurance business managers. Aslam et al. found that the implications of each intelligence model correlated to the managerial effectiveness and job success. The inclusiveness of the various intelligence models serves as a foundation for future researchers seeking to view culture through different

lenses. Retail business managers could begin to understand the different CQ perspectives and become broad-minded.

Cultural intelligence is essential for managers engaged in a multicultural working environment. Cultural intelligence considers a higher task performance in a cross-cultural working setting (Jyoti & Kour, 2015). Earley and Mosakowski (2004) introduced the construct of CQ method as the capacity to manage national, corporate, and vocational cultures. CQ represents the decision-making ability to make sense of unfamiliar environments. Ability to blend in cross-cultural contexts is essential to manage and efficiently function (Ott & Michailova, 2016). Therefore, managers operating in a multicultural environment must be adaptive and effective in decision making.

Earley and Mosakowski (2004) contended that an individual's decision-making ability is inclusive of four elements to decode and reply to different cultural conditions such as: (a) cognitive, (b) metacognitive, (c) behavioral, and (d) emotional/motivational. Ang et al. (2007) and Earley and Mosakowski (2004) posited that CQ components dwell in what is comparable to the human body areas of the head (cognitive and metacognitive), the body (physical), and the heart (emotional/motivational). The head represents the person's ability to diagnose, control, and embrace thinking and thought processes. A person demonstrates cognitive CQ by adopting strategies that help to create a point of entry into a foreign culture and operate efficiently (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004; Kaufman & Hwang, 2015). Second, the body represents the individual's ability to

mirror people's gestures and customs and assimilate into the host culture. The capacity to mimic habits such as the dressing or greeting others represents behavioral CQ (Jyoti & Kour, 2015; Kaufman & Hwang, 2015). Third, the heart or the motivational CQ component represents an individual's willingness and confidence to engage unfamiliar cultures (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Managers conquering all CQ components become broad-minded and are open to effective cross-cultural interactions.

Business performance depend on CQ adaptive individuals. Individuals possessing high motivational cultural intelligence also maintain a high degree of cultural adjustment while successful team performance requires cross-cultural competencies (Ersoy, 2014). Business success is dependable on building cultural sensitivity, cultural knowledge, and cultural awareness among employees and managers (Sucher & Cheung, 2015). A positive association exists between CQ and the quality of the relationships for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and stakeholders (Charoensukmongkol, 2015; Ersoy, 2014). Individuals with high levels of CQ are considered culturally competent because of their cognitive, behavioral, and motivational abilities to work efficiently with different cultures (Ott & Michailova, 2016). Individuals with a high level of CQ competencies are essential in a multicultural setting (Mathews, 2016). Therefore, enterprises can benefit from CQ adaptive individuals because of their cross-cultural competencies and contributions to business success. Leaders possessing high levels of CQ could influence a multicultural business setting.

Culturally competent leaders are more effective. Leaders with high CQ are considered culturally competent and have cognitive, behavioral, and motivational abilities to work effectively with people from different cultures (Ott & Michailova, 2016). The evidence also indicates that leaders need to build trust, manage conflicts, empower the diverse team equally, mitigate negative behaviors, and focus on the individual (Wang, Heppner, Wang, & Zhu, 2015). CQ is essential to efficiently manage diversity because of the skills and cognitive values. Because of the competencies and cognitive values, business managers with higher levels of CQ are in a better position to lead others.

Individuals with higher levels of cognitive CQ are efficient. Cognitive CQ is associated with the basis of a person's knowledge and is defined as the *knowledge component* as it relates to an efficient cross-cultural adjustment (Jyoti & Kour, 2015). Cognitive CQ is known as the traditional intelligence achieved when an individual gains knowledge useful for cultural interactions (Ott & Michailova, 2016; Varela & Gatlin-Watts, 2014). Cross-cultural awareness and mutual understanding are essential to the execution of intercultural and multicultural business interests (Siakas & Siakas, 2015). Construction of an individual's cultural knowledge requires mutual understanding and interaction with the host (Siakas & Siakas, 2015). Cognitive and culturally competent individuals can achieve mutual understanding while operating with culturally diverse businesses (Barbuto, Beenen, & Tran, 2015). Cognitive CQ is essential for productive international relationships (Lambert, 2016; Rosenauer, Homan, Horstmeier, & Voelpel,

2016). CQ is essential to manage efficiently in diverse business settings because of the higher awareness and understanding among individuals.

Leading others require awareness and the ability to conduct strategic analysis. Cognitive CQ relates to attaining knowledge, metacognitive CQ applies the higher-order thinking ability to how that knowledge is used (Presbitero, 2016). However, metacognitive CQ refers to the strategized application of an individual's experience in a diverse multicultural setting (Sahin, Gurbuz, & Köksal, 2014). Cognitive and metacognitive CQ are closely related to aesthetic judgment and decision-making effectiveness (Ott & Michailova, 2016). An individual's need for adaptation to a foreign culture is relevant to the person's self-awareness (Presbitero, 2016). Presbitero found that metacognitive CQ triggers an individual's higher levels of thinking to analyze further, process, and modify behavior or practices to assimilate the cultural environment. Metacognitive CQ allows people to become aware of their surroundings and become better leaders. Becoming a better leader also considers the individuals' personal traits.

Personality traits influence an individual's metacognitive CQ. For instance, personal openness relates to building interpersonal relationships (Li, Mobley, & Kelly, 2016; Presbitero, 2016). Many successful entrepreneurs regard the quality of the business relationships with the attributes of their networks (Charoensukmongkol, 2015). Individuals with high levels of metacognitive CQ traits are essential to business success (Charoensukmongkol, 2015). Business relationships and business success is attainable

when individuals possess metacognitive CQ traits. In addition to metacognitive CQ, behavioral CQ can add value to an individual's skill sets.

Individuals with high levels of behavioral CQ consider verbal and nonverbal cues. Behavioral CQ relates to the gestures, body language, and the verbal and nonverbal communication that occur during face-to-face interactions (Presbitero, 2016). The things that people do rather than the things that people think encompass behavioral CQ (Ang et al., 2007). Behavioral CQ can improve with training, education, and experience (Barbuto et al., 2015; Tran, Porcher, Falissard, & Ravaud, 2016). Efficient intercultural communication competence emerges when individuals adopt behaviors, emotions, and thoughts from the host culture in developing positive relationships (Wang et al., 2015; Yeke & Semerciöz, 2016). Behavioral CQ competence also stems from the application of one's behavioral and cultural norms in resolving communication differences between parties (Yeke & Semerciöz, 2016). Personality traits such as extroversion could influence an individual's behavior in a cultural setting (Sahin et al., 2014). Therefore, individuals possessing higher levels of behavioral CQ become adaptive and competent by communicating and adapting to other cultures. However, as the business environment changes continually, individuals should become adaptive and capable.

An individual's mental capacity is key in interacting with other cultures. Motivational CQ is associated with the mental capacity and the drive to manage situations or tasks (Ang et al., 2007; Presbitero, 2016). The five sources of motivation are intrinsic process motivation, instrumental motivation, self-concept external

motivation, self-concept internal motivation, and goal internalization motivation (Mathews, 2016). Motivational CQ is essential for leadership effectiveness in a continually changing global business environment. Therefore, business managers confronting continuous change must be adaptive and possess the appropriate mental capacity (Ersoy, 2014). Managers who are culturally intelligent and comfortable with their abilities are better equipped to interact with people outside their culture (Jyoti & Kour, 2015). A CQ intelligent individual possess the mental capacity to engage others and manage change effectively. Effective business leaders are adaptive and recognize the various sources of motivation that help shape organizational success.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory and CQ

Hofstede's cultural dimension theory considers human values and cultural dimensions as elements that affect the business environment. Culture is the set of intrinsic human values that help shape our social and organizational world (Hofstede, 1984). Hofstede also contended that culture is the collective programming of the mind which differentiates the members of one group or society from those of another. Some scholars claimed that culture considers individualism, masculinity, power distance, uncertainty, and long-term orientation as the cultural variances in many countries (Vasile & Nicolescu, 2016). Hofstede proposed six cultural dimensions such as power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence. However, other scholars argued that the four aspects of culture are distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, and uncertainty avoidance (Ag Budin

& Wafa, 2015; Beugelsdijk, Maseland, & Hoorn, 2015; Voss, Lucas, & Ward, 2014).

Despite the differences of opinion among scholars regarding the number of dimensions of culture, some agree that distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance are the most common dimensions of culture.

The understanding of the various cultural dimensions plays a significant role in the diverse workplace setting. For instance, some job advertisements are manipulated with keywords alluding to the CQ denominators of collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance that are appealing to some cultural backgrounds (Chipulu et al., 2016). However, some researchers argued that Hofstede's framework is doubtful and irrelevant to global practitioners and question its relevancy (Beugelsdijk et al., 2015). Job advertisements that entice CQ qualities allow hiring managers to select adaptive candidates to fill specific job positions. Because of the available hiring strategies, managers should build skill sets to meet the market's demand and become better equipped for success.

Understanding of Hofstede's cultural dimensions and CQ is favorable to business success. Managers that study CQ improve their job satisfaction and perform better in a multicultural context (Barakat, Lorenz, Ramsey, & Cretoiu, 2015; Ramsey & Lorenz, 2016; Reynolds, Rahman, & Bradetich, 2014). Other researchers sustained that understanding Hofstede's cultural dimensions in corporations can influence management's success (Vasile & Nicolescu, 2016). The learning environment allows for exposure to cross-cultural values and interaction with community students from various

cultures (Schullery, 2013). Some business managers could become intrinsically interested in learned behaviors versus cultural values. For instance, some business managers seek cultural behaviors with differences and similarities within a business network (Venaik & Brewer, 2016). Managers who understand and assimilate the cultural differences can experience favorable work results (Kriz, Gummesson, & Quazi, 2014). Because of understanding Hofstede's cultural dimensions and its correlate to CQ, some business managers can improve their multicultural work setting. Improvement of the work setting can in turn produce positive work results.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is the federal agency responsible for investigating discrimination. The EEOC enforces federal regulations regarding employment discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetic information (EEOC, 2016c). For example, people experiencing discrimination because of age may invoke protection from the EEOC under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (Rix, 2016). The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) serves to protect individuals 40 years of age or older, against discrimination or harassment during the process of hiring, firing, job assignment, training, and or any other condition of employment (EEOC, 2016c). Individuals may seek EEOC protection under the various regulations such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, Equal Pay Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of

1964, Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA), or the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA).

Some business owners who engage in discriminatory practices are held responsible. The EEOC held entities responsible for paying about \$1.2 billion worth in workplace diversity violations between the years of 2013 and 2015 (EEOC, 2016c). However, countries such as Australia, fail to properly prosecute or investigate entities or individuals engaging in discriminatory practices (Boucher, 2016). In the United States, some businesses violate EEOC regulations by using illegitimate and manipulative advertisements to obtain job candidates' information (Nikolaev & Pavlova, 2016). Other employers use the employees' medical information to filter out individuals with potential medical disabilities despite adequate job performance (EEOC, 2016c). Contrary to some other countries, some American businesses engaging in discriminatory practices are subject to steep monetary fines resulting from EEOC interventions. Therefore, EEOC scrutiny of business practices is necessary to ensure the legitimacy of business practices.

Communication and training are vital to the application of EEOC regulations. Recognizing the high volume of discriminatory allegations, the EEOC engages in providing communication and training venues to educate employers as well as employees (EEOC, 2016c). Engagement of the workforce by providing training and support allows for employee loyalty and output (Goyal & Chhabra, 2015). However, engaging in discriminatory practices can trigger costly lawsuits that are detrimental to the organization (McFadden, 2015). Businesses that participate in training and

communication also create a positive work environment in alignment with EEOC regulations.

Workplace Diversity

Studies in the field of workplace diversity continues to expand. Research in the field of workplace diversity has increased since 1986 (Guajardo, 2013). Businesses are experiencing fluctuations in the work environment because different generations are increasingly working together (Schullery, 2013). Managing a diverse workforce seems to require training and collaboration. Successful diversity planning requires employees and management receive formal training in the topics of diversity and cultural awareness (Abosedo, Ajayi, & Peter, 2014; Wondrak & Segert, 2015). Creation of a favorable and supportive work environment is crucial in overcoming biases and stereotypes (Kalargyrou, 2014). A supportive work environment is critical to the successful functioning of a continually changing business operation.

Researchers date the topic of workplace diversity to 50 years. Workplace diversity Previously known as diversity management, workplace diversity began to take momentum in 1967 among groups of political scientists, public managers, and personnel administrators (Hays-Thomas, 2015). Most of the studies conducted on the topic of workplace diversity regarded integration of minorities in the public sector. When recognizing the importance of workplace diversity, the U.S. National Archives Records Administration (NARA) (2012), Executive Order 13583 aimed to establish a strategic diversity plan for the federal workforce. NARA expanded upon the definition of

diversity regarding culture, race, gender, education, physical abilities, sexual orientation, and religion. In addition, NARA suggested that organizations that embrace diversity, also develop better perspectives, strategies, and improve their quality of work. Because of an increasingly diverse workplace, many private and public entities continue to enhance their diversity planning as part of their business strategies.

