Development of Organizational Diversity Communication

Over Time and Between Working Sectors

Automated Content Analysis of Cultural Diversity Perspectives in Annual Reports (DivPAR)

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Master's Thesis
June 2022

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ABSTRACT

This explorative study has analyzed the development of diversity communication, based on three diversity perspectives (moral, market, and innovation), in 687 annual reports of 30 organizations from eight working sectors in the Netherlands from 2010 till 2020 through automated content analysis. The purpose of this study was to better understand the trends in diversity communication over time and between different types of organizations, which has not been researched before. Therefore, this study can be considered highly relevant due to the rising importance of diversity in the workforce and the need from the business field, such as communication professionals, to learn more about this development, but also because of the demand from the academic field to fill the research gap regarding large-scale studies on diversity perspectives. Accordingly, the following two research questions were formulated: 1. How has the prevalence of the three diversity perspectives in annual reports developed over time? 2. Are there differences in prevalence or development of the perspectives between sectors? The research questions were answered through a quantitative content analysis of diversity perspectives via the validated automatic coding tool DivPAR, complemented by regression analyses, ANOVA, and one-sample t-tests in SPSS.

   In conclusion, this study found significant and positive effects for the development over time for all three diversity perspectives which means that all perspectives were mentioned to a greater extent over time in the annual reports. More precisely, the moral perspective was overall the most popular perspective in diversity communication among all sectors and found the strongest positive effect over time. Besides that, this study was the first to find out that there are significant differences in diversity communication between organizations from distinct working sectors, based on a manually created industry classification for the Dutch economy. In particular, the services and consultancy sector communicated mostly on diversity for all three motivations while the sectors of agriculture and food processing, and retail communicated the least about diversity. Despite that, this study found no significant differences regarding the development of diversity communication over time between the sectors which means that all three diversity perspectives were communicated more over time in all sectors.

   Everything considered, the findings of this study reveal insights in organizational diversity communication over time and between sectors, which is, in the first place, useful for society and academics, to get a better understanding of how organizations deal with diversity communication, and, in the second place, for communication professionals, to optimize communications and improve organizational reputation management.

KEYWORDS: *Diversity perspectives, diversity communication, automated content analysis.*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction of the topic and societal relevance

Diversity and inclusion have become important pillars of organizations' strategies in the last few decades (Barak, 2016; Jonson et al., 2021; Ozbilgin et al., 2015). Prior studies reveal predominantly positive effects from enhanced workforce diversity and inclusion such as benefits for organizational productivity, enrichment of employees' worldviews, and improvement of organizations' reputations, which could explain the expanded attention for diversity initiatives in business fields (Hofhuis et al., 2021; Homan, 2019; Martins, 2014; Plaut, 2010). Subsequently, most of todays' organizations implement some type of a diversity policy and communicate about their diversity initiatives to their stakeholders via various platforms including their website, social media accounts, in (job) advertisements, and in periodicals such as annual reports as part of strategic- and reputation management (Hofhuis et al., 2021). Accordingly, the rising importance of diversity brings relevant questions along such as how organizations deal with diversity, how they communicate about it, if there are differences between distinct types of organizations in their diversity communication, and what the optimal way to communicate about diversity comprises. Therefore, it would be useful to research the trends in organizational diversity communication as this could eventually be used to better understand how organizations deal with diversity, which remains an important topic in society. Furthermore, communication professionals from organizations could use the outcome of this research to get a better understanding of the trends in the diversity field. Based on this, they could optimize their communications and improve an organization's reputation, which underlines the societal relevance.

Overview of theories and academic relevance

In the academic field, several studies have been conducted to identify and classify the different motivations behind diversity policies and communications, often referred to as diversity perspectives among scholars (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Hofhuis et al., 2021). Moreover, research has proved that the applied diversity perspective in an organization could have an extensive impact on the effectiveness of diversity management (Ely & Thomas, 2001). However, large-scale research on the development of diversity perspectives remains missing which is unfortunate because there is a need for more research on this trend from both the business as the academic field (Homan, 2019; Podsiadlowski, 2012).

This research gap is mainly due to the fact that the process of manually coding for diversity perspectives in organizational communication is very labor-intensive which therefore complicates it for scholars to conduct quantitative research on a large scale. For this reason, Hofhuis et al. (2021) have developed and validated an automatic coding tool, Diversity Perspectives in Annual Reports (DivPAR), for quantitative content analysis to identify diversity perspectives in annual reports. The DivPAR tool is based on one of the leading classifications for diversity perspectives in the academic field from Ely and Thomas (2001) and includes a moral perspective (e.g., "We want to eliminate discrimination and

provide equal opportunities for all cultural groups''; p. 2), a market perspective (e.g., ''By having a culturally diverse workforce, our organization is better able to understand and adapt to market demands''; p. 2) and an innovation perspective (e.g. "Cultural diversity is associated with increased learning potential, flexibility, and innovation"; p. 1) (Hofhuis et al., 2021). This tool is very useful as it makes it easier to conduct large-scale research on the development of diversity, which can be used to fill the research gap regarding studies on the development of the diversity perspectives over a longer period. Moreover, there is a lack of studies on diversity development from specific angles. For instance, studies on the prevalence of the diversity perspectives among distinct organizational working sectors do not exist yet, while it can be expected that there are differences in diversity management between types of organizations considering the trends respecting related topics such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

Thus, this research aims to contribute to the academic field by further testing the DivPAR tool with empirical evidence and fills the existing research gap for large-scale studies on diversity perspectives from different organizations over a longer period based on a sector categorization. This has not been done before and therefore this research would contribute to the academic field. Moreover, this study aims to contribute to the theoretical rationales with respect to cultural diversity perspectives and the importance of social identity and social categorization in intergroup relations by emphasizing the relevance of surface-level characteristics (Podsiadlowski, 2012).

Research focus and research questions

In summary, this explorative study will focus on the prevalence of diversity perspectives, as communicated in annual reports, between organizations from different working sectors in the Netherlands from 2010 till 2020, using the DivPAR tool. The purpose of the study is to get a better understanding of the developments regarding diversity communication in the working field with different types of organizations which leads to the following research questions:

1. How has the prevalence of the three diversity perspectives in annual reports developed over time?
2. Are there differences in prevalence or development of the perspectives between sectors?

The following research questions will be answered through a quantitative content analysis of diversity perspectives via the automatic coding tool DivPAR complemented by regression analyses, ANOVA, and one-sample t-test analysis in SPSS.