Workplace diversity encompass the many differences that make the work setting. Workplace diversity stems from the variances in education, functional background, technical skills, abilities, as well as tenure or cohort membership (Hays-Thomas, 2015). Workplace diversity refers to the differences in cultures, religion, age, gender, education, physical abilities, and sexual orientation (Alexander, Havercome, & Mujtaba, 2015; Berry, 2016; EEOC, 2016a). A researcher studying workplace diversity could perceive demographic as well as job-related differences. An efficient business manager could create strategies to enhance business performance. For instance, a manager should consider workplace diversity in the business environment and performance (Benn, Dunphy, & Griffiths, 2014). Otherwise, discrimination can have a negative impact on a company's bottom line (Durrani & Rajagopal, 2016; Pearce, Wald, & Ballakrishnen, 2015). A manager's understanding of diversity is essential to understanding and business success.

Some people view diversity as detrimental to businesses whilst others do not. Diversity can produce dysfunctional teams, causes conflict between employees and managers, and generate productivity loss (Garnero et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2014).

However, Martin (2014) suggested that workplace diversity allows for a high knowledge base, cross-cultural communication, and superior business potential because of multicultural reach. Workplace diversity permits interaction with a variety of people, who in turn, could help expand a business operation (Presbitero, 2016). Managers should strategize cultural diversity in the workplace by using the five fundamental cultural strategies known as cultural dominance, social avoidance, artistic compromise, cultural synergy, and cultural accommodation.

Cultural synergy could be successfully attainable without losing self-culture. Cultural synergy is advantageous because one could gain knowledge of other's cultures without losing self-culture (Martin, 2014). Individuals from different cultures may share, communicate, and influence each other's behaviors (Yeke & Semerciöz, 2016). Managers should tend to understand the synergies of cultural knowledge sharing. Workplace diversity is an evolving process that requires a balance between learning and life experiences (Reyes & Finkl, 2015). Individuals studying and applying new concepts may also perform better (Ramsey & Lorenz, 2016). Therefore, managers learning cultural synergy could enhance their experience and cultural understanding while maintaining self-culture.

Some countries establish workplace protective laws because of diversity. One example is the U.S. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (EEOC, 2016b). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 offers, among other protections, actions against unlawful employment practices that discriminate against a person's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin

(EEOC, 2016b). Countries such as Australia, Canada, and Germany are following the U.S. by providing protections for the diverse work environment (Bennett, 2016; Boucher, 2016). Often, organizations that experience discrimination lawsuits also suffer costly financial settlements (Deitch & Hegewisch, 2013). The adoption of workplace protective laws is globally becoming popular to avoid costly lawsuits. However, the adoption of laws may also bring about conflict among groups.

Some countries adopt conflicting laws that instead of creating integration, create segregation and disparity. Historically, Israel oppresses and discriminates against Palestinians while seeking to change the demographics and geographic makeup of the country (Baker, 2016). Baker's assertion derived from the review of the Israeli government enactment of laws in response to military confrontation with Palestinians. The adoption of some of the Israeli government regulations precluded Palestinians from entering Israeli territory and conduct business (Baker, 2016). Similarly, Britain signed into law the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act of 2015 that widely supports racial discrimination of Muslims immigrants regarding employment (Bagley & Abubaker, 2017). Bagley and Abubaker found that many Muslim women in Britain are not seen equally by their employers because of their religious beliefs and commitment to family. The adoption of anti-discriminatory policies often contains hidden purposes that counteract the protection of the people (Ozeren, 2014). In creating strategies or adopting laws, one should be mindful of the possible effects and ensure clarity and positive intent.

The global business world has become increasingly diverse. Many global, multicultural entities encounter difficulty in implementing business diversity initiatives (Kirton, Robertson, & Avdelidou-Fischer, 2016). The challenges regarding diversity initiatives stem from a need for balance between diversity and unity (Delhay & de Ven, 2014). The outcome of enhancing diversity planning is dependable on the type of differences at stake (Zhan et al., 2015). For instance, ethnic polarization could potentially jeopardize or enhance an ethnic and cultural diversity initiative. Managers failing to address diversity planning correctly could bring about a conflict which can produce devastating results (Hur & Strickland, 2015). Disagreements, disintegration, sub-group preferences, and interest other than shared common goals can lead to conflict (Zhan et al., 2015). In contrast, inclusiveness among diverse groups leads to positive outcomes (Oudshoorn, Neven, & Stienstra, 2016). Oudshoorn et al. (2016) concluded that strategies resulting from sound planning and inclusiveness in a diverse workforce allow for successful relationships that focus on common goals.

Managers should engage in creating a positive working environment. A working environment that is free of prejudice and conflict fosters the exchange of new ideas, critical thinking, and improvement (Gledhill & Butcher, 2015). Adversely, any form of silent discriminatory practices, derogatory language, or denial for inclusion, represents a disadvantage (Priola, Lasio, De Simone, & Serri, 2014). Some workplace diversity strategies could cause tension among groups and negatively affect the industry (Kirby, Kaiser, & Major, 2015). For instance, managers engaging in deficient diversity strategies

can hinder team and industry performance (Lambert, 2016). Contrarily, a bias-free approach to diversity promotes workplace equality, uniformity, and inclusion (Pearce et al., 2015). Therefore, effective managers recognize the needs of the business, inclusion, and the benefits of employees' contributions to foster a positive working environment.

Cultural Diversity. Cultural diversity could positively contribute to business success. Cultural diversity is essential to business success and creativity (Lambert, 2016). Cultural diversity refers to people who migrate and attempt to evolve and succeed in a host environment (Taylor & Kachanoff, 2015). Cultural diversity brings opportunities for the sharing of new knowledge, ethnic identification, innovation, added perspectives, and new relationships (Han & Beyerlein, 2016; Hays-Thomas, 2015). Individuals possessing cross-cultural competencies could contribute to workplace performance by sharing new dynamics (Sucher & Cheung, 2015). Managers maintaining a higher level of cultural understanding can successfully influence business practices (Hofstede, 2015). The sharing of knowledge among groups could produce new and innovative dynamics essential for business growth. Adaptive managers could recognize the opportunities and exploit the possibilities for improving the workplace performance.

Business leaders must engage in promoting a balance between managing a well-informed team and supporting an effective diversity planning. A favorable business climate evolves from a balance between task interdependence and high levels of CQ (Rosenauer et al., 2016). A well-managed and trained team can produce higher levels of creativity, opportunities, knowledge, inclusiveness, and recognition (Lambert, 2016).

Sharing of information and cultural diversity in the workplace is resisted by many. Some managing members oppose diversity planning because of a fear of career loss and because diversity initiatives could fail (Hofhuis, van der Zee, & Otten, 2015). Leadership is essential to the successful establishment of a culturally diverse environment that fosters a climate of respect towards cultural groupings and identities, promote a constructivist understanding of aesthetic experience, intercultural relations, and sensitivity (Bennett, 2016). Effective leaders understand the benefits of CQ and the importance of fostering inclusiveness in the workplace. Leaders creating an effective workplace also create a favorable business climate.

Some governments fall short of supporting diversity. While many governments and businesses recognize the importance of diversity, some fail to financially support the policies that enhance education (Delhaye & de Ven, 2014). The lack of support stems from the belief that diversity is a device for social integration. Some industries believe that catering to diversity compromises quality and hinder growth opportunities (Earl & Taylor, 2015). Mousa and Alas (2016) argued that diversity training influences organizational effectiveness which places businesses in a better stance to acquire stable market positions. Diversity competency is a continuous developmental process aimed to help managers respond effectively in a diverse working environment (Hays-Thomas, 2015). Although some researchers are aware of the benefits of diversity, some governments and businesses side with the belief that diversity is a device for social

integration which hinders quality and business growth. Business managers should seek cultural diversity education in strategizing for their organizational effectiveness.

Religion Diversity. The differences in religion encompass more than beliefs. Religious diversity refers to the differences in religious beliefs and practices (Kane, Jacobs, & Hawkins, 2015). Kane et al. (2015) also indicated that some religious practitioners connect behaviors, dress codes, lifestyles, and customs to their traditions, faith, and spirituality. The diversity of religion is inclusive of some of the major religious groups such as Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists (Wolfart, 2015). The differences in religion also represent a variety of cultural uniqueness that characterizes each group. Although most people relate to the broader religious ideologies, there are also smaller or non-denominations groups that add to the field of religious diversity.

Religion could influence organizations. Organizations inclusive of diverse religious groups benefit from the sharing of experiences and learning potential that results in new techniques and methods (Moyer, 2015). Conversely, some religious practices and costumes are perceived by others as odd and could lead to intolerance (Kane et al., 2015). Organizations that fail to address diversity, also struggle in conducting business operations (Mousa & Alas, 2016). Businesses should strategize for a positive working atmosphere that maximizes the sharing of experiences and learning among diverse religious groups. A cohesive approach to learning and sharing stimulates the improvement of the workplace by fostering new ideas that align with the organizational goals (Moyer, 2015). Religious diversity is relevant to ethnic diversity in places

experiencing higher volumes of immigration (Wolfart, 2015). Important to note is that religion itself contains multiple cultures (Jyoti & Kour, 2015). Some businesses mitigate the challenges of diversity by adjusting policies, creating initiatives, and adopting work practices to align with the cultural shifts (Mousa & Alas, 2016). Therefore, the incremental religious diversity in the workplace requires effective management strategies to produce positive results.

Religion is not the precursor of a culture. A predominant religion does not necessarily dictate a majority in a culture (Venaik & Brewer, 2016). Religious societies, as well as different forms of government, economics, and markets, can co-exist in a social context (Bennett, 2016). Co-existence requires open communication, awareness of diversity, leadership, equal treatment and building strong relationships amongst members (Alemu, 2016). Despite the presence of dominant groups, cultural bridges that create balance are achievable by establishing focal venues of integration

Age Diversity. Dealing with generational and age differences is essential to businesses. The 1964 Civil Rights Act exempted age as a form of workplace discrimination (EEOC, 2013). Age diversity refers to the collective generational differences among members of a cohort. Although age diversity can add value to an organization, it can also present unique challenges for effective management (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016; Fisher, Truxillo, Finkelstein, & Wallace, 2017; Nikolaev & Pavlova, 2016). Dwyer and Azevedo suggested that workplace awareness is achievable by conducting training aim to mitigate the generational differences. Business managers

dealing with a diverse generational workforce should develop an agile, adaptable, and flexible workplace culture that promotes open communication to ensure alignment between employees and business goals (Purdy & Manning, 2015). Purdy and Manning also suggested that active listening is critical in adapting to a new work environment, and a business manager must understand its importance in enhancing interpersonal relationships. A successful diverse workplace considers everyone's understanding of cultural differences as well as active communication (Presbitero, 2016). Therefore, seems essential for business managers to understand workplace age differences to cope with the challenges effectively.

The workplace environment is inclusive of different age groups. Many firms range between three to four different generational cohorts who share the contemporary workplaces (Boehm et al., 2014; Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016; Mencl & Lester, 2014). Often, the input coming from the older versus, the younger generations are not valued equally (Oudshoorn et al., 2016). Oudshoorn et al. (2016) suggested that the younger generations are more inclined to ignore the input coming from the older generational groups. The likelihood of business success in a diverse generational workplace is dependent upon the integration of ideas (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Seems prudent that retail business managers consider integrating the input from all generational groups in making sound business decisions.

The most crucial employees are the younger and most educated individuals. Institutions that commit age discrimination discredit the older versus, the younger

generation (Fisher et al., 2017; Holian, 2015). Contrarily, researchers in the field of generational discrimination argued that youth discrimination is evident in young students as well as individuals 35 years of age or younger in the business sphere (Nikolaev & Pavlova, 2016). Because of the mixed age groups in the workforce, many businesses should strategize to minimize the generational differences (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Effective managers then should aim to develop strategies that allow inclusiveness among cross generational boundaries to avoid costly discriminatory lawsuits and enhance better business practices that align with current EEOC regulations.

Some governments promote labor protection in support of the older generations. An example is the enactment of the United States Older Americans Act of 1965, also known as the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to support job placement and training programs for disadvantaged elderly (Rix, 2016). Also, the U.S. Congress enacted the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 to promote employment of older individuals, highlight ability versus age as a hiring factor, and to address age discrimination in the labor force (EEOC, 2016c). The Employment Act of 1967 applies to individuals of 40 years of age and older (EEOC, 2013). The U.S. also enacted the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 to protect older persons designated as federal financial recipients (Rix, 2016). Similarly, the United Kingdom ratified the Equality Act of 2010 to provide compensatory remedies for workers experiencing age discrimination (Dewhurst, 2015). Researchers also argued that some of the treatments under the Equality Act of 2010 contain stereotypes that can influence the outcomes

(Dewhurst, 2015). Revision of existing laws could ease the burden for managers operating in a diverse workplace.

Despite the presence of anti-discrimination laws, many businesses continue to incur in costly age discriminatory practices. In 2016 the EEOC reported that age discrimination practices in private, state, federal, and local firms cost more than \$482 million (EEOC, 2016c). The EEOC also indicated that the voluntary mediation and conciliation rate increased as compared to previous years. Voluntary arbitration as a form of ADR is a crucial tool in resolving employment-related disputes outside of the courts (EEOC, 2016a). A retail business manager should steer away from age discriminatory practices that could negatively influence business profitability.

Individuals could mind their age of retirement or age-based retirement. For instance, determining a retirement age may conflict with current age discriminatory laws and the employee's interest (Kaups, 2016). Also, mandatory retirement age or retirement based solely on age could have an adverse impact on business as well as the employees receiving the services (Holian, 2015). For instance, the compulsory retirement age could result in the significant exodus of quality industry professionals which can lead to a skill void and delays in services (Kaups, 2016; Rix, 2016). Therefore, managers should be aware of the retirement age laws and the impact on business operations.

Some countries are facing workforce shrinkages due to age-related retirement. Because of the age-related shortages, the Australian workforce is providing work flexibility in the form of flexible schedules aimed to extend the employee working life

and avoid employee shortages (Earl & Taylor, 2015). Giving meaningful solutions to retain quality professionals may help maintain a balanced workforce. Managers should consider the existing laws, employee shortages, employee capacity, as well as useful work arrangements to extend the employee's working life.

Gender Diversity. Gender diversity continues as one of the most discussed and controversial topics. For instance, gender refers to the distinctions between male and female, woman and man, girls and boys (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015; EEOC, 2013). Gender differences are natural and allow for individuals to partake in private and public domains of society (Miller & Borgida, 2016). Therefore, distinctions in genders allow for the growth of the organization and the creation of new ideas. Retail business managers should consider the gender differences when developing strategies to enhance workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations.

Gender equality could have marketing and business implications. For instance, some researchers highlight the relevance of equal pay and workplace flexibility in achieving gender equality (Bisom-Rapp & Sargeant, 2014). Studies regarding gender in the workplace focus on the role of the gender distinction (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015; Perryman, Fernando, & Tripathy, 2016; Whiston, Feldwisch, Evans, Blackman, & Gilman, 2015). Businesses should consider the relevance of gender diversity and its correlates to enhance workplace diversity planning.

A manager's understanding of how gender relates to performance in the work environment is essential. Recognizing an individual's ways of processing or responding

to the different scenarios enhances the working environment (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). For instance, learning how to anticipate the gender responses in different situations could benefit some businesses. Different from Bisom-Rapp and Sargeant (2014), who embraced the importance of equal pay, Perryman et al. (2016) centered their study towards female executive pay gap and top management performance. Perryman et al. found that women in similar leadership positions receive lesser pay than their male counterparts. Understanding gender differences could reduce risk, improve performance, and promote equal pay. Contrarily, Whiston et al. (2015) viewed gender diversity from the age and socio-political standpoint. Whiston et al. argued that professional woman at or over 50 years of age see themselves as part of an elaborate socio-political environment.

Equal pay is an area of debate in the global market. Many of the concerns about equal pay gap continue to vary between the economically advanced nations (Sandberg, 2016). Meanwhile, global businesses fall short of implementing comparable pay measurements that protect women. In contrast, the U.S. labor market continues to experience a closing of the wage gaps in different areas (O'Reilly, Smith, Deakin, & Burchell, 2015). Although some progress is evident, gender pay gap requires further legislation. Some researchers argued that the current policymaking approach falls short of addressing the needs of women who reach retirement age (Bisom-Rapp & Sargeant, 2014). Because of gender pay gaps, many women suffer from financial disparity that is

not experienced by their male counterparts. Gender pay gap difference is an ongoing issue that requires support from policymakers, businesses leaders, and society.

The gender-related pay gap is relevant when considering women as the manager, higher education, or pay secrecy. Pay secrecy refers to workplace rules that prohibit employees sharing salary information as to maintain the anonymity of each other's pay statuses (Kim, 2015). In the absence of pay secrecy, female managers associated with lower rank employees also experience challenges regarding compensation status (Abraham, 2016). Women in the U.S. with higher education and under an outlawed pay secrecy system tend to suffer minor gender pay inequality (Kim, 2015). Some women managers under a pay secrecy system receive protection from revealing their pay and receive incentives equal to many male counterparts. Kim argued that in many instances, gender pay inequality is manageable. Therefore, retail business managers should consider any inconsistencies associated with gender pay gaps as part of strategizing to enhance diversity planning to assure compliance with EEOC regulations.

Another common gender diversity issue is workplace flexibility. The EEOC Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2012-2016 reported five significant obstacles that preclude women from advancement in the U.S workforce (EEOC, 2016a). The first hurdle is inflexible workplace policies for women with caregiver obligations. The second barrier relates to unavailable management positions for women. The third obstacle is that women in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics experience underrepresentation. The next obstacle is salaried disparity as women on average earn

less than their male counterpart. The last hurdle relates to gender biases and stereotypical perceptions. However, many businesses that are publicly accountable and are also perceived as transparent (Ali & Ivanov, 2015). Therefore, firms that engage in transparency and accountability may foster a positive workplace environment.

Some of the most common workplace discriminatory practices against women relate to career breaks and caregiving. Career breaks include pregnancy, childbirth, and the care of family members (Alteri, 2016; Bisom-Rapp & Sargeant, 2014). Despite some countries providing various levels of gender protection, some of the protections are not adequate. An example of inadequate protection is evident as some courts ruled against the provisions regarding breastfeeding in the workplace under the United States Pregnancy Discriminatory Act of 1978 (Alteri, 2016). The Affordable Care Act includes gender-protective regulations, but some businesses are not held accountable because of the lack of remedies associated with the provisions (Alteri, 2016). However, many companies opt to engage in accommodating childbearing and breastfeeding as special individual accommodations (Bisom-Rapp & Sargeant, 2014). Although some governments provide some levels of workplace protections for women, socially responsible entities take the initiative in protecting their employees.

Many working mothers are successful regardless of having children or not. For instance, some researchers suggested that school attending children are not a barrier to the success of working mothers (Doubell & Struwig, 2014). However, many of the working women from South Africa with adult teenagers (over 18 years of age) receive

negative criticism from society because of their active employment status. Meanwhile, many Asian women are limited by culture from business success regardless of having children or not (Param, 2015). Although women may experience the gender divide resulting from social stigma, many are successful despite the obstacles.

Some forms of workplace flexibility include flex-place and flexi-time conditions. Under the flex-place condition, (telecommunicating or teleworking) employees can conduct work from other than their usual and physical job site location (Munsch, 2016). Similarly, under the flexi-time condition, employees could adjust the beginning and end of their workday as a flex-place or regularly scheduled employee. Flex-place is useful for parents (male or female) seeking to care for young children or acting as caregivers. Contrarily, other researchers argued that employees who request flexible working conditions other than for caregiving receive less favorable views (Kmec, Huffman, & Penner, 2014). Although some businesses employing flex-place and flexitime may discriminate employees who are caregivers versus non-caregivers, gender does not seem to be the factor.

Education Diversity. Education plays a vital role in an individual's development as well as societal development. Through education, some people can increase income as well as employment opportunities (Rauscher, 2015). Higher education serves as a bridge to conquer cultural differences and serves as a tool in the competitive field of business (Rauscher, 2015). Therefore, retail business managers should consider the educational diversity in the workplace and strategize to maximize opportunities.

The treatment of equally educated individuals varies. Despite the similarity in educational levels among genders, gender plays a vital role in job attainment and pay (Jung & Lee, 2016). In contrast, while the male population succeeds in the higher social markets, the female population experience cultural bias (Figueiredo, Rocha, Biscaia, & Teixeira, 2015). Exposure to labor markets indicates that men are more prone to attain higher pay and job experience in comparison to their female counterparts (O'Reilly et al., 2015). To that end, women encounter more challenges regardless of their educational and experience stance as compared to the male counterparts.

Some European, as well as Northern and Southern American nations, value gender above the individual's educational level. Some researchers contended that gender segregation supersedes educational diversity on many levels (Figueiredo et al., 2015). Other researchers in the field of education and gender inequality argued that women suffer from gender segregation despite being over-educated as compared to their male counterparts for the same type of jobs (Ferreira & Silva, 2016; Jung & Lee, 2016). In the U.S., highly educated women are less likely to suffer from gender pay gap, up to 15%, when compared to non-graduate women (Kim, 2015). Although most researchers point out that educational diversity and gender segregation is evident, higher education seems to serve as a path to success.

Higher education is the venue to attain an integrated workplace. García-Mainar, García-Martín, and Montuenga (2015) explored the role of the educational levels from 60,000 Spaniard wage earners and concluded that higher education is essential for

reducing gender inequality in the workplace. As supported by Kim (2015), equality between the sexes ties to higher education because of the results obtained in the integrated workforce. Higher education allows for an integrated workplace where educational diversity serves as a business tool.

The prestige of some elite universities could influence the job market. For instance, prestigious schools provide students with a higher social networking capability that bridges employability (Jung & Lee, 2016). Similarly, Ciriaci and Muscio (2014) contended that the quality of the educational institutions influences employment outcomes. Therefore, quality and prestige of an educational system allow job candidates to have an edge on job attainment. Students could enhance their educational diversity and job placement by selecting quality and prestigious educational institutions.

Studying abroad is a path to acquire skills relevant to business. The experiences and competencies learned elsewhere are helpful in the job market (Di Pietro, 2014). Other scholars contended that a distinction between educational diversity regardless of race, disability, gender, or sexual orientation is key to an efficient workplace (Bhattacharya, 2016). Some researchers agree that relevant skills irrespective of the individual's gender, education, race, disability or sexual orientation are viewed positively in a diverse workplace setting.

Physical Disabilities. Discrimination against people with disabilities could be costly. The EEOC (2016b) defined *physical disability* as a physical and or mental condition that limits an individual's major life activities, a natural or psychological state

that is not transitory, or as a person who has a history of disability. In the U.S., the EEOC has settled about half a billion dollars in discrimination claims including disability claims in the year 2015 alone (EEOC, 2016c). Many business leaders experience difficulties investing towards diversity initiatives and inclusiveness in the workplace. Despite the challenges, the high cost related to discriminatory practices is manageable when organizations engage in diversity initiatives and inclusiveness (Kalargyrou, 2014). Because of adopting diversity initiatives and inclusiveness in the workplace, organizations could experience higher profitability.

The number of barriers to overcome diversity in the workplace are more common than strategies to defeat diversity obstacles. Hagner, Dague, and Phillips (2015) found that in the workplace, barriers outnumber the strategies and even small inclusionary failures at the workplace have a detrimental effect on disabled employees. Often, people experiencing physical disabilities in the workplace attempt to hide or lessen their disabilities unless represented by similarly handicapped individuals in higher positions of authority (Boucher, 2016). Therefore, managers should seek strategies to remove obstacles by serving disabled individuals. Open communication between employees and leadership may produce a better workplace.

Some successful physically disabled individuals manage and strategize their careers. Successful handicapped individuals plan their career while considering promotions, fitting in, recognition, helping others in similar conditions, and finding financial independence (Kulkarni & Gopakumar, 2014). Similarly, other researchers

(Boucher, 2016; Hagner et al., 2015) concluded that people with disabilities commit, advocate, and support others with similar conditions. Individuals who strategize their career paths and collaborate may enhance and attain positive results. Retail business managers should be mindful of the workplace environment and help trigger collaboration among the different groups.

Sexual Orientation. Some people may argue about the definition of *sexual orientation*. Some researchers define sexual orientation regarding heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual orientation (Bailey et al., 2016). Other researchers view sexual orientation as the generic sexual minorities (Savin-Williams, 2016). Generic sexual minorities further branch out into various categories such as bisexual males, bisexual females, gay males, lesbian, individuals in between sexualities, and gender nonconformity (Bailey et al., 2016). People define sexual orientation within at least three significant groups and further subcategorize each major group under several subcategories. Hence, the importance for one to recognize the various and complex definitions which, are critical in understanding the concepts.

Open minded retail business managers should be aware of the firm's geographical location, values, and cultural variances. A person whether lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender experiencing a change of geographic area may also experience anxiety and stress because of the cultural shift (Ramanna, 2015). Some cultures may judge a person's sexual orientation which can influence the acceptance or negate at the host environment (McFadden, 2015). Hence, employers should abstain from inquiring about the

employees' sexual orientation or sexual preferences (EEOC, 2016c). Open minded business managers who understand the environment, may regard employees better and be mindful of the cost of lawsuits associated with discrimination against sexual orientation.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission provides coverage to both, sexually-orientated as well as gender discrimination. The Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 condemns sexual orientation discrimination on the grounds of sex or gender discrimination (EEOC, 2016a). Discrimination against an individual's gender or sexual orientation leads to possible productivity and monetary loss (Ozeren, 2014). Therefore, perception reflect negatively on individuals as well as detrimental to businesses. Retail business managers should consider the EEOC protections and the impact of discrimination to the workplace.