Structure

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter two provides an overview of previous research on diversity, diversity perspectives, diversity communication, organizational communication through annual reports, and organizational differences regarding diversity communication. Chapter three discusses the research

design and method with an outline of the processes of data selection and data collection together with a sample description. Then, chapter four presents the study's results regarding the prevalence of the three diversity perspectives, as communicated in annual reports, over time and between sectors based on the outcomes of the regression analyses, ANOVA and one-sample t-test analysis in SPSS. Finally, the fifth and last chapter provides a summary of findings, theoretical implications, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research, practical implications, and finalizes with a conclusion.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Defining diversity and inclusion

Nowadays, the management of diversity among employees has become apparent as one of the fundamental challenges faced by modern organizations (Jonson et al., 2021). Diversity and inclusion are well-known and well-researched concepts in the United States and Europe and have persistently become part of the corporate plan for a few decades now (Barak, 2016; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Jonson et al., 2021; Ozbilgin et al., 2015; Podsiadlowski et al., 2012). The concepts are often interchangeably used in scholarly and popular literature, however the difference between the two is obvious. Despite that, there has not been agreed upon a universal definition for the concepts yet (Jonsen et al., 2012; Roberson, 2006). In this section, some of the leading definitions in the field will be shared to get a better understanding of what diversity and inclusion entails before we delve deeper into the development of diversity and inclusion within organizations.

On the one hand, Roberson (2006) argues that diversity generally describes how groups are structured in terms of both observable and unobservable differences. Some aspects of diversity include demographic differences such as age and gender (Roberson, 2006). Another definition from Kreitz (2008) explains diversity as the significant differences that distinguish people from each other, however these differences can both be openly recognizable or more private (as cited in Podsiadlowski et al., 2012). More precisely, the concept of cultural diversity describes the inclusion of differences in race, ethnicity, language, nationality, religion, and sexual orientation in the representation of a community (Amadeo, 2013). Nowadays, additional measures of diversity such as knowledge, competencies and working styles are included as well, which makes diversity an extensive concept (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). On the other hand, the concept of inclusion concentrates on the way different individuals are included in networks and in the process of making decisions (Roberson, 2006). Another interpretation of inclusion focuses on how people work together which is often linked to diversity as well due to the differences among people that are working together (Jonsen et al., 2021).

In general, most academics agree on the fact that the concepts of diversity and inclusion are connected with each other. In summary, diversity concentrates on the differences among people and inclusion on the representation of those differences in organizations. Furthermore, diversity and inclusion are often linked to CSR in the business field, but these concepts are not interchangeable despite its alignment in both theory and practice, which will be further explained later (Hansen and Seierstad, 2017; Karatas-Ozkan et al., 2014).

In the following section, the development of diversity communication in organizations over time will be discussed, which is connected to research question one. Next, the dominant theories regarding diversity perspectives will be touched upon, followed by literature on the communication aspect of diversity, which will be later more specified to the form of annual reports. Thereafter, literature

on the organizational and sectoral differences between organizations in relation to diversity will be discussed, which relates to research question two. Lastly, a short explanation of the present study will be shared.

Development of diversity in organizations over time

Since the 1990s, diversity and inclusion have grown in importance as part of organizations' strategies. Respectively, most of todays' prominent organizations implement various diversity and inclusion related practices. Several studies have underlined the value of diversity on group functioning, competitive advantage, and other factors like employees' well-being (Cox & Blake, 1991; Homan, 2019; Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). Besides that, this popular belief in value-in diversity is frequently linked with the inclusion of cultural minority employees (Hofhuis et al., 2021; Homan, 2019).

For the ascending importance of these diversity-related developments, researchers have suggested various explanations (Dahlsrud, 2008; Hansen & Seierstad, 2017; Maier & Ravazzani, 2019; Rimmington & Alagic, 2017). Predominantly, most academic and business studies acknowledge that the wants and expectations of a wider range of different stakeholders should be addressed in an organization in order to accomplish legitimate operational success nowadays (Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). In the past, organizations mainly focused on traditional stakeholders like shareholders, whereas contemporary companies concentrate on the desires of more stakeholders such as employees and (potential) clients as well (Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). Continuing in this line of thought, Rimmington and Alagic (2017) have stated that proactive management includes "seeking, responding to, collaborating with, and empowering a diverse array of stakeholders" (p. 270). According to Dahlsrud (2008), organizations have to deal with new expectations, coming from new stakeholders and national legislations, regarding the way how they should balance social, environmental, and economic impacts in their management. These expectations could range from developments respecting sustainability to the inclusion of a diversity policy. Thus, it can be argued that there is an interaction between developments and trends in society and in business because the developments and expectations from society influence the developments and expectations in business and vice versa. In line with this, Hansen and Seierstad (2017) have argued that organizations have been pushed to put both CSR and diversity management on the agenda due to societal developments including globalization, changing demographic trends and discourses about the role of corporations in society. Adding to this, Maier and Ravazzani (2019) argue that a diversity strategy is considered to be a necessary strategic asset of an organization in the quickly changing globalized business context. However, researchers agree that there are differences in the implementation of diversity practices in distinct types of organizations, for instance based on the geographical location, size, and sector of the organization (Hansen & Seierstad; 2017; Maier & Ravazanni, 2019). Subsequently, these factors influence the motivation behind the inclusion of a specific diversity strategy, which will be elaborated on in the next section.

Different diversity perspectives

Organizations carry out distinct organizational approaches to diversity, often labeled as diversity strategies, diversity orientations, or diversity perspectives (Podsiadlowski et al., 2012; Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). In other words, a diversity perspective can be seen as ''the underlying rationale for organizations to formulate diversity management practices'' (Hofhuis et al., 2021, p. 2). Many studies have been conducted to identify and classify the different diversity perspectives (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Hofhuis et al., 2021; Podsiadłowski, 2012).

One of the most prominent ways to label diversity perspectives in the academic field comes from Ely and Thomas (2001). They came up with the following three diversity perspectives: the integration-and-learning perspective, the access-and-legitimacy perspective, and the discrimination-and-fairness perspective. Firstly, the integration-and-learning perspective explains diversity as a tool for learning and change in work processes. In this perspective, employees are seen as part of distinct cultural identity groups with their own valuable insights, skills, and experiences, which can be used to improve business practices by for instance rethinking primary tasks and redefining markets, products, and strategies. The second access-and-legitimacy perspective is based on the idea that there is cultural variation in organizations' markets and constituencies which makes diversity in an organization valuable as it can be helpful for acquiring access and legitimacy to these culturally variated markets. Thirdly, the discrimination-and-fairness perspective relates to the understanding of diversity in an organization as moral necessity to make sure that all people in society are treated equally. In this perspective, the emphasis is on the belief that diversity is fair for employees and the right thing to do. Some examples are providing equal opportunities in hiring and promotion and suppressing prejudicial attitudes.

Following up on this, Hofhuis et al. (2021) have created the following three similar perspectives: a moral perspective, a market perspective, and an innovation perspective, which are aligned with the perspectives by Ely and Thomas (2001) but named differently. Moreover, these three diversity perspectives are included by Hofhuis et al. (2021) in the development of their digital tool for automatic content analysis which is called DivPAR. Firstly, the moral perspective corresponds with the discrimination-and-fairness perspective. This perspective considers cultural diversity in the workplace as an ethical or moral responsibility for organizations towards society. An indicator for this perspective could be: "we want to eliminate discrimination and provide equal opportunities for all cultural groups" (p. 2). Secondly, the market perspective corresponds with the access-and-legitimacy perspective. In this perspective, the central idea is that organizations operate in a culturally diverse market, making a diverse workplace a valuable tool for reaching different stakeholders. An indicator could be: "by having a culturally diverse workforce, our organization is better able to understand and adapt to market demands" (p. 2) which can be applied to various types of organizations such as supermarkets and governmental organizations. Thirdly, the innovation perspective corresponds with the integration-and-learning perspective. This perspective refers to the notion that cultural diversity directly benefits internal

processes within an organization. An indicator could be: "cultural diversity is associated with increased learning potential, flexibility, and innovation" (p. 1).