Leadership

Effective leaders engage in cross-cultural interactions. Business leaders practicing cultural intelligence concepts communicate better, instill a sense of cultural awareness, and understand the similarities and differences (Ersoy, 2014). Leaders following the employees' culture are useful in identifying the behaviors of individuals and the implications on organizational leadership (Ag Budin & Wafa, 2015). Promoting a multicultural working environment allows for the sharing of values and ideas aim to enhance or develop corporate policies (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Culturally intelligent leaders are essential in a multicultural environmental in promoting a sense of inclusion among the teams. The team effectiveness relates to overcoming bias, knowledge sharing,

dynamics, and demonstrating intercultural acceptance (Han & Beyerlein, 2016). A leader who fosters a climate of respect towards multicultural groups also promote understanding and sensitivity (Bennett, 2016).

Leaders engaging in cross-cultural management impart organizational learning and intervention (Hofstede, 2015). The lack of education leads to erroneous assumptions and expectations that distresses the quality of relationships and interactions (Hays-Thomas, 2015). Leadership commitment to intervention affects organizational outcomes. A working environment conducive to enhancing performance and learning serves as a platform for producing innovation through new ideas, products, and service (Lambert, 2016). Understanding the concepts of communication, motivation, and teamwork help promote opportunities for growth and development among the organization (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016; Yeke & Semerciöz, 2016). Leaders need to consider the CQ concepts in creating an innovative and balanced workplace environment.

The cultural setting could have implications for leadership. Some Central American businesses embrace a humanistic approach to leadership because of the importance of relationships among leaders and followers (Dabke, 2016). The cultural setting and individuals' behaviors drive the leadership styles (Ag Budin & Wafa, 2015). Leaders embracing a new cultural setting need to adapt to the environment and mold their leadership style to accommodate the differences. Adapting to the new setting may also include compliance with existing regulations. Dependable on the business size and discriminatory action, the EEOC may impose punitive monetary or compensatory

remedies (EEOC, 2016b). Discrimination lawsuits can be costly and could hamper the business' image (Deitch & Hegewisch, 2013). Leaders need to consider the cultural setting, mold their leadership style, and comply with existing regulations to enhance diversity in the workplace aim to avoiding costly settlements to the organization.

Transition

Section 1 is an overview of the effects of workforce diversity in today's business sphere. In an increasingly diverse workforce, business managers should understand the present challenges. Because diversity in the workplace encompasses culture, education, gender, physical abilities, age, religion, and sexual orientation, business managers must become knowledgeable and strategize in addressing the issues. I discussed the foundations of diversity to include the characteristics of each of seven of its components as well as various strategies and programs. The purpose of the discussion regarding the foundations of diversity is to help the reader understand the differences and commonalities between the cultural aspects. Findings from previous researchers are indicative that future research should further explore workplace diversity and its effects on business success from the grounds of culture, education, gender, physical abilities, age, religion, and sexual orientation.

Section 2 includes a discussion of the research method for this study. I used a qualitative research method design to obtain information about how the various diversity components in the workplace environment affect a retail business setting. I incorporated a multiple case study approach to generating and collecting data while identifying critical

issues in addition to recommendations for improving diversity in the workplace. Section 2 is inclusive of the descriptions for conducting research, the researcher's role in performing the analysis, sampling techniques, selection of participants, as well as data collection and instrumentation. Section 2 is also inclusive of the process regarding the collection, transcription, and analysis of the qualitative data. Section 2 is also inclusive of detailed information regarding the method and design as well as rationale for selecting a qualitative multiple case study method.

Section 2: The Project

My objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning that potentially influences business profitability. The population included business managers of five distinct retail stores located in the Southeastern United States who have successfully instituted workplace diversity plans for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations. The business implication consists on the potential to provide new insights related to strategies applicable to workplace diversity planning in the retail businesses sector. The impact of positive social change also includes the potential to improve the workplace business environments by a better understanding of workforce diversity to create positive business and community relationships.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations. The population included business managers of five distinct retail stores located in the Southeastern United States who have successfully instituted workplace diversity plans for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations. The implication for positive social change includes the potential to provide new insights related to strategies applicable to workplace diversity planning in the retail businesses sector that could create or improve positive business and community relationships.

Role of the Researcher

In this study, I represented the researcher. The researcher is to relinquish some degree of self-interest through interaction with interviewees and the analysis of the data (Moore, 2015). As part of the analytical process, a researcher should articulate and convey to their readers an honest and substantive content of the project. The researcher evaluates the observations and produce interpretations and is responsible for the data collection, data analysis, data evaluation, as well as acts as the protector of the human subjects (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Khoshnava, Shoghi, & Ali, 2014). The role of the researcher expands to all stages of the study including concept and design, interviews, transcribing, analysis, and reporting the ideas and themes. A researcher must ensure that participants are free from any harm or danger during the interview process. The pool of participants is five retail business managers located in the Southeastern United States who have successfully instituted workplace diversity plans to assure compliance with EEOC regulations.

In this study, no previous contact existed between the researcher and any of the prospective participants. Also, I possessed no previous experience on the topic of strategies to enhance workplace diversity planning nor established any relationships with the participants. A researcher should be mindful that links drawn between the researcher and participants in qualitative studies can raise ethical concerns (Sanjari et al., 2014). Because of ethical concerns, to avoid bias, and to view data through a personal lens, the researcher should exercise respect for privacy, conduct honest and open interactions, and

avoid misrepresentations. Shapka, Domene, Khan, and Yang (2016) declared that researcher employing interview protocols mitigate bias by concentrating on the participants' responses and not the views of the researcher. Boucher (2016) noted that participants' views could originate from the interviewee's selection of relevant topics versus a structured or semistructured interview protocol. The interpretation, behaviors, and reflections of the interviewees will be relevant to this study.

Researchers employing human subjects require a high level of ethical care. On July 12, 1974, the National Research Act (Pub. L. 93-348) signed into law by members of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS, 1979). The National Research Act (Pub. L. 93-348) is also known as the Belmont Report. The purpose of the Belmont Report was to create guidelines and principles protective of research inclusive of human subjects. The Belmont Report includes three key fundamentals elements. The first essential element regards to the boundaries between practice and research. The general rule is that the investigation activity requires a review process to ensure the protection of human subjects. The second fundamental relates to basic ethical principles where one considers respect for persons and beneficence. Respect for persons demands that subjects enter the research voluntarily and with adequate information. Beneficence regards to the ethical treatment of individuals while taking measures to secure the participant's well-being. I considered the ethical principles as well as select a safe interview location free of hazards or harm to the participants.

Participants

This qualitative multiple case study examined the retail business industry in the Southeastern United States area. The retail business industry is suitable for this study because access to the geographic location and access to participants. An adequate number of participants for a study is fundamental in obtaining higher certainty of the real effects (Kaiser, Thomas, & Bowers, 2016; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2014). In this study, the participants were retail business managers.

The pool of participants was five retail business managers located in the Southeastern United States who have successfully instituted workplace diversity plans to assure compliance with EEOC regulations. A qualitative case study requires the participants' experience in the phenomenon (Yin, 2014). To correctly identify the participants, I networked with the local Chamber of Commerce. Also, I reached out to businesses that were filed against by the EEOC and established a successful diversity plan. I introduced the doctoral research and the purpose, the criteria, and the confidentiality and informed consent protocols. Participants who agreed to partake in the interview, signed a consent form stating their voluntary collaboration in the study.

Offering incentives may have positive and negative connotations. Participant selection is best when using noncoercive strategies (McDermid, Peters, Jackson, & Daly, 2014). For instance, researchers that offer incentives to participants can trigger coercion (Jennings et al., 2015; Polacsek, Boardman, & McCann, 2016). However, a disadvantage for offering incentives to participants of a study is the possible reduction in the

participation rate (Zutlevics, 2016). In this study, I did not provide any compensatory incentives to participants. As a precautionary technique, the consent form (see Appendix A) for participation in this study contained language addressing conflicts of interest or coercion.

Upon the business' leader approval for cooperation, I began to coordinate the interviews at least two weeks in advance and confirmed each participant interview with the exact date, time, and location (see Appendix A). Before the meeting date, the participants received a concise consent form inclusive of the research question (see Appendix A). Participants are likely to read a short and concise consent form versus a longer version (Perrault & Nazione, 2016). Some researchers agree that a consent form that is shorter and simpler to understand is preferable among participants (Ittenbach, Senft, Huang, Corsmo, & Sieber, 2015). Other researchers argued that using a poorly written consent form may not ensure the rights of the participants (Wen et al., 2016). Because a consent form should contain concise and informative language while protecting the participant's rights, the consent forms in this study met conciseness, protective, and informational protocol.

Obtaining the participants information was essential to the study. In conducting case studies, the information obtained from the participants represents the essential source of data (Morse, 2016; Yin, 2014). A researcher who performs interviews could discover that the qualitative data contains new and critical observations (Posavac, 2015). Researchers' diligence when selecting a target population is useful primarily when the

respondents provide further helpful information. The new data could be beneficial for exploring other points of views. I strategized in selecting the target population to obtain useful information. Among the strategies I used to gain access to participants, included establishing a professional working relationship with local retail industry management professionals by first requesting a face to face meeting and then follow up by emailing a sample appendices A, B, or C for the interview, member checking, or focus group. I engaged in communications with the Southeastern United States Chamber of Commerce as to attain information about the local retail businesses useful for this study. The participants for this study received informed consent forms via e-mail or in person. I obtained a signed form before beginning an interview.

Case studies are unique in science while remaining ethical. Different from other sciences, case studies are part of the social sciences sphere where the researcher focuses on the study of contemporary phenomena in its real-world context (Yin, 2014). Social scientists have the ethical obligation to protect human subjects. The protection of the participant confidentiality begins with the researcher's awareness (Petrova, Dewing, & Camilleri, 2014). A positive relationship between the ethical bodies, including Walden University and other ethics committees, is critical to the success of the confidentiality process (Snowden, 2014). A researcher must be aware of the ethical obligations of protecting human participants and ensure privacy in the study.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

The three research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Macfarlane et al., 2015; Yin, 2014). A qualitative method is suitable to develop a thorough understanding of a phenomenon (Boddy, 2016; Almalki, 2016). A qualitative method is also appropriate to engage in open-ended questions in discovering what is occurring or has occurred (Yin, 2014). Because I conducted a study seeking to understand a phenomenon by engaging participants with open ended questions, a qualitative method was most appropriate. In contrast, quantitative researchers use closed-ended questions to test hypotheses (McDowell, Harris, & Geho, 2016). Quantitative researchers seek to examine relationships and differences among variables (Green & Salkind, 2014). In this study, participants took part of an inductive form of inquiry to explore a phenomenon, therefore, a quantitative method was not suitable. Meanwhile, mixed-method combines qualitative and quantitative methods to address a research question and specific issues (Almalki, 2016; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015; Seyyedrezaie, Ghonsooly, Shahriari, & Fatemi, 2016). The use of the mixed method is a sophisticated form of inquiry that requires integration of qualitative and quantitative data at various stages of the study to produce findings (Green et al., 2015). Therefore, a researcher employing a mixed method requires an expert level of understanding of the various research and statistical methods. The focus of this study

does not require mixed insights because I represented a beginner researcher. Therefore, a mixed method was not appropriate.

Research Design

Several research designs are available for individuals using a qualitative approach. Researchers employ a research design to conclude the findings, validity, and reliability of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The ethnographic design is a qualitative research process that researchers use when seeking to understand and interpret cultural behaviors and events while occurring in its context (Hoey, 2014; Moustakas, 1994; Saunders et al., 2016). Researchers employing an ethnographic design do not seek to explore a phenomenon but describe and interpret shared patterns of a group (Butnaru, 2015; Forsey, 2010). Because the intent of this study was not to explain cultural practices and trends, the ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study. The phenomenological design is the intrusive exploration of the meanings of individuals lived experiences relating to a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Reynolds & Hicks, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016). A researcher employing a phenomenological design seeks to observe the individuals' experiences regarding a phenomenon. Because the objective of this study was not to explore groups or individual lived experiences, the phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study. However, a case study design is suitable for studying complex systems (Saunders et al., 2016; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2014). A researcher employing a case study design seeks an in-depth inquiry into a phenomenon within its real-life setting (Yin, 2014). Thomas (2015) posited that a

researcher applying a case study design attempt to gather evidence from different sources such as interviews, company records, reports, and peer-reviewed sources to support arguments. My study included the collection of interview data, company documents, reports, and peer-reviewed sources. Because a researcher using a case study design finds flexibility in data sources, a case study design was appropriate for this study.

Population and Sampling

Defining the Population

The scope of research of this multiple case study was limited to a population of five managers from five local retail businesses in the Southeastern United States. Researchers employing a multiple case study could seek replication of the process of producing evidence and allow for adequacy of the number of participants and their experiences regarding the phenomenon. Also, a researcher employing multiple case study aims to collect information from various sources suitable for the nature of the research question of this study (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Fugard & Potts, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016). Replication becomes evident as a researcher finds new information from a single population sample while making other sampling decisions (Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015). Equally important is that the population sample consisting of five retail business managers demonstrate successful strategies to enhance workplace diversity planning to assure compliance with EEOC regulations. For instance, the five retail business managers were able to understand, and

answer questions related to the strategies that enhance a diversity plan in their workplace. To that end, a multiple case study was most appropriate for this study.

I interviewed all five managers. Researchers seeking the interviewees' collaboration during the research process also achieve trustworthiness (Thomas, 2017). Because trustworthiness was essential to the study, the interview process took place in a private setting free of distractions and participants will not be exposed to any form of harm, injury, or insult. A researcher should consider logistics of conducting interviews and maximize the participant's time and availability in selecting the interview setting (Saunders et al., 2016). Interview settings include public libraries, available conference rooms, or the manager's office. However, other researchers argued that conducting online or phone interviews versus face to face interviews are irrelevant and that the participant should have a choice (Shapka et al., 2016). I conducted interviews with each manager at their office or available conference room while considering the private setting and availability.

Sampling

The size of the sample population does not determine data saturation. Previous researchers posited that the sample size, whether larger or smaller, is irrelevant to achieving data saturation (Bunpha, Pedersen, & Sridith, 2014). Instead, data saturation takes place when the researcher reaches the point of obtaining no newer data.

Researchers conducting qualitative research begin with a minimum number of individuals in the sample and add more to achieve exhaustion of new themes (Yin, 2014). A

researcher conducting a multiple case study could reach data saturation with either, a large or smaller sample population.

A small sample population could serve the purpose of the study. Other researchers suggested that the sample size should be representative of the population as much as possible while also considering the cost of data collection, transcription, and depth of analysis (Boddy, 2016; Fugard & Potts, 2015). For this study, the sample size consisted of five managers from five local retail businesses located in the Southeastern United States. To that end, I pursued approval from local business leaders in acquiring participants for my study (see Appendix A).

The case study's data analysis contains a two-stage process in reaching depth. Researchers employing multiple case studies engage in a two-stage data analysis that includes the case analysis and cross-case analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2014). Researchers employing a case analysis, analyze each case in-depth and separately. The cross-case analysis represents building commonalities with the number of cases and selects a sampling technique that supports the research design. I individually analyzed each of the five retail business managers in retail stores and then cross-examined all cases to identify commonalities, themes, and general explanations applicable to each of the five cases.

Data saturation could be obtained with a small pool of participants. A researcher conducting a multiple case study employing multiple data collection methods could reach data saturation with a few participants (Sandelowski, 2015; Yin, 2014). A researcher

who achieves data saturation provides a comprehensive description of the concepts and makes a valuable contribution to the literature (Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2014).

Because of the small sample population for this study, a small census sample was appropriate. A small census sample inclusive of five managers at retail businesses in the Southeastern United States coupled with data triangulation helped to reach data saturation.

Ethical Research

A researcher must be ethically driven. Researchers must protect the participants' information to enable a safer ethical space between the researcher and the participants (Connelly, 2014; Maragakis & O'Donohue, 2016; Petrova et al., 2014). Confidentiality is essential for the short and long-term outcomes of the study (Manton et al., 2014). Researchers employing ethical practices could narrow the difficulties associated with maintaining confidentiality among the participants by using pseudonyms.

Participants received paper or electronic information about the interview process as well as the consent process (see Appendix A). The American Psychological Association (2013) contains a code of ethics useful for sampling, design, and all aspects of scholarly research. Each participant received a standard research consent form. The consent form contained specifics regarding compensation associated with participation in this study. In this study, incentives were not applicable. Ethical protection applied to all participants. Participation in this research study was voluntary, and the participant could have withdrawn at any time (Maragakis & O'Donohue, 2016). If the participant elected

to end participation in the study, a verbal notification or refusal to collaborate via email at any time sufficed.

Ethical protection included measures to protect personal information. Personal information can be protected by securing the data in safe storage (Sanjari et al., 2014). Personal data is filed for a minimum of five years to protect the rights and vulnerability of participants (American Psychological Association, 2010). Other than the researcher, no other person has access to the stored information. The final doctoral manuscript included the Walden University's IRB approval number 06-01-18-0554035 set to expire effective May 31st, 2019. Before this study, I never engaged any of the participants in a business or personal relationship.

Data Collection Instruments

In this study, I constituted the primary instrument of data collection. A researcher's interest in a study topic serves as the primary data collection instrument (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Face to face interviews with participants allows for the analysis of attitudes and concepts obtained from the central emerging topics (Desivilya & Raz, 2015; Yin, 2014). Interviews are the most common data collection source in qualitative studies (Yin, 2014). Also, researchers conducting qualitative interviews ask open-ended questions as to obtain the participant's viewpoints (Tran et al., 2016). Other researchers reported that the data collection process could be at risk whenever researchers fail to recognize their bias (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Because of possible bias, researchers employing useful data collecting technique should be aware of the participants'

perspectives and not those of the researcher. The objective of a researcher is to obtain as much relevant and unbiased information as possible while serving as the primary data collection instrument. In this study, the interview instrument consisted of six open-ended questions to help explore the phenomenon of business managers in the retail industry in the Southeastern United States related to strategies that some business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity to influence business profitability.

A researcher conducting semi-structured interviews aims for flexibility by asking probing questions with the participants. For instance, researchers employing semistructured face to face interviews find flexibility by encouraging participant expressions (Gerencheal, & Horwitz, 2016; Greco, 2016; Moustakas, 1994). Other researchers sustain that younger participants are equally comfortable engaging in interviews involving face to face or online forums (Shapka et al., 2016). However, other researchers that the use of semistructured interview protocols can control the interview process while reducing bias and subjectivity (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The interview process for this study included face to face interviews using a semistructured format that contains six open-ended questions. Because of the semistructured interview format, participants were encouraged to provide more in-depth information that is free of bias and subjectivity.

Data Collection Technique

In this study, I collected data using semistructured face to face interviews using open-ended questions and pertinent organizational data from businesses that meet the

criteria for participation. The first step in data collection began with the approval of this study by IRB which, serves as the Walden University Institutional Review Board for Ethical Standards in Research (Walden University, 2017). Support from the IRB is necessary to ensure the protection of the participants from harm associated with the research (Connelly, 2014). Upon IRB approval, I contacted the target businesses by meeting with business leaders and by established conversations through the local Chamber of Commerce in the Southeastern United States. I also reached out to businesses that were filed against by the EEOC and established a successful diversity plan. I selected the participants and scheduled interviews.

The interview protocol is a component of the interview process. The interview protocol is a descriptive plan of the data collection process that enhances transparency and the quality of the research (Sarma, 2015). Researchers employing interview protocols ignite stalling conversations (Shapka et al., 2016). For instance, Castillo-Montoya (2016) developed the interview protocol refinement (IPR) framework as a four-phase process to fine-tune interview protocols. The IPR four stages include (a) a mean to ensure that the interview questions align with the study's research questions, (b) conduct an inquiry-based conversation, (c) obtaining feedback on interview protocols, and (d) piloting the interview protocol. In this study, I applied the IPR to trigger conversations as well as to enhance the transparency and quality of the research. Because IPR could be useful to maintain consistency when conducting interviews, it could also be useful for improving reliability and validity of the data collection process.

In addition to the consent form, I prepared for the interviews by becoming familiar with the interview protocol (see Appendix A). A researcher who familiarizes with the available resources for conducting interviews can explore the complexity of the issues and understand the participants' reflections (Bullock, 2016; Saunders et al., 2016). A successful interview is a product of preparation (Greco, 2016). Because the interview process is essential in obtaining data from the participants, I prepared by becoming familiar with an effective interview protocol (see Appendix A) and with a minimum of two recording methods. The recording technique consisted of an iPhone 7 coupled with a smart pen known as LiveScribe 3 to record and transcribe voice to text. Upon arrival at the location of the interview tested the equipment and audio recording methods for proper functioning. I prepared to conduct note taking in alignment with the interview protocol (see Appendix A) to include, date, time, location, the purpose of the interview as well as any relevant observations during the interview. Researcher employing field note taking could further the analysis of pertinent company documents, interview feedback, and observations such as body language (Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2014). At the commencement of the interview, briefly introduced myself by providing a brief personal biography, introduced the topic, discussed the consent form, advised the participant about the requirements for recording the session, and then addressed any concerns from the participant.

Researchers in the field of interviewing and note taking (Bullock, 2016; Dohaney, Brogt, & Kennedy, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016) posited that the interview process is

flexible as to illicit detail data collection from the participants. Also, the participant could feel more at ease when employing a conversational style that enhances the sharing of real-life stories and personal experiences. Because the participant could feel comfortable with an everyday conversation versus a structured discussion, the participant may be willing to share more in-depth experiences. As the discussion evolves, the audio recording of the interview becomes valuable data for future analysis (Briggie, Hilsenroth, Conway, Muran, & Jackson, 2016; Saunders et al., 2016; Weinbaum & Onwuegbuzie, 2016). Because study participants are more comfortable in a conversational interview setting, interview recordings serve to capture relevant information essential for data analysis. I followed up with the interviewees with member checking (see Appendix B).

Researchers seeking consistency when conducting interviews, employ member checking to enhance data reliability and validity. Researchers applying a member checking technique, improve reliability and validity of the data collection process (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Farrelly, 2013; Yin, 2014). Member checking is useful as researchers reflect on their biases while ensuring that the study is reflective of the participants' experiences (Kornbluh, Ozer, Allen, & Kirshner, 2015; Thomas, 2017). Member checking allows one to minimize bias and improve data reliability and validity. In this study, I included an interview inclusive of detailed steps of the data collection process to enhance reliability and validity of the data collection process.

A researcher employing semistructured interviews faces certain advantages and disadvantages. For instance, a researcher using semistructured interviews can collect adequate data in support of the research topic (Gerencheal, & Horwitz, 2016; Greco, 2016). Other researchers agreed that semistructured interviews are an efficient way to engage in conversations that result in the emergence of relevant issues (O’Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Brozović, & Sinha, 2016). A researcher employing semistructured interviews could lead to the discovery of valuable practices and insights. Researchers conducting semistructured interviews also face disadvantages. Some researchers conducting semistructured interviews enter a lengthy process of analysis (Isaacs, 2014). A researcher transcribing one hour of interview faces about five hours of accurate typing (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Another disadvantage of using semistructured interview is that the researcher’s bias can influence the participant’s responses (Malagon-Maldonado, 2014). Because of the difficulties of using semistructured interviews, one should recognize the limitations and exploit the advantages of using interviews.

The use of multiple sources of data increases the quality of the study. Researchers engaging in collecting company documentation, focus groups and conducting face to face interviews enhance the overall quality of the study (Kritikou, Stein, De Cock, & Hanson, 2016; Sarma, 2015; Yin, 2014). Researchers employing a case study approach to research integrate data from company records and real-life events as part of their data collection process.

Collecting documentation is advantageous because of the ability to apply methodological triangulation of the data obtained from other sources (Yin, 2014). Data triangulation is essential for validating data, understand the phenomenon, and enhance trustworthiness (Carter et al., 2014). In this study, I identified relevant company documents that the participants deemed appropriate from businesses that meet the criteria for participation. Because a participant could point out relevant documents, a researcher could request company documents that are useful. Relevant company documents could enhance the quality of the study when triangulating with other data. Because of the variety of data sources, one must determine the consistency of the findings by comparing documented data with data from the participant's life experiences.

The disadvantage of relying on company documentation is the misinterpretation. Since the writer of a company document could be addressing a specific issue, the researcher must carefully analyze the material to avoid misunderstandings (Yin, 2014). A company document that is inaccurate or incomplete is not a useful document for the study (Malagon-Maldonado, 2014). Researchers using company records concentrate on quality versus quantity (Carter et al., 2014). Because of the possibility of misinterpretation associated with the use of company documents, a researcher should conduct a careful analysis of the data.

I transcribed each interview verbatim. I conducted transcript review to confirm the participant's responses and check for accuracy as to increase validity. Some scholars suggested that an effective strategy to enhance validity and credibility is allowing the

participants to review the summary of the transcript for accuracy (Darawsheh, 2014; Harvey, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016). After receiving confirmation from the participants, I addressed any corrections and followed-up with confirmatory meetings. One of the goals for conducting this study was to reflect the participant's views in the study.

Another useful data collection technique is the focus groups (see Appendix C). A focus group is a forum where individuals discuss a topic or topics and perspectives and experiences emerge (Cyr, 2016). The focus group method dates to World War II and requires convening a group of people to discuss an aspect of the case study (Yin, 2014). A researcher employing a focus group approach can collect vast amounts of information from a group of participants in a short span of time (Wilson, 2016). A focus group is essential in gathering quality and relevant data (Rothwell, Anderson, & Botkin, 2016). Researchers employing focus groups might produce unexpected findings that could lead to new research (Cyr, 2016; Morse et al., 2014). Focus groups serve to reinforce evidence, create validity, and are essential to triangulate other data. Because researchers employing focus groups could obtain quality and relevant data as well as unexpected findings, I employed a single focus group as part of this study. By employing a single focus group, I reinforced the data in my study to ensure validity and confirmability.

A researcher employing focus groups could also experience some disadvantages. Saunders et al. (2016) posited that the type of relationship between researchers and those in the focus groups might negatively impact the study's outcome. Clashes of personalities within a focus group could impose challenges for the researcher (Wilson,

2016). A researcher employing focus groups should efficiently organize and maximize the gathering of evidence. Meanwhile, researchers using dyadic interviews share the advantages of focus groups but require a minimum of two participants rather than a larger group (Morgan, Eliot, Lowe, & Gorman, 2016). However, researchers employing dyadic interviews may find that the approach is newer than focus groups and requires further exploration in the field of research. Researchers using an efficient data collection protocol should consider the environment, personalities, and the scientific evidence when employing a data collection technique.