In short, the different diversity perspectives reflect the various motivations behind diversity initiatives. In the next section, the way of communicating these diversity perspectives will be discussed.

Diversity communication

The majority of organizations communicate about their diversity initiatives to their stakeholders in various ways such as via their website, social media accounts, in (job) advertisements, and in annual reports (Hofhuis et al., 2021). Until now, most of the research on diversity and inclusion has focused on human resource management practices, while analysis of communication features was missing (Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). However, analyzing both organizations' internal and external communication can be very useful to explore the prevalence of diversity perspectives within an organization. Studies have revealed that communication, in the broader scope of diversity, is vital for explaining what organizations do, and realizing the maximum benefit and legitimacy from their efforts (Basil & Erlandson, 2008; Colleoni, 2013). Adding to that, other scholars have argued that communication can be considered essential in framing diversity management as an organizational opportunity and objective (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004, as cited in Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). By putting an emphasis, in an organizations' communication, on the rationale, initiative and achievements that could be realized through employing and promoting diversity both inside and outside the company, multiple stakeholders could be reached and convinced of the justification of the diversity initiatives (Simons, 2002, as cited in Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). Accordingly, external communication has been demonstrated to be fundamental for organizations for inclusion of the larger community of stakeholders and to accomplish internal and external social legitimacy (Ravazzani, 2016). However, most of the related studies showed that external communication on diversity in online contexts is often positioned in the context of CSR or as an indicator of corporate social performance (Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). As mentioned before, diversity and inclusion are frequently associated with CSR, however the concepts cannot be considered interchangeable (Hansen and Seierstad, 2017; Karatas-Ozkan et al., 2014). Overall, many studies have been conducted on CSR, in comparison to the relatively limited number of studies on diversity. Since there are some similarities between the concepts, it can be insightful to include and review literature on CSR as well for this study that focuses on diversity communication. Respectively, research by Mory et al. (2016) revealed that organizations' diversity and inclusion practices, for instance regarding equal opportunity, used to be neglected in the literature, whereas external CSR practices, such as environmental awareness, were often reflected upon. More recent comparative studies on diversity initiatives, as externally communicated via organizations' websites, including different types of organizations, are missing, which might be due to the significant variation in ways to communicate on diversity via the website and the arrival of other channels. However, a changing trend can be observed as the internal CSR and diversity and inclusion practices have recently

gotten more attention from both the business and academic world. Adding to that, researchers argue that the ongoing increasing globalization and migration underline the importance of diversity management in organizations for now and for the future as well (Podsiadlowski et al., 2012).

Diversity communication in annual reports

As stated before, there are various ways for organizations to communicate about diversity, for instance via social media, a website, and an annual report. Annual reports are frequently considered to be one of the most standardized and consistent forms of organizational communication and are in most countries publicly published, at regular intervals, each year for all stakeholders in English, as a result of the international business landscape, and therefore easily accessible (Hofhuis et al., 2021). The main topics in the annual reports consist of financial performance and organizational strategy (Bebbington et al., 2008). These topics are most relevant for shareholders and business partners, who can be considered as the main target audience for the annual reports. However, in the last decade, next to financial performance, organizations started to mention CSR, including statements on diversity and inclusion branding purposes, in their annual reports as well (Elving et al., 2013; Hofhuis et al., 2021; Podsiadlowski & Reichel, 2014). As part of external communication, annual reports are important channels for reputation management since people will be informed and possibly influenced in their opinion about the organization based on what is included in the reports (Bebbington et al, 2008; Jonsen et al., 2019, Hofhuis et al., 2021). Essentially, the inclusion of diversity statements is considered useful for organizations to build on an inclusive reputation to its main stakeholders, but it is also relevant for other stakeholders such as employees and customers. By means of an example, potential employees could read an annual report of an organization and form their opinion about the organization based on it, which will eventually influence their decision to apply for a job.

In short, annual reports are considered to be the most specific communication channels towards all stakeholders, are mostly publicly accessible, published at regular intervals, and available in English (Hofhuis et al., 2021). For these reasons, annual reports from different types of organizations and from different countries, can easily be accessed and can be used for comparative studies, which can be used to fill the research gap regarding diversity communication.

Research question one

Taken all the above-mentioned information regarding diversity perspectives and diversity communication into account, this study will focus on the overtime development of the prevalence of the three diversity perspectives in annual reports, which corresponds with research question one.

Organizational differences in diversity communication

Several studies have shown how the implemented diversity perspective in an organization affects outcomes on various levels (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Dwertmann et al., 2016). Starting with the effects on

individual and group level, Ely and Thomas (2001) have stated that the dominant diversity motivation within an organization has a big influence on the employees, the mutual understanding between colleagues and both individual and group functioning. By means of an example, the specific diversity perspective influenced how employees expressed and dealt with strains regarding diversity, whether employees from the traditionally underrepresented minority felt respected and appreciated by their colleagues, and how employees defined the meaning of the interpretation of their racial identity at work (Ely & Thomas, 2001). Accordingly, prior work from Van Knippenberg et al. (2007) revealed the importance of the individuals' beliefs about the value of diversity which showed ''that work group diversity and group identification are more positively related the more individuals believe in the value of diversity'' (p. 2).

Besides that, previous studies have examined that specific organizational environments, such as the difference between public and private structured organizations, affect the process of implementing diversity initiatives in organizations. Some of these differences include the diversity perspectives, the establishment of measurements, and the tools to ensure accountability for the initiatives to succeed for longitudinal progress (Chun et al., 2013; Riccucci, 2021). Whereas private sector organizations were found to be more progressive and inclusive of diversity initiatives, organizations in the public sector were considered to be more hesitant to take on diversity initiatives (Chun et al, 2013). Next to that, other studies specified how the national, local, and macro-social environment from organizations influence their diversity initiatives (Georgiadou et al., 2019; Wyatt-Nichol & Antwi-Boasiako, 2012). Adding to that, in the broader scope of CSR practices, some studies have already revealed similar outcomes (Hameed et al., 2016; Kapur et al., 2020). Conclusively, this underlines the assumption that organizations deal with diversity and diversity communication in different ways based on various features such as their structure and environment.

However, research on diversity communication between different types of organizations based on their working sector, which is another way to categorize organizations and will be further discussed in the next section, does not exist yet. Based on the above-mentioned research on organizational and sectoral differences impacting the adapted diversity initiatives, it can be expected that differences in diversity communication are observable by contrasting specific industries or sectors as well. Nonetheless, research focusing on diversity initiatives based on a comparison on industry level is missing, which leaves us to make assumptions. For instance, it can be expected that widely known organizations that fulfil a prominent position in society, like financial institutions, tend to communicate more about diversity for moral motivations due to the expectations that are put on them by society and the need to take societal responsibility (Dahlsrud, 2008; Hansen & Seierstad, 2017). Another expectation is that organizations in sectors with a lack of diversity in their top management, such as in manufacturing and industry sectors, will be less likely to implement diversity initiatives as they are not used to it and might not see the value of it (Fisher, 2021). Nevertheless, this remains difficult to prove since no studies have been conducted on diversity from a working sector level.

Organizational sector classification

Various industry classifications are used to put organizations in different categories for business and research purposes including the well-known Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS) and the North American Classification System (NAICS). The first one, GICS, is a method for allocating organizations to a specific industry that suits their business operations, which is predominantly used and acknowledged by investors, analysts, and economists to compare competing companies (Hayes, 2021). GICS categorizes the following eleven sectors: energy, materials, industrials, consumer discretionary, consumer staples, health care, financials, information technology, communication services, utilities, and real estate (MSCI, 2021). The second one, NAICS, is the standard used by federal statistical agencies in the United States, Canada, and Mexico to categorize businesses for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data in reference to the business economy of the United States (Census, 2022). The 2017 NAICS edition consists of 20 sectors including for instance the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector, the construction sector, and the educational services sector (Statistics Canada, 2018).

Notwithstanding, it is notable that each country has its own economy with business activities in different sectors which poses questions on how to operationalize this aspect in this study. As we compare different industry categorization schemes, a large overlap is found in categories but there are also some specific differences. By means of an example, agricultural activities can be found in most approaches, but the inclusion of cotton production activities can be found only in specific countries. Also, the boundaries of specific categories are likely to vary between different national schemes. These differences between the ways of categorization can be analyzed and quantified to be able to compare between countries. This could be a very useful study but does not fit within the boundaries of this study. Another aspect which is not analyzed but could have impact in industry categorization is found in cultural differences between countries as these may affect the way productive activities are categorized. Therefore, in order to be able to draw valid conclusions, this study will focus on the Dutch situation based on a manually created industry classification. This categorization will be used to research the differences in diversity communication between organizations from distinct sectors as this could provide insight into the dominating diversity perspectives across and within different industries. Moreover, this could reveal whether certain perspectives occur more frequently in specific industries which could then be related to other influencing factors such as the progressiveness of the industry (Wyatt-Nichol & Antwi-Boasiako, 2012).

Research question two

Based on all this, this study will delve deeper into the question whether there are differences between organizations from distinct sectors in their diversity communication in the form of annual reports, as is expected considering the related trends such as with other organizational features and CSR practices.

This can be seen as an indicator of how different sectors handle diversity, which has not been researched yet and therefore fills a gap in the academic field.

Present study

Taking all of the above into account, this explorative study will provide insight into the prevalence of diversity perspectives, aiming to better understand the developments regarding diversity communication in the working field in the Netherlands, which continues to be a highly relevant topic in todays' society. This study will be the first to research the development of the diversity perspectives over time, between 2010 and 2020, and between different sectors. The diversity perspectives will be analyzed through annual reports because they are the most specific channels for communication towards stakeholders, including statements on diversity branding purposes, and are part of an organizations' reputation management (Bebbington et al, 2008; Jonsen et al., 2019; Hofhuis et al., 2021). The research questions will be answered through a quantitative content analysis of diversity perspectives via the automatic coding tool DivPAR, which will be further explained in the methodological section, complemented by regression analyses and an ANOVA in SPSS.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Method

Research design

The purpose of this study was to explore the trends on diversity perspectives over time and between different sectors. In order to find out about the differences in diversity perspectives from organizations in the Netherlands over time, from 2010 to 2020, and between the eight working sectors, an explorative study was conducted through an automated quantitative content analysis of diversity perspectives in annual reports.

This study aimed to have a sample consisting of enough organizations to represent each sector, and then to collect digitized annual reports from ten years for each organization, which was estimated at a sample of around 800 reports. More specifically, this means that the goal was to collect annual reports for each year in the period from 2010 till 2020 for ten organizations for each of the eight sectors: agriculture and food processing, service and consultancy, construction and real estate, manufacturing and industry, finance and insurance, retail, transport, media and (tele)communication. The sectors function as industry classifications to place organizations in different categories that fit the Dutch economy.

As mentioned earlier, annual reports were chosen because they are commonly known as the most specific communication expression towards stakeholders (Hofhuis et al., 2021). It is worth noting that organizations give their own substance to their annual reports which means that the annual reports could slightly differ in terms of content between the organizations and for the different years. Nevertheless, annual reports are considered to be one of the most standardized and consistent forms of organizational communication. Therefore, annual reports are expected to clearly reflect the diversity policy within an organization. Also, annual reports are frequently published in consistent time intervals of one year which makes them useful for the study of development of diversity over time. Adding to this, most annual reports are clearly labeled as annual reports on the internet and therefore easy to find. Based on all this, they can be considered useful for the purposes of this study.

In order to obtain the sample, data selection and collection processes have been carried out, which will be further discussed in upcoming sections.

Method

Content analysis is the right method to quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of certain words, themes and concepts and therefore perfectly suits this research that analyzes trends on diversity perspectives (Colombia Public Health, 2022). For this study, an automatic content analysis tool, called DivPAR, will be used based on a validated Python script, which will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

Next to that, a quantitative approach was chosen because it explicitly specifies what is measured and how it will be measured in a structured way (Farnsworth, 2019). This aligns with the goal of this study to reveal patterns in diversity perspectives in organizations over time and between different sectors, which underlines the justification for this approach. Moreover, a quantitative method is preferred since it allows to quantify a bulk of digitalized annual reports about diversity perspectives, and potentially can be used to contextualize the results from this study sample in a broader context (Farnsworth, 2019).

Data selection

The process of data selection for the intended sample consisted of different phases. There was a trial phase before the data selection for the final sample, which focused on the sector categorization. In the research process, the initial idea was to use of an existing and widely appreciated industry classification and to select companies based on these criteria. However, after selecting companies based on the existing industry classifications, such as GICS and NAICS, it appeared that these classifications were unsuitable for organizations in the Netherlands. This is logical because each country has its own economy with business activities in different sectors, making it difficult to make use of one general industry classification. Therefore, a manual industry classification was created based on the market in the Netherlands, which will be explained later in this section.

In the first phase of the data selection for the final sample, organizations were selected via the Orbis database. This database provides access to the financial data of 79 million companies worldwide and gives insight into different features and actual financial aspects of organizations. Orbis allows users to find organizations with chosen criteria by using filters. For this study, the following filters were used in this order: year, status, world region/country/region in country, stock and earnings estimates. After choosing each filter, data was selected from the database, and with each next filter, data was selected out of the earlier selected data, which underlined the importance of the order of the filters.