I conducted a single focus group by selecting participants from a business that met the criteria for participation. Participants in focus groups should share commonalities including an environment relevant to the discussion (Saunders et al., 2016). Focus groups consist of interactions between individuals familiar with a subject (Wilson, 2016). The researcher should consider the use of participant driven questions as a data source to verify and reinforce the discussion (Rothwell et al., 2016). Conducting a focus group seemed manageable because the researcher could drive the interactions between a small group of people sharing common business interests.

A researcher should consider the location and the setting for conducting a focus group. Selecting a neutral site to hold the focus groups is useful to avoid interruptions and distractions (Saunders et al., 2016). Conducting focus groups at the manager's office may negatively influence the outcomes of the process. A researcher should select a setting that welcomes interaction among participants. I chose a conference room at the

local public library. Public libraries offered conference room service free of cost by appointment or on a walk-in basis.

Researchers conducting a focus group should consider the number of participants. An adequate selection of participants is vital to trigger conversations (Morgan et al., 2016). Researchers conducting focus groups could reach data saturation by triangulating interview data and business documents (Saunders et al., 2016). I held a single focus group while coupling the data from interviews and business documents to reach data saturation.

The member checking follow-up interview (see Appendix B) applies to reach data saturation and to enhance academic rigor (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Member checking is a technique to validate results by returning the findings to the participants to check for accuracy and resonance (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Member checking is a strategy to enhance validity in which participants check the interview transcript for accuracy and provide their perspectives regarding the phenomenon (Darawsheh, 2014; Harvey, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016). Once I established the participant's availability to participate in the study, I then provided the individual with the interview transcript and the member checking follow-up interview (see Appendix B). For instance, I contacted each participant and verified their availability to walk through each interview question, read the interpretation, and ask the following question: Did I miss anything?

Member checking is essential for data saturation, validate the results of the study, and enhance academic rigor. In this study, member checking was conducted by providing the participants with a summary of their responses to confirm their perspectives. Member checking for qualitative research is when the researcher paraphrases the participant's answers to each question into the researchers' words. The researcher then asks the participant to ensure that the analysis accurately interpreted his/her intended message for each item. Because of member checking, the researcher strengthens reliability and validity in alignment with the research question.

Data Analysis

The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning that potentially influences business profitability. In this study, I conducted semistructured interviews guided by open-ended interview questions. The interview questions address the central research question and assist the researcher in exploring how business managers in the retail sector successfully enhance workplace diversity that potentially influences business profitability. The expectation was that the participants shared insights on strategies in workplace diversity planning. I collected data from multiple sources including semistructured face-to-face interviews and relevant company documents.

Researchers use a variety of methods to manage and analyze the data. A traditional method for management and data analysis is the framework method (Ahmed et

al., 2016; Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013; Mabuza, Govender, Ogunbanjo, & Mash, 2014). The framework method is useful for comparing textual data from different sources. I applied a method inclusive of (a) audio recording of the interviews, (b) transcribe the interviews, and (c) coding on transcripts. Other steps included analyzing by comparing codes from one interview to other interviews, construct a matrix of codes, and provided an interpretation of the data. Also, as part of the framework method, conducted member checking by providing each participant with a summary of their responses. The participants received each an email with a copy of their transcripts for their review and asked for a five-day return via e-mail. Member checking serves to ensure accuracy and completeness of the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Researchers analyzing data could account for numerous hours on the task. Researchers engaging in qualitative data analysis technique experience a daunting time task (Onwuegbuzie & Weinbaum, 2017). Other researchers maintained that manual coding of textual data is a lengthy process (Cope, 2014). Because the data analysis process can be exhausting, researchers are now taking advantage of the new technology. The use of technology such as qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), Coding Analysis Toolkit, Atlas.ti, NVivo, or Qualrus can assist the researcher in conducting the manual data analysis process (Cope, 2014; Isaacs, 2014; Malagon-Maldonado, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016). For this study, I used Atlas.ti software to assist in the coding process. Atlas.ti is a sophisticated qualitative data analysis software to help arrange, reassemble, and manage data.

The conceptual framework for this study was Earley and Mosakowski (2004) cultural intelligence (CQ) theory. A business manager in the retail sector can use CQ to enable a comprehensive understanding of how to strategize positive relationship between the managers and the local cultures (Ersoy, 2014). Cultural intelligence competencies are essential in a multicultural workplace setting (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004; Jyoti & Kour, 2015; Kalargyrou, 2014; Mathews, 2016; Siakas & Siakas, 2015). As supported by Barbuto et al. (2015), cognitive and culturally competent individuals can achieve a mutual understanding of culturally diverse businesses. By applying CQ theory in this study and conducting a literature review, I increased the knowledge and identified themes of the variety of beliefs, values, and attitudes as well as strategies to enhance workplace diversity that potentially influences business profitability.

I correlated the themes and compared the findings to those present in the literature review. I triangulated data from the semistructured face-to-face interviews, company documents, and the literature. Researchers who employ methodological triangulation also test validity in qualitative research studies (Carter et al., 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2014). Researchers employing triangulation use diverse viewpoints in analyzing a phenomenon (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Also, researchers conducting effective triangulation, apply different methods of data collection in studying a phenomenon (Carter et al., 2014). The analysis of case study data can be an overwhelming task that requires one's to develop an efficient strategy (Cope, 2014; Isaacs, 2014; Onwuegbuzie & Weinbaum, 2017). Because using semistructured

interviews is time-consuming, transcribing and analysis of the data required additional time to process.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Researchers can employ different techniques to ensure reliability in their studies. The true score theory technique is the foundation of reliability in quantitative studies, and that reliability refers to how the researcher will address dependability (Trochim, 2006). However, in this qualitative study, I did not employ the true score theory. In quantitative research, reliability is the repeatability of a measure that researchers use to obtain similar results (MacPhail, Khoza, Abler, & Ranganathan, 2016). Instead, reliability in qualitative research is the product of an efficient coding process. Reliability is dependable on confidentiality and anonymity, and that reliability refers to replication and consistency (Saunders et al., 2016; Trochim, 2006; Yin, 2014). Researchers could employ a variety of methods such as coding, member checking, and data triangulation to enhance the reliability of a qualitative study.

A researcher conducting a qualitative study could achieve reliability by using different techniques. For instance, the researcher can use transcript reviews, pilot test, expert validation of the interview questions, interview protocol, observations, and focus groups (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Ossenberrg, Dalton, & Henderson, 2016; Padilla & Benítez, 2014; Yin, 2014). For this study, I used face to face interviews, member checking, a focus group, and transcript reviews. The combination of the various

measures enhanced the dependability of my qualitative study by successfully reaching data saturation.

To ensure reliability and consistency throughout the data collection, I replicated the same interview process (see Appendix A) that contains a set of open-ended questions. A researcher employing a qualitative research method can achieve reliability through accurate data recording and transcription (Briggie et al., 2016; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2014). Because of the data collection protocol and because of the open-ended questions, the participants had the opportunity to produce clear and relevant answers. I repeated the process across the participant pool to ensure consistency as well as dependability.

Validity

Qualitative study validity revolves around credibility, confirmability, and transferability regarding the findings of the study. A researcher seeking data validity applies strategies that enhance validity such as engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, coding, negative case analysis (Bridges-Rhoads, Cleave, & Hughes, 2016; Daliri, Kamrani, Jentoft, & Paighambari, 2016; Lub, 2015; Morse, 2015). Validation techniques such as triangulation and member checking serve to establish the quality of one's research (Saunders et al., 2016). Other researchers argued that qualitative research lack transparency and scientific rigor and the findings constitute a biased collection of personal opinions (Noble & Smith, 2015). To overcome the issues of transparency and scientific rigor, a researcher should strategize to enhance qualitative data validity. By employing the appropriate validity strategies, a researcher could achieve credibility,

confirmability, transferability, and data saturation. A researcher could begin to understand the various validity strategies and apply concepts that are most useful to their qualitative research study. To further expand on the topic of validity, the researcher should understand the concepts of credibility, conformability, transferability, and data saturation.

Credibility. Credibility is fundamental in demonstrating the alignment between the findings and the participants. A researcher enhances credibility through the view of the participants (Cope, 2014). For instance, a researcher can enhance credibility by member checking of the data interpretation, participant transcript review, triangulation, coding, interview protocol, and focus groups (Aldrich, Dietz, Clark, & Hamilton, 2015; Brooks & Normore, 2015; Thomas, 2017). Qualitative credibility is essential to demonstrate alignment between the findings and the participant's perspectives. Also, a researcher seeking to enhance credibility and increase rigor and quality of the study should use multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2014). A researcher could select the appropriate procedure that enhance the credibility and validity of qualitative research and apply the concepts. As part of attaining credibility in my study, I employed an interview protocol (Appendix A), member checking (Appendix B), and triangulation.

Confirmability. A researcher can achieve confirmability when others could confirm the results. To achieve confirmability, the researcher should employ the use of interview summaries and feedback from the participants (Saunders, 2015). Researchers obtaining confirmability can demonstrate the neutrality or the consistency of the findings

and that the data represents the participants' responses (Connelly, 2016; Cope, 2014). I applied techniques such as adding probing questions during interviews, participant's transcript reviews, member checking (Appendix B), and data triangulation to enhance confirmability.

Transferability. Transferability of research findings require a level of evaluation for applicability. For instance, many researchers (Connelly, 2016; Cope, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Saunders et al., 2016) concur that qualitative findings require careful evaluation for suitability before applying the concepts in a new setting. Providing a full description of the study, allows future researchers the opportunity to make a judgment of the transferability as applicable to their field of study (Saunders et al., 2016). I employed a qualitative approach to research and provide a descriptive and trustworthy study so future researchers could evaluate for transferability.

Data Saturation. Data saturation varies from one study to another. Tran et al. (2016) posited that the topic, purpose of the study, method of data collection, and participants influence when and how the researcher can reach data saturation. Researchers reach data saturation when no new codes, no new themes, or additional information is attainable (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016). A researcher reaching data saturation in qualitative research disregards the sample size, and instead, ensures accurate and valid data. When pursuing the specific business, I employed the appropriate validity strategies to achieve credibility, confirmability, transferability, and data saturation. To attain data saturation, I included company documents from businesses

that met the criteria for participation, participants' interviews, member checking (Appendix B), and focus group protocol (Appendix C).

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I presented the purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study, and discussed how I would explore the research question: What are the strategies that business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning to assure compliance with EEOC regulations? This section also included discussion of my role as the researcher and descriptive information of the target population. My sample population consisted of five purposely selected business managers at distinct retail stores located in the Southeastern United States who have successfully instituted workplace diversity plans for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations. This section also included justification for employing an exploratory multiple case study design for this research. I described how I would conform to ethical requirements and explain the process of data collection by conducting face-to-face interviews as well as company documents while employing a methodological triangulation and member checking to reach data saturation. I described Section 2 to include discussion on the process of data analysis and applicable methods to ensure research quality, reliability, and validity. Next, Section 3 will include the findings in this study as well as discussion of the application to professional, implications for social change, recommendation for action(s) and further research. Also, Section 3 will include a reflection of my experiences with the research process. Section 3 is inclusive of a summary and conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations. The data came from manager interviews, a single focus group, and company documentation at five retail business stores located in the Southeastern United States. I facilitated a single focus group session with retail business employees and conducted face to face interviews with stores managers. I triangulated data from the focus group, individual face to face interviews, and company documents. Among the company documents, I reviewed company mission and vision statements, company core values, harassment policy, company diversity reports, company profiles, company annual reports, and organizational communication regarding employee recognition, benefits, and company culture. I applied a modified van Kaam model to analyze the face to face interview data as well as the focus group data and the Atlas.ti qualitative software to organize the product of my analysis. My analysis resulted in a total of 76 codes supporting the significant themes and concepts about the research question of my study. Out of the total 76 codes, I used 49 codes in the emergent themes. Three major themes emerged from my analysis including: (a) guiding principles, (b) training, (c) and hiring practices. The three major themes support the conceptual framework, CQ, established by Earley and Mosakowski in 2004. The themes align with

the research topic, retail business manager's strategies for enhancing workplace diversity planning.

Presentation of the Findings

I used the following research question in this study: What strategies do business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning to assure compliance with EEOC regulations? Researchers conducting qualitative studies can select from multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2014). To enhance the understanding of the phenomenon, I used the analysis prescribed by Hanson and Klimo in 1998. I interviewed five retail business managers, conducted a single focus group with retail business employees, and reviewed company documents to support the data collection.