By using the first filter, data was selected from the year 2020, which corresponds with the actuality and the time frame of this study. With the second filter, only active organizations were selected so that for instance the organizations that are bankrupt were left out. The third filter allowed to pick only the companies that are operating in the Netherlands. Fourthly, the stock and earning estimates filter gave the opportunity to select for publicly listed companies only. In this way, it was accounted for that the organizations that were included in the sample belong to the most prestigious commercial organizations of the Netherlands in terms of financial worth which means that these organizations were expected to have a powerful and representative position. Another advantage of selecting publicly listed companies is that they are obligated to publicly share their annual reports which would make the data collection process easier. Moreover, publicly listed organizations were expected to have a relatively high number of employees and therefore represent a larger part of society. Furthermore, selecting the leading organizations from each sector was expected to improve the analysis as the organizations from

different sectors are comparable in their market position. Despite that, it is worth mentioning that this way of selecting the sample leaves out the relatively smaller organizations in the chosen working sectors which could affect the reliability of the study regarding generalizing results since only the relatively more prominent organizations are represented in the working sectors. Thereby, the non-commercial organizations, such as universities and NGOs, were also left out because this study decided to strictly focus on the commercial organizations in the Netherlands.

Overall, the first phase of data selection resulted in the retrieval of most of the companies. The next step was to develop a proper industry classification for the Netherlands and to categorize the companies in the right sector. This process was carried out manually based on internet research for information about the organizations to understand their business, to come up with working sectors, and to see which sector would be the best fit per organization.

Notwithstanding, the sample at that moment revealed that some sectors were less represented than others. Utilizing an example, the manufacturing and industry sector consisted of fifteen companies that fit the selection criteria, whereas the retail sector consisted of only four companies that match the criteria. This could reflect that the Dutch economy might have certain more dominant sectors in the market as there are more active and publicly listed companies in for instance the manufacturing and industry, compared to the retail sector. For this reason, it was decided that not every sector needed to have an exact equal number of organizations included as this study aims to align with the Dutch market, which is not evenly distributed as well. However, in order to improve the reliability of the study and to be able to run the analyses in SPSS in a correct and insightful way, a minimum of seven companies and a maximum of twelve companies per sector was determined.

Due to the unevenness in the dataset among the number of organizations per sector, a second phase of data selection was implemented. In the second phase of data selection, organizations were manually selected based on the researchers' own insights regarding the type of business of the organizations and their economic position, supplemented by internet research on the performance of organizations such as annual sales. In this way, more organizations were added to the sample, which resulted in seven to twelve organizations for each working sector. Eventually, the final choice of organizations was based on the above-mentioned criteria aiming to establish a sample of between seven to twelve organizations per sector that was reflective of large organizations in the Dutch economy. An overview of the selected organizations per sector can be found in Appendix A.

Data collection

After the data selection, data collection was the next step in the process. In this study, the data refer to the annual reports of the selected organizations. The goal was to collect the annual reports from 2010 to 2020 for each organization in the data set.

The process of data collection was carried out by a mix of methods. For several organizations in the sample, a set of annual reports was already available from a previous study by my supervisor, Dr.

J. Hofhuis. This data set was supplemented with the annual reports from missing years and with new organizations. In order to do so, the most prominent data collection method was to use Google search with the following keywords: ''name company'' + annual report + ''year'', which often resulted in useful internet sources to download the annual reports. Another data collection method was to visit the organization's website, and to search manually for a section that included documentation such as annual reports. Lastly, the website www.annreports.com was used to look for annual reports. With a mix of these methods, most of the annual reports were collected. However, some were still missing for various reasons.

Therefore, the next phase in the data collection was to check the missing reports and replace or supplement them if necessary. First of all, a few organizations from the initial data set did not publicly share their annual reports. In that case, the organization was exchanged for a comparable organization in the same sector based upon business activities, financial results, and internet research. A similar issue was that some organizations only shared the recent annual reports and that older ones were missing for various reasons. Some examples are that the organization could be new or that it became quite recently publicly listed and therefore was not obligated to share its annual reports before. Based on these matters, it was decided that at least half of the annual reports from 2010 till 2020 should be available to include the organization in the study. Consequently, organizations with not enough, which means five or fewer, available annual reports were replaced with a similar organization. The organizations with a few missing annual reports were included in the study, although not all annual reports were collected. However, this can be considered negligible because the organizations are analyzed as a group, together with other organizations in the same sector, and not on a company level. Another matter concerned the annual reports that were written in Dutch because the DivPAR tool only works with the English language. Therefore, annual reports that were written in Dutch, and not findable in English, were labeled as missing data and were handled in the same way as the missing reports with the rule stating that at least half of the reports should be available or otherwise they will be replaced for another organization. Moreover, a point was that some organizations have merged within the study's time frame. For instance, the first annual reports were only from the organization Vodafone, which later changed to VodafoneZiggo because of the merger. The same goes for DeltaLloyd which later became Nationale Nederlanden Group, and the merger of SNS resulted in Volksbank. In these cases, both the annual reports from the organizations before and after the merger were taken and processed as a whole. No organizations were found that stopped existing or went bankrupt within the time frame of this study. This probably has to do with the fact that only active organizations were selected and that most organizations were selected based on recent financial performance from the year 2020. Eventually, this resulted in an initial dataset with eight sectors, 70 organizations, and 690 annual reports that will be analyzed with the automated content analysis tool Diversity Perspectives in Annual Reports (DivPAR).

Sample description

Out of the proposed sample consisting of 770 annual reports, a total of 690 annual reports were collected from 70 organizations from eight working sectors in the period between 2010 and 2020 (86.5%). The sample includes mainly publicly listed organizations from the following working sectors: agriculture and food processing (e.g., Unilever, Heineken), service and consultancy (e.g., KPMG, Randstad), construction and real estate (e.g., Ballast Nedam, VastNed), manufacturing and industry (e.g., Aalberts, Shell), finance and insurance (e.g., ABN Amro, Aegon), retail (e.g., Ahold, TenCate), transport (e.g., Schiphol, JustEatTakeaway), media and (tele)communication (e.g., VodafoneZiggo, DPG Media). The complete list of selected organizations can be found in Appendix A.

After data cleaning, N = 687 were included in further analyses. Data cleaning included the removal of annual reports that were written in Dutch (N = 2), since the DivPAR tool only works with the English language, and the removal of a report from 2021 (N = 1) because that report was out of scope since this study focuses on the period between 2010 and 2020.

Overall, the trend was that annual reports from the earlier years (2010-2013) were harder to find digitally available as the annual reports of these years made up between 8.4% and 8.6% of the total sample, compared to between 9.2% and 9.6% for the more recent reports, which is visualized in Table 1. Furthermore, Table 1 shows the unequal distribution of the annual reports per sector. This reveals that the manufacturing and industry sector is most represented (19.1%), followed by the finance and insurance sector (14.3%), the services and consultancy sector (13.2%), and the construction and real estate sector (12.8%). The lower represented sectors include the transport sector (10.9%), agriculture and food processing sector (10.3%), media and (tele)communication sector (9.9%), and the least represented sector is the retail sector (9.5%).

Table 1

Overview: Amount (n) of collected annual reports per year and per sector.

Year	n	%	Sector	n	%
2010	58	8.4%	Agriculture and Food Processing	71	10.3%
2011	57	8.3%	Services and Consultancy	91	13.2%
2012	59	8.6%	Construction and Real Estate	88	12.8%
2013	59	8.6%	Manufacturing and Industry	131	19.1%

2014	63	9.2%	Finance and Insurance	98	14.3%
2015	66	9.6%	Retail	65	9.5%
2016	65	9.5%	Transport	75	10.9%
2017	65	9.3%	Media and (tele)Communication	68	9.9%
2018	65	9.5%			
2019	65	9.5%			
2020	66	9.6%			

Automated content analysis: DivPAR tool

As mentioned before in the theoretical framework, Hofhuis et al. (2021), based on previous research by Ely and Thomas (2001), have classified three distinct diversity perspectives: a moral perspective, a market perspective, and an innovation perspective. Subsequently, Hofhuis et al. (2021) have developed a digital tool for automatic content analysis for Diversity Perspectives in Annual Reports (DivPAR), which will be used in this study.

The DivPAR tool provides a solution for the research gap regarding large-scale studies on diversity perspectives in organizations, due to the labor-intensive process of manual coding, by providing an automatic tool. From a top-down viewpoint, a so-called dictionary-based approach (''code as X if word Y is present'') was used to design the DivPAR tool because the constructs that the researcher is looking for in the texts would be manifested by themselves through a limited number of indicative words or phrases. Therefore, three categories (the moral, market, and innovation perspectives) were defined with a set of rules that could be used for indication and distinguishment of diversity perspectives. By using a Python script, large collections of documents can be progressed and shaped into new datasets respecting the prevalence of the diversity perspectives over time. Subsequently, the DivPAR tool will convert all annual reports from the sample to usable plain text format. Then, the prevalence of the moral, market, and innovation perspectives will be automatically coded. Based on this, a dataset consisting of an overview of the number of times each perspective was included in each annual report will be created in which the data is translated into variables which show if whether the perspective was, and how many times, or was not present in the annual report (Hofhuis et al., 2021). Consequently, it is possible that a perspective is counted multiple times within one annual report which therefore reflects on the popularity of each perspective.

By researching the long-term development of the three diversity perspectives among large organizations in the Netherlands with the DivPAR tool, Hofhuis et al. (2021) built the foundational empirical evidence and proved validation. This study will add empirical evidence to this by analyzing the found diversity perspectives over time from organizations in the Netherlands from eight sectors. The data will be used for quantitative analysis in SPSS with regression analysis to find an answer to the research questions.

Chapter 4: Results

Overall trends

This study aims to explore the trends on diversity perspectives over time and between different sectors in the Dutch economy. In order to do so, DivPAR, the automated content analysis tool, analyzed the number of times that the three diversity perspectives (moral, market, and innovation perspective) were counted per annual report based on its validated Python script. Therefore, it is possible that a perspective is counted multiple times. By means of an example, it is possible that, within one report, the moral perspective gets counted four times, the market perspective two times, and the innovation perspective not at all. Subsequently, the output of the DivPAR tool reveals the frequencies of the perspectives, which indicates the popularity of the perspectives because a perspective that is counted multiple times is stronger than a perspective that is only counted for once. In this study, the popularity of the diversity perspectives will be analyzed on different levels, for instance over time and between sectors, which aligns with the research goals of this study.

Regarding overall trends, a one-sample t-test and ANOVA for all three perspectives were conducted to analyze the popularity of the perspectives in the collected annual reports from all the sectors representing the Dutch economy. An analysis of the means, which reflects the average number of times that a perspective was counted for in all annual reports, underlined the popularity of the moral perspective compared to the market and innovation perspective. Results show that the moral perspective was counted for 3.48 times on average while the market perspective was counted for .50 times on average and the innovation perspective .47 times on average per annual report. Another remarkable insight was the high score for the standard deviation for all perspectives which means that there are fairly large differences in the prevalence of the perspectives within the sectors, which will be further analyzed in the discussion chapter.

In the following section, results for the development of the diversity perspectives communication over time, including all sectors, will be discussed, which answers research question 1. Secondly, the outcomes for the (potential) differences in the development of the diversity perspectives communication between sectors will be shared, which answers research question 2.

Research question one: Prevalence of the three diversity perspectives in annual reports over time

In this study, the first research question was: How has the prevalence of the three diversity perspectives in annual reports developed over time? In order to find out if time, in this study measured based on the year of the annual report, influences the prevalence of the communication of the diversity perspectives, regression analyses were conducted. The predictor is the year, and the dependent variables are each of the diversity perspectives (moral, market, and innovation).

First of all, a linear regression analysis was conducted for the moral perspective. The model of the moral perspective was found to be significant, $F(1, 685) = 152.75$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .18$. Subsequently, it can be argued that the year has a strong positive and significant effect on the prevalence of the moral perspective (B = .65, $\beta = .43$, $p < .001$). Secondly, a linear regression analysis was conducted for the market perspective. The market perspective was found to be significant, $F(1, 685) = 28.22$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .04$. Accordingly, a positive and significant effect is found regarding the year of the annual report on the prevalence of the market perspective (B = .06, $\beta = .20$, $p < .001$). Thirdly, a linear regression analysis was conducted for the innovation perspective. The model of the innovation perspective was found to be significant, $F(1, 685) = 28.10$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .04$. Therefore, a positive significant effect of the on the prevalence of the innovation perspective was found (B = .06, $\beta = .12$, $p < .001$).

In conclusion, a positive significant effect of time on the prevalence of each diversity perspective was found which means that the perspectives were more present in the more recent annual reports in than the older annual reports, as displayed in Graph 1. Therefore, it could be argued that communicating about diversity grew in importance for organizations over time in the period from 2010 till 2020 because all the perspectives were included more in the newer annual reports compared to the older ones.

In a comparison of the strength of the effects between the perspectives, it was found that the moral perspective had the strongest positive effect and that the market and innovative perspective had a quite similar moderate positive effect. This effect is visualized in Graph 1, which displays the higher number of times that the moral perspective is counted, for instance an average of around six times per annual report in 2017 and 2018, compared to an average of around one time per annual report for the market and innovation perspective in 2017 and 2018.

Besides that, the extent of the expansion of the prevalence of diversity perspectives communication was not completely gradual. As the graphs reflect, for the moral perspective there were small decreases in the number of times that the perspectives were counted for in 2014 and 2015. For the innovation and market perspectives, a more fluctuating trend was noticed with ups and downs in the number of times that the perspectives were counted for. However, both perspectives also revealed a positive and significant effect in the long run.