Theme 1: Guiding Principles

Guiding principles could serve as a business point of entry. The first significant theme relates to the cognitive and metacognitive, cultural conditions within the conceptual framework known as the cultural intelligence (CQ) model (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Cognitive and cultural conditions pertain to what a person demonstrates as cognitive CQ by adopting strategies that help to create a point of entry into a foreign culture and operate efficiently (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004; Kaufman & Hwang, 2015). Also, while cognitive CQ relates to attaining knowledge, metacognitive CQ applies to higher-order thinking ability specifying how that knowledge is used (Presbitero, 2016). Cognitive and culturally competent individuals can achieve a mutual understanding of culturally diverse businesses (Barbuto et al., 2015 & Tran, 2015). Guiding principles are used to communicate professionally (Porcaro & Carrier, 2014). CQ intelligent individuals could use guiding principles for retail business

managers as a business point of entry. Because of CQ competencies and cognitive values, business managers with higher levels of CQ are in a better position to lead others (Presbitero, 2016).

Manager Participant 2 suggested “Companies should adopt a policy of zero tolerance for discriminatory practices.” Manager Participant 4 and Manager Participant 5 also provided company documents that supported the adoption of a policy regarding harassment. Some manager participants and some employee participants agreed on the purpose of policy and protocols. However, some employee participants showed concerns about managers making rules as they go. For instance, Focus Group Participant 4 suggested “Managers should follow company protocols and avoid making up rules as they go.” Manager Participant 4 contended “Without holding everyone underneath you accountable to the same degree, it promotes favoritism.” Further, Manager Participant 2 stated, “Employees are held to high standards of ethics and held accountable for violations of company policy.” Review of company documents related to Manager Participant 2 and Manager Participant 5 suggested “In the event of a conflict regarding policy matters between managers and employees, to contact the department of human resources (HR) for clarification.” Manager participants and employee participants seem to understand the role of policy and to ensure a fair and equitable application of the processes. The company documents provided by Manager Participant 5 supported the requirement for policies such as harassment and equal opportunity policies, and the commitment to a diverse and inclusive working environment.

Hofstede (2015) supported that managers maintaining a higher level of cultural understanding can successfully influence business practices. Rosenauer et al. (2016), supported that a favorable business climate evolves from a balance between task interdependence and high levels of CQ. Additionally, a well-managed and trained team could produce higher levels of creativity, opportunities, knowledge, inclusiveness, and recognition (Lambert, 2016). Manager Participant 1 emphasized “Engaging in fair business practices allows one to be a better leader.” Bennett (2016) contended that leadership is essential to the successful establishment of a culturally diverse environment that fosters a climate of respect towards cultural groupings and identities, and promotes a constructivist understanding of aesthetic experience, intercultural relations, and sensitivity. As supported by Focus Group Participant 2 “You always want people to want to work for you, and when they want to work for you, you will see amazing results.”

Focus Group Participant 4 suggested “Trust serves to creating a productive and welcoming environment.” Some researches agreed that successful leaders build trust, manage conflicts, empower the diverse team equally, mitigate negative behaviors, and focus on the individual (Wang et al., 2015). Regarding focusing on individuals, Focus Group Participant 4 stated, “Morale is key to business success.” Because retail business managers should engage a diverse and challenging workplace, training seems like the venue to enhance traits and boost individuals. Therefore, business success depends on quality training aim to strengthen relationships, build trust, and empower individuals.

Focus Group Participant 2 claimed “The lack of diversity may result in the loss of profitability.” Organizations failing to address diversity also struggle in conducting business operations (Mousa & Alas, 2016). Manager Participants and Focus Group Participants agreed that businesses should concentrate on what individuals can bring to the table and produce. The published company documents provided by Manager Participants 2, 3, and 5 supported that diversity and inclusion are essential to business operations and profitability.

Open minded. The sub theme open minded of Theme 1: Guiding principles also relates to the motivational component of the CQ model. The motivational CQ component represents an individual’s willingness and confidence to engage unfamiliar cultures (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Motivational CQ is associated with the mental capacity and the drive to manage situations or tasks (Ang et al., 2007; Presbitero, 2016). The focus group participants produced 60% of the quotations in this theme which, seems to suggest that employees are highly concerned about the manager’s open minded condition more so than any other theme.

Open minded retail business managers should be aware of the firm’s geographical location, values, and cultural variances (Ramanna, 2015). Manager Participant 1 suggested “Managers adapt to the business environment from exposure to others [mentors] while formulating a personal open minded mentality in dealings with employees.” Often, a person experiencing a cultural shift may also experience anxiety and stress (Ramanna, 2015). Managers who are adaptive, understanding, and assimilate

the cultural differences can experience favorable work results (Kriz, Gummesson, & Quazi, 2014). Focus Group Participant 2 urged, “Managers should know the workforce and get a little bit more involved in asking more questions.” The focus group consensus was that an open minded manager is an individual who is approachable, communicates well, and is understanding. However, some manager participants defined *open minded* as being supportive to employees tending to special circumstances. For example, Manager Participant 1 suggested “*Open minded* is a characteristic of individuals who are understanding people’s needs such as providing accommodations during pregnancies, include employee’s input in management decisions, becoming accepting, promotes a sense of inclusiveness.”

Some researchers reported that the most common workplace discriminatory practices against women relate to career breaks and caregiving including pregnancy, childbirth, and the care of family members (Alteri, 2016; Bisom-Rapp & Sargeant, 2014). Focus Group Participant 2 insisted “Managers should create a safe and comfortable working environment.” Dwyer and Azevedo (2016) contended that retail business managers need to promote a multicultural working environment that meets the demands of the cultural differences. Open-minded managers should be aware of their surroundings and be sensitive to the needs of the individuals. Understanding and tending the needs of the workforce could lead to business success. Manager Participant 2 and Focus Group Participant 4 suggested that people should treat each other as one likes to be treated. Manager Participant 3 agreed “Open minded mentality and communication are

direct contributors to having a successful work environment.” The published company documents supported that positive culture creates an efficient work environment and improves performance.

Focus Group Participant 2 urged, “Managers [to] promote a welcoming working environment.” Manager Participant 1 suggested, “ The importance is to understand people as individuals as every person is unique and the difference makes you distinct.” Business leaders practicing cultural intelligence concepts communicate better, instill cultural awareness, and understand the similarities and differences (Ersoy, 2014). Focus Group Participant 1 encouraged [managers] “Establish strong and meaningful relationships with employees and get to know your workplace or environment.” Focus Group Participant 2 suggested, “Tolerance and acceptance are key to [understand] cultural differences and one should embrace diversity to learn from other cultures”. Focus Group Participant 2 also stated, “Respect other people’s beliefs and customs.” Skilled leaders respect human values, understand the demographics of the cities where they operate and consider the good of the broader community (Ali & Ivanov, 2015; Supanti et al., 2015). Earley and Mosakowski (2004) supported that a manager’s awareness of CQ can be useful to navigate through habits, gestures, and assumptions that define their employees’ differences. Company documents supported the notion of creating a culture that is not only diverse but can leverage the differences, values the employee, and respects the individual.

Theme 2: Training

The second major theme, training, relates to the cognitive, cultural condition within the conceptual framework known as the Cultural Intelligence (CQ) model. Cognitive CQ is known as the traditional intelligence achieved when an individual gains knowledge useful for cultural interactions (Ott & Michailova, 2016; Varela & Gatlin-Watts, 2014). Manager participants produced 88% of the quotes in Theme 2: Training versus 12% percent of the Focus Group Participants commented on training. Manager participants demonstrated the interest in providing training as well as holding employees accountable for missing mandatory training sessions. Some researchers supported that CQ can improve with training, education, and experience (Barbuto et al., 2015; Tran, Porcher, Falissard, & Ravaud, 2016). Recognizing the high volume of discriminatory allegations nationwide, the EEOC engages in providing communication and training venues to educate employers as well as employees (EEOC, 2016c). Engagement of the workforce by providing training and support allows for employee loyalty and output (Goyal & Chhabra, 2015). Conversely, engaging in discriminatory practices can trigger costly lawsuits that are detrimental to the organization (McFadden, 2015). Some businesses who engage in training, also attempt to create a positive work environment while seeking alignment with EEOC regulations.

Regarding training delivery, Manager Participant 1 stated, “Employees and managers attending diversity training online, actively test in the matter.” Successful diversity planning requires employees and management receive formal training in the

topics of diversity and cultural awareness (Abosedo, Ajayi, & Peter, 2014; Wondrak & Segert, 2015). Manager Participant 3 indicated “Actively provide new employees and managers with computer-based training as well as hands-on training on a variety of topics including company policies, equal treatment, and expected behavior.” Goyal and Chhabra (2015) supported the engagement of the workforce by providing training and support allows for employee loyalty and output. Focus Group Participant 3 pointed out, “Management show care and educate the workforce.” EEOC (2016c) suggested that because of the high volume of discriminatory allegations, employers should engage in communication and training venues to educate the business. Because of the available formal and informal training venues, retail business leaders should consider the benefits of educating the workplace.

Regarding training requirements, Manager Participant 1 urged, “Those employees failing to meet the goals are also counseled to address the cause of any relevant behaviors or concerns.” Ag Budin and Wafa (2015) highlighted the importance of identifying the behaviors of individuals and the implications for organizational performance. Manager Participant 1 described accountability as “Tracking training by the individual to ensure compliance with company policy.” Some researchers supported that efficient communication emerges when individuals adopt behaviors, emotions, and thoughts in developing relationships (Wang et al., 2015; Yeke & Semerciöz, 2016). Therefore, a robust training program is essential to business success. Company documents supported the relevance of training.

Manager Participant 4 suggested, “Providing the workforce with readily available resources such as company policies, training on harassment, and equal opportunity, to educate the workforce and ensure compliance.” Some researchers asserted that retail business managers could effectively strategize by identifying and applying proven strategies to enhance workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations (Boehm et al., 2014; Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016; Fox et al., 2015). Manager Participant 3 declared “Newly hired employees should receive information to in the welcome aboard package to include topics such as sexual harassment policies, equal opportunity, and the company code of conduct.” Providing new hires with relevant information could serve individuals to learn about the expectations at the new workplace. Therefore, applying proven strategies could enhance workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations.

Manager Participant 2 suggested, “Learning the core values are used to help everyone perform their duties.” Mousa and Alas (2016) supported that training influences organizational effectiveness which places businesses in a better stance to acquire stable market positions. The company documents related to Manager Participant 3 supported the development and institution of inclusion education curriculum aim to address the topic of unconscious bias. Pearce et al. (2015) indicated that a bias-free approach to diversity promotes workplace equality, uniformity, and inclusion. Company documents supported a bias-free environment and revealed the availability of training at all levels of the businesses.

Coaching. Motivational CQ represents the individual's willingness and confidence to engage unfamiliar cultures (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Eighty percent of the manager participants and 75% of the focus group participants expressed coaching as a motivational tool. Manager Participant 4 suggested, "You seek out to develop people by applying coaching, training, and mentorship." Focus Group Participant 2 expressed, "Coaching serves to acknowledge the good staff and the good that you bring to your business." Sucher and Cheung (2015) noted that business success is dependable in building cultural sensitivity, cultural knowledge, and cultural awareness among employees and managers.

Regarding employee appreciation, Focus Group Participant 2 declared "When an employee feels appreciated, you work so much more because you know that your work is not going unnoticed." Successful individuals plan their career while considering promotions, fitting in, recognition, helping others, and finding financial independence (Kulkarni & Gopakumar, 2014). Focus Group Participant 4 expressed, "[Managers] trying to help may obviously, make them [employees] feel better at work, that way you could forget whatever is making you sad or, angry." Lambert (2016) emphasized that recognition considers the higher levels of creativity, opportunities, knowledge, and inclusiveness. Some employees could view recognition as a motivational trigger. Therefore, retail business managers should consider the association between recognition and motivation.

On coaching opportunities, Manager Participant 4 urged, “Managers whom experience difficulties with employees to use these as teachable moments to further develop our employee’s in hopes to make them better associates and people.” The sharing of values and ideas enhance or develop corporate policies (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Participant Manager 3 suggested, “A manager should spend time with each of the employees while emphasizing on understanding, open communication, sharing new ideas, and thinking outside the box in the overall decision-making process.” Zhang et al. (2014) argued that successful organizational leaders seek to drive effective decision-making initiatives that integrate efficiency. Manager Participants 1, 3, and 5 viewed coaching as “The opportunity to engage employees regarding evaluation and business performance opportunity.” For instance, Manager Participant 3 stated, “Through coaching, you evaluate whether the employee receives rewards or corrective interaction.” Benn, Dunphy, and Griffiths (2014) suggested that efficient business managers consider all venues to enhance business performance. Manager Participant 3 urged, “You apply active coaching which allows you to observe and notate the employees’ interactions with customers and cohorts and provide effective feedback that leads to the root cause of behaviors.” Therefore, retail business managers should seek out opportunities to coach employees while actively listening. The interaction could lead to a more informed decision-making process that results in better business practices.

Manager Participant 5 revealed, “In bridging the trading gap in generations, managers should engage the millennials with motivational strategies.” Some manager

participants agreed that the overall goal is to increase productivity in the workplace. Sucher and Cheung (2015) claimed that individuals possessing cross-cultural competencies contribute to workplace performance by sharing new dynamics. Managers maintaining a higher level of cultural understanding can successfully influence business practices (Hofstede, 2015). Company documents supported the fostering of an inclusive culture that helps employees engage the workplace and exchange honest and direct feedback from others at the place of business.