Graph 1

Overview: Prevalence of Diversity Perspectives (n = 687) in Annual Reports of Dutch Organizations (n = 70) between 2010 and 2020

Prevalence of Diversity Perspectives
in Annual Reports (n = 687) of Dutch Organizations (n = 70)
Between 2010 and 2020
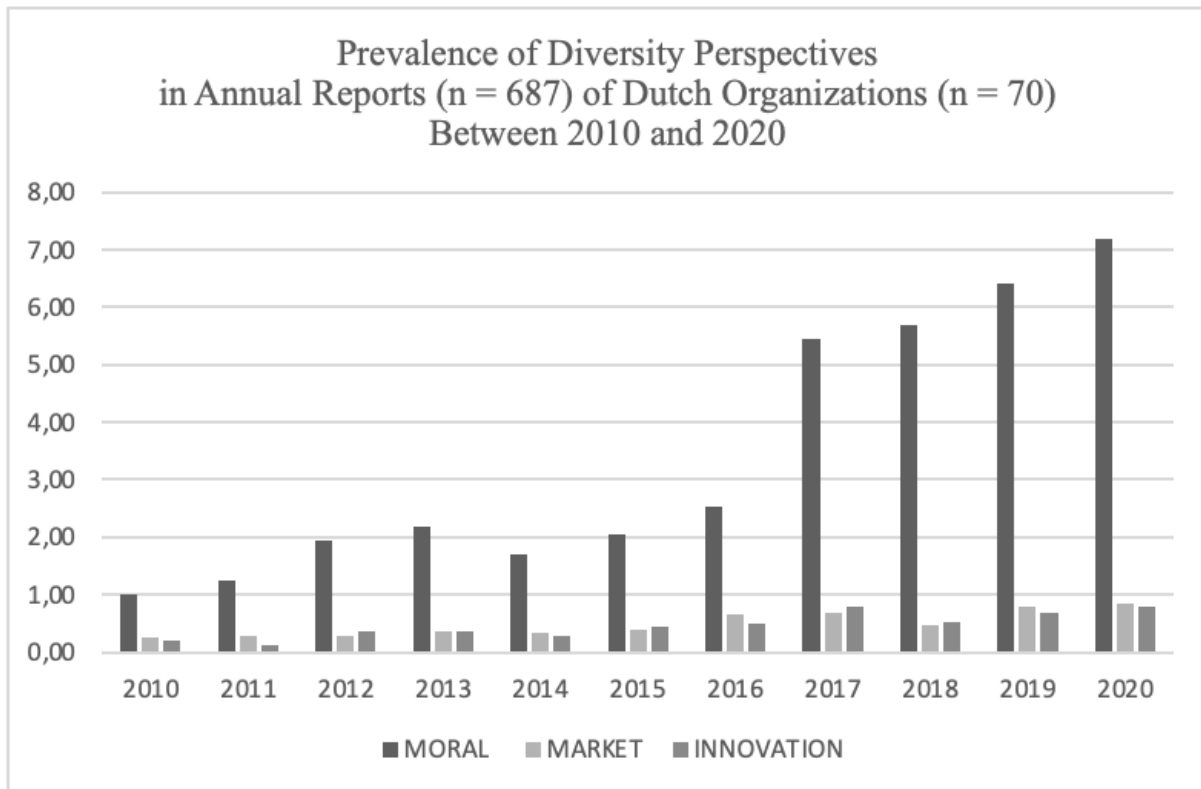
Research question two: Prevalence of the three diversity perspectives in annual reports between sectors

In this study, the second research question was: Are there differences in prevalence or development of the perspectives between sectors? In order to explore this, ANOVA analyses and regression analyses were conducted.

Starting off, an ANOVA was conducted to determine if there are significant differences between the sectors and if there are significant differences in trends in the prevalence of the diversity perspectives over time between the sectors. In order to do so, predictors were each of the perspectives (moral, market, and innovation) as dependent variables, the sector as a fixed factor and the year as a random factor.

First of all, significant results were found that show differences in the prevalence of each of the diversity perspectives among the sectors. The first analysis for the moral perspective was found to be significant $F(1, 7) = 2.35$, p < .022, $R^2 = .02$. Secondly, the results for the market perspective showed significance $F(1, 7) = 7.35$, p < .001, $R^2 = .07$. The third analysis for the innovation perspective proved to be significant $F(1, 7) = 9.48$, p < .001, $R^2 = .09$. In conclusion, this means that there is a difference in the prevalence of all diversity perspectives among the working sectors. The strongest positive effects were found with the market and innovation perspectives, which means that organizations from distinct

sectors might look differently at the importance of these motivations for diversity. For the moral perspective, a moderate positive effect was identified as well, which means that there are differences observable between sectors, but not so strong compared to the other perspectives. This could imply that organizations from different sectors see the importance of the moral perspective, which was also supported by the overall popularity of the moral perspective.

However, no significant results were found in the ANOVA to explore the potential significant differences in trends regarding the prevalence of the diversity perspectives over time between the sectors. For each of the sectors, a moderate positive effect was found in the development of the perspectives over time. More precisely, results show that the moral perspective was not found to be significant $F(70, 599) = .54$, $p < .999$. Secondly, the market perspective did also not appear to be significant $F(70, 599) = .81$, $p < .859$. Thirdly, the innovation perspective proved to be not significant $F(70, 599) = .72$, $p < .959$. Therefore, there were no significant differences respecting the development of the diversity perspectives over time between the sectors. In other words: trends over time are statistically similar for all sectors which means that all sectors mention the three diversity perspectives to a greater extent over time in their annual reports.

In conclusion, it was found that there is a difference in the prevalence of all diversity perspectives among the working sectors. However, for each of the sectors, a moderate positive effect was found in the development of the perspectives over time, so there were no significant differences regarding the trends over time between the sectors.

Additionally, regression analyses have been conducted to explore whether the change overtime in diversity perspectives differs significantly per sector. Predictors were the year and dependent variables were each of the diversity perspectives (moral, market, and innovation) based on data selections which group and classify the companies per sector. For each analysis, data cases were selected belonging to the working sector. The overview of effects and significance per sector and per perspective are visualized in Table 2.

To conclude, this shows that differences between the sectors have been observed as the prevalence of the perspectives was not equal over all sectors, which means that the development of diversity perspectives is different in the distinct working sectors. From the three perspectives, the moral perspective found the most significant effects, in seven of the eight working sectors (87.5%). The market perspective and innovation found only significant effects in two of the eight sectors (25%).

Additionally, results from Table 2 reveal the divergence in the level of popularity of perspectives among the sectors, from which the remarkable findings will be elaborated on now. First of all, the moral perspective is the most popular in the services and consultancy sector (m = 4.84) and the least popular in the agriculture and food processing sector (m = 2.48). Secondly, the market perspective is also the most popular in the services and consultancy sector but scores the lowest in the retail sector (m = .18). Thirdly, the innovation perspective has an outstanding positive score in the services and consultancy sector (m = 1.11) and is the least popular in the retail sector (m = 14). Overall, this

underlines the differences between the sectors and that all the perspectives are primarily mentioned in the annual reports of the services and consultancy sector whereas the retail sector and agriculture and food processing sector are the least popular sectors to mention diversity.

Table 2

Overview: Mean (m), Standard Deviation (SD), Effects (β) and Significance (p) for all Three Perspectives per Sector.