Communication. The sub-theme communication of Theme 2: Training, relates to the behavioral, cultural condition within the conceptual framework of the Cultural Intelligence (CQ) model. Communication is the capacity to mimic habits such as the greeting others, language, or attire (Jyoti & Kour, 2015; Kaufman & Hwang, 2015). Behavioral CQ relates to the gestures, body language, and the verbal and nonverbal communication that occur during face-to-face interactions (Presbitero, 2016). Thirty-six percent of the sample population commented regarding communication. Evidence obtained from the managers and focus group participants agreed with some researchers that understanding the concepts of communication, motivation, and teamwork help promote opportunities for growth and development among the organization (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016; Yeke & Semerciöz, 2016).

Regarding effective communication, Manager Participant 2 suggested, “open door forum based on open communication.” Manager Participant 3 stated, “An open mindset and communication are direct contributors to having a successful work environment.”

Focus Group Participant 3 suggested, “Managers establish open lines of communication with employees and vice versa.” Alemu (2016) alluded that co-existence requires open communication, awareness of diversity, leadership, equal treatment and building strong relationships amongst members. Manager Participant 2 pointed out, “Through business meetings and interactions, employees are empowered to have a voice and contribute to the path of clear communication.” Purdy and Manning (2015) supported that business managers dealing with a diverse workforce should develop an agile, adaptable, and flexible workplace culture that promotes open communication to ensure alignment between employees and business goals. Focus Group Participant 4 suggested, “Communication is key to understanding others.” Martin (2014) indicated that workplace diversity allows for a high knowledge base, cross-cultural communication, and superior business potential because of multicultural reach. Company records supported the establishment of business internal feedback processes as well as a platform for development and communication across the business.

Theme 3: Hiring Practices

The third major theme relates to the emotional and or motivational cultural condition of the CQ model. The emotional and or motivational CQ components represent an individual’s willingness and confidence to engage unfamiliar cultures (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Chipulu et al. (2016) contended that job advertisements enticing CQ qualities, ease the hiring managers process for selecting adaptive candidates to fill specific job positions. For instance, Chipulu et al. (2016) declared that some job

advertisements are manipulated with keywords alluding to the CQ denominators of collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance that are appealing to some cultural backgrounds. Therefore, managers should become mindful and recognize the differences.

Businesses concerned with maintaining a diverse workforce could use a variety of strategies. For instance, in a dominated white female industry, Manager Participant 1 suggested, “Hire from a diverse pool of employees including African Americans to ensure a more diverse workplace.” Manager Participant 1 also suggested, “Work closely with the human resources department to addressing any issues.” However, in seeking diversity balance among employees in a mostly male-dominated industry, Manager Participant 5 indicated, “Promote and hire females from every walk of life to ensure having a good mix of people in the business.” Manager Participant 5 also added “By steering away from having employees like-minded, the new and diverse talent, allows the business to focus on productivity, excellence in performance, positive contribution, and fairness.” Ozeren (2014) supported that bias against an individual’s gender or sexual orientation leads to productivity and monetary loss. Therefore, managers should be mindful of the process and ensure compliance.

Focus Group Participant 2 urged, “Retail business managers ought to know your customer baseline and diversify your workforce accordingly.” Dwyer and Azevedo (2016) argued that mixed workforce should strategize to minimize the generational differences. Focus Group Participant 1 announced, “Managers should hire new

employees by merit and not by biased preferences.” Pearce et al. (2015) alluded that a bias-free approach to diversity promotes workplace equality, uniformity, and inclusion. Therefore, effective managers should recognize the needs of the business, inclusion, and the benefits of employees’ contributions to foster a positive working environment. Company documents supported the practice of hiring diverse talents from different applicants’ pools in compliance with local law and other regulations.

Applications to Professional Practice

The results of this study could be useful to current and future retail business managers for enhancing strategies for workplace diversity planning. Retail business managers, supervisors, and other business leaders can minimize profit loss associated with the high cost of litigation due to discriminatory practices by applying the findings from this study. Retail business managers willing to enhance their workplace diversity plan, could benefit from the recommendations from this study as a cost-effective source to enhancing strategies for workplace diversity planning for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations that otherwise could lead to financial loss and negatively influence business profitability.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change include effective strategies to help retail business manager foster effective relationships based on positive cross-cultural interactions. Skilled leaders have respect for human values, understand the demographics of the cities where they operate and consider the good of the broader community (Ali &

Ivanov, 2015; Supanti et al., 2015). Business leaders that respect human values and understand demographics also support social change by serving the environment, practicing fairness, and by acting socially responsible (Ament et al., 2014; Vermeulen, 2015). The results of this study could provide leaders with techniques to enhance the working environment, create positive relationships, and potentially minimize risk associated with profitability loss.

The desirable outcome of this study is to provide retail business leaders with strategies useful for recognizing opportunities within their organizations in alignment with EEOC regulations, which could potentially enhance diversity in the workplace. The findings from this study could contribute to social change by providing retail business managers with strategies that can serve as guiding principles, training venues, and hiring practice. The findings from this study could enhance community relations which could result in positive perception. Therefore, retail business managers could help create an enhanced and diverse working environment that contributes to the betterment of the communities where they operate.

Recommendations for Action

The findings from this study suggest retail business managers engage in behaviors to enhance workplace diversity planning that assures compliance with the EEOC. First, retail business managers should assimilate and adopt effective guiding principles. Guiding principles could serve as a business point of entry. Efficient business operations stem from adopting strategies that help to create a point of entry into the workplace's

culture. An open minded posture, willingness, and confidence in achieving mutual understanding can be used to navigate through the differences in a diversified workplace. Having CQ competencies and cognitive values allow retail business managers to lead others effectively (Presbitero, 2016).

Secondly, strategize on training. A culturally diverse workplace requires individuals to gain knowledge useful for cultural interactions. The workforce reacts positively when training is available, managers engage in coaching, and the lines of communication are open. Employees perception regarding recognition, trust, and inclusiveness increase because of the managers' engagement and commitment to develop, communicate, and unify the team. As noted by the participants in this study, inclusiveness is achievable when a manager spends time with each of the employees while emphasizing understanding, open communication, sharing new ideas, and thinking outside the box in the overall decision-making process. The findings of this study could become available and useful to the industry from a discussion in an open forum, under a conference setting, or in the form of training regarding this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

The information derived from this study contributes to the literature review on retail business managers' strategies for enhancing workplace diversity planning. Recommendations for this study include a specific type of business or industry. Future researchers should consider studying strategies that business managers have used in highly diversified working environments.

The first limitation of this study was the sample size of the population. The participants were limited to retail business managers. Recommendations for future research would be to include human resources (HR) managers as participants, specifically, HR managers involved in the diversity planning process. Another recommendation would be to include senior executives responsible for the overall business operation. The second limitation of this study was the size of the focus group because consisted of four participants. Recommendations for future research would be to expand the number of participants in the focus group to at least six to obtain richer data. Another recommendation would be to conduct additional focus groups including managers. The third limitation was the geographical area, and its exclusivity to the Southeastern United States. Recommendations for future research would be to expand the geographical spectrum as population limits the generalization to other demographics.

Other research possibilities would be to consider the time constraints while recruiting participants. For instance, some of the participants required a lengthy approval process while others did not. Another element to consider is the nature of the topic. I found that the topic of diversity was challenging to absorb by some managers because they feared negative consequences from their respective corporate offices. Therefore, recruiting manager participants became difficult.

Reflections

The time spent conducting this doctoral study brought me to the acute realization that persistence is a driving force behind curiosity. The topic of this study was driven by

personal experiences as I struggled to understand the increasingly diverse world we share. The experiences gained as a former Navy Chief orbited my curiosity towards exploring the rationale for discriminatory behavior, the differences, the disparities, the uniqueness. However, most of all, I wanted to explore the similarities, what makes us equal, what works best. As a manager, I reflected on CQ concepts and attempted to make sense of the applicability of those concepts. I found that CQ concepts can be learned, are adaptive, and can help individuals learn to understand other cultural backgrounds. Individuals have the capacity to morph and adapt, and at the end, reap the benefits of the differences. Individuals learning to share the benefits of the differences could build a better world.

Participation in the DBA Doctoral Program exposed the many challenges typically experienced by the beginner researcher. One of the major challenges I encountered was during the recruitment of participants. Although, several participants demonstrated interest months before to the formal invitation, most canceled at the very last minute. The cancellation of several of the participants caused delays in the IRB approval which is dependable on the submission of participant's signed letters. The proposal reviews, loopbacks, many hours of reading and writing, attending seminars at the Writing Center, attending courses, and Writing Intensives, took time away from family, friends, and social events. The constant search for qualifiable information, updating resources, weekly Team Synergy calls, each representing a building block. However, exposure to the doctoral processes and the subject increased my understanding

of diversity and that way I contemplate life. I now have a profound respect for the many researchers attempting to explore life from the many angles. I believe that the DBA program molded me to become a better person, a better human being, and a beginner researcher. I now see life through a different spectrum, one that changed my life forever.

Conclusion

The findings from this multiple case study revealed that achieving a successful workplace diversity plan requires inclusiveness and sharing of ideas. I feel that the research has been answered through conducting this study regarding what strategies do business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning to assure compliance with EEOC regulations, by recruiting the assistance of five retail business managers and a single focus group composed of retail business employees. The participants offered some effective strategies to enhance workplace diversity planning consistent with EEOC regulations. For example, managers should adopt higher CQ competencies and cognitive values useful in creating guiding principles to lead better the workplace. Many of these strategies can be attained with meaningful training, communication, coaching, communication, and effective hiring practices. Also, the strategies from this study are cost-effective and applicable to the industry.

Because that lack of workplace diversity planning can lead to financial loss and negatively influence business profitability, it is essential that business managers strategize and integrate proven and efficient design processes in their planning to enhance workplace diversity for assuring compliance with EEOC regulations. Therefore,

managers should identify and apply proven strategies to achieve business success.

Successful retail businesses, business managers, individuals, and communities can benefit from the accomplishments.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Walden University	
What you will do	What you will say—script
Introduce myself and the topic under study.	My name is Daniel Ortiz, and I am a Doctorate student at Walden University. I would like to thank you for your time and for granting me this interview. The primary research goals are: (a) to explore the strategies that some business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity that potentially influences business profitability, and (b) to identify common beliefs under participants on the topic.
Explain content of the consent form and address any concerns the participant may have.	On [Date] you received a consent form via (method) containing some legal and ethical requirements. On [Date] you replied granting me the consent for this interview. Are there any concerns that you may want to address before proceeding?
Receive consent to start the interview.	We will proceed if I have your consent.
Start audio recording.	I will now start the audio recordings.
Introduce participant with code, the date, and time.	Interview with Participant [1..5], [Current Date], and [Current Time]
Start interview with the initial probe question, followed by the targeted concept questions, targeted follow-up questions, and ending with the wrap-up questions respectively.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What strategies have you used to enhance your workplace diversity plan? 2. How have your previous experiences with workplace diversity affected your strategies? 3. What method did you find worked best to enhance your workplace diversity plan? 4. How did your employees respond to your strategies involving workplace diversity? 5. What policies and processes have you or the organization established, if any, to mitigate financial losses due to failure to adhere to workforce diversity laws? 6. What additional information would you like to add

regarding this topic?

I would like to thank you for your valuable time and the information provided. As indicated in the consent form, this interview will be de-identified using your code [X] and verbatim transcribed. I will also summarize your response to each question, within a timeframe of [amount of days] after this interview. I will then e-mail you the summary of your response to each question to allow you to confirm if the summary of your response to each question reflects your views and for you to provide any feedback and corrections you may have.

End interview section and discuss member-checking with participant

I will e-mail you the transcript on [Date] and would like to schedule the follow-up meeting on [Date].

Schedule follow-up member checking meeting.

[Date] and [Location]

End of the interview protocol

Appendix B: Member Checking

Introduce follow-up interview and set the stage	Script XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Share a copy of the succinct synthesis for each individual question	Script XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Bring in probing questions related to other information that you may have found—note the information must be related so that you are probing and adhering to the IRB approval.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation 2. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation 3. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation 4. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation 5. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation 6. Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation
Walk through each question, read the interpretation and ask: Did I miss anything? Or, what would you like to add?	

Appendix C: Focus Group Protocol

My name is Daniel Ortiz, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I would like to thank you for your time and for granting me this opportunity. The purpose for the following questions is to help answer the main research question which is *What strategies do business managers in the retail sector use to enhance workplace diversity planning to assure compliance with EEOC regulations?*

Focus Group Questions:

1. What was your experience being selected to join this organization?
2. What is your overall experience of being employed in a diverse workplace?
3. What are some of the benefits?
4. What are some of the challenges?
5. What else would you like to add?

Thank you for your valuable time and the information provided. As indicated in the consent form, you will be de-identified by using your code [X] and input to the discussion transcribed verbatim. I will also summarize your response to each of the questions, within a timeframe of [amount of days] after this focus group. I will then e-mail you the summary of your response to each question to allow you to confirm if the summary of your response to each question reflects your views and for you to provide any feedback and corrections you may have.