Sector	Moral	Market	Innovation
Agriculture and Food Processing	m = 2.48 SD = 3.17, β = .66, p < .001	m = .28 SD = .68 β = -.22, p < .047	m = .15 SD = .47 β = -.02, p < .834
Services and Consultancy	m = 4.84 SD = 5.86 β = .47, p < .001	m = .86 SD = 1.25 β = .06, p < .630	m = 1.11 SD = 1.60 β = -.05, p < .656
Construction and Real Estate	m = 2.52 SD = 3.43 β = .30, p < .007	m = .15 SD = .42 β = .09, p < .499	m = .27 SD = .64 β = .10, p < .455
Manufacturing and Industry	m = 3.61 SD = 5.02 β = .39, p < .001	m = .47 SD = .73 β = -.11, p < .194	m = .55 SD = .95 β = .21, p < .021
Finance and Insurance	m = 3.98 SD = 4.54 β = .35, p < .002	m = .67 SD = .98 β = .23, p < .0.33	m = .31 SD = .85 β = -.09, p < .413
Retail	m = 3.08 SD = 5.61 β = .53, p < .001	m = .18 SD = .46 β = -.07, p < .558	m = .14 SD = .58 β = .11, p < .349

Transport	m = 3.65	m = .83	m = .51
	SD = 4.82	SD = 1.55	SD = .86
	β = .11, p < .401	β = .16, p < .206	β = .33, p < .005
Media and (tele)Communication	m = 3.15	m = .43	m = .53
	SD = 4.29	SD = .74	SD = .89
	β = .54, p < .001	β = .05, p < .692	β = -.22, p < .053
Total	m = 3.48	m = .50	m = .47
	SD = 4.75	SD = .95	SD = .98

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will share a summary of findings in the same order as in the results chapter, followed by theoretical implications, limitations and recommendations for future research, and practical implications.

Summary of findings

Results from this explorative study have provided insight into the prevalence of the three diversity perspectives (moral, market, and innovation perspective) as formulated by Hofhuis et al. (2021), aligned with the prior work of Ely & Thomas (2001). The prevalence of the diversity perspectives is analyzed from two angles: over time and between sectors, precisely in the period from 2010 to 2020, and between eight working sectors, from a manual-created categorization for organizations in the Netherlands that represents the Dutch economy. A quantitative content analysis of diversity perspectives via the automatic tool DivPAR was complemented by several regression analyses and other analyses such as a one-sample t-test and ANOVA in SPSS.

Overall results

First of all, this study revealed, by conducting a one-sample t-test, the overall popularity of the three diversity perspectives. Results showed that the moral perspective was extensively popular (m = 3.48) compared to the market (m = .50) and innovation (m = .47) perspectives. It is interesting to see that these results are aligned with an earlier study by Hofhuis et al. (2021) which also showed an overall dominance in popularity for the moral perspective. Other studies have examined that organizations implement the moral perspective because they consider enhancing cultural diversity in the workplace as an ethical or moral responsibility towards society (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Hofhuis et al., 2021). Despite the clear preference for the implementation of diversity based on moral motivations by the organizations in this study, a study by Ely and Thomas (2001) stated that the innovation perspective would be the most promising perspective for organizations in terms of sustainable organizational success. Adding to that, they argued that implementing diversity based on innovation perspective motivations would even resolve some of the problems that occur with organizations that implement diversity initiatives based on moral or market perspective motivations. This shows that there is a possible discrepancy between what literature suggests to be the best fit for an organization and what organizations actually do in practice based on the results of this study. Various possible explanations from my point of view for this will be shared in the upcoming sections.

Research question one: Development over time

One of the research purposes of this study was to find out how the prevalence of the three diversity perspectives has developed over time between 2010 and 2020, which corresponds with research question one. Through regression analyses, positive and significant effects were found for all three perspectives, which means that the perspectives were more present in the recent annual reports compared to the older reports. More precisely, the strongest positive effect of time as a predictor was found for the moral perspective, and a moderate positive effect was found for the market and innovation perspectives. Based on this, it could be argued that diversity has become a more important topic for organizations in the Dutch economy because of the rising trend in mentioning diversity initiatives for various motivations (moral, market, innovation) in the annual reports. This aligns with previous research on the rise of diversity and inclusion in the workforce in recent years (Dahlsrud, 2008; Hansen & Seierstad, 2017; Hofhuis et al., 2021; Homan, 2019; Maier & Ravazzani, 2019; Rimmington & Alagic, 2017).

Research question two: Development between sectors

The second goal of this study was to determine if there would be differences in the prevalence of the diversity perspectives between sectors, which corresponds with research question two. The conducted ANOVA and regression analyses showed positive and significant effects, meaning that the prevalence of all three diversity perspectives differs between the sectors. However, no significant effects were found for differences in the development over time between the sectors. This means that all three diversity perspectives were communicated to a greater extent over time in all sectors. Besides that, it should be mentioned that the standard deviation for all perspectives and all sectors scored very high, which means that there are fairly large differences in the prevalence of the perspectives within the sectors.

Since diversity studies in the scope of the differences between working sectors did not exist yet, this research is the first one to prove this finding. This also means that no previous studies were found that tell something about diversity regarding different working sectors, which makes it necessary to include studies from a broader scope. Thus, prior research has revealed that organizations from distinct organizational environments, such as the public or private sector, implement diversity in various ways. Moreover, other studies have shown how organizational' national, local, and macro-social environment affect their implementation of diversity initiatives (Georgiadou et al., 2019; Wyatt-Nichol & Antwi-Boasiako, 2012). Adding to that, organizations from distinct sectors are organized differently, focused on their organizational goals with their own business, customs, and way of working. Subsequently, organizations from these distinct sectors are expected to behave and act differently, which can also be observed regarding the implementation of other initiatives such as sustainability or CSR practices (Hameed et al., 2016; Kapur et al., 2020). Continuing in this line of thought, it is explainable that there are differences between sectors in relation to diversity.

In addition, this study shed light on the differences between these working sectors regarding the popularity of the diversity perspectives. Regarding the results, one striking outcome was that the services and consultancy sector had the highest score for all three diversity perspectives, which means that diversity was mostly mentioned in the annual reports of organizations in this sector. Other results showed that diversity perspectives were least mentioned in the annual reports of the agriculture and food processing sector and the retail sector. However, since research on sector level respecting diversity is missing, my own insights will be used to interpret the results in the upcoming sections.

Theoretical implications

Overall results

Starting off with some general statements, this study contributes to the theoretical discussion respecting diversity and inclusion, which is a highly relevant and widely discussed topic in today's academic, business, and societal world. Nowadays, the concept of diversity can be considered quite comprehensive and complex to frame since scholars include different factors regarding diversity in their conceptualization and because diversity keeps evolving. For this reason, this study has decided to focus on the interpretation of diversity according to the theoretical framework built by Ely and Thomas (2001) and the practical completion for the validated automatic content analysis tool DivPAR by Hofhuis et al. (2021) to make sure that it is clear what is implied when discussing diversity. As this is the second study to use the DivPAR tool, this study adds further empirical evidence by testing and supporting the DivPAR tool and contributes to the existing theoretical conceptualizations of diversity in the academic field.

Besides that, an interesting overall result was that the moral diversity perspective was extensively popular compared to the others. A possible explanation why diversity is mostly implemented for moral motivations, instead of market and innovation purposes, could be a result of the fact that leaders in organizations are used to a certain way of managing an organization and that they want to stick to this way of management, which might have to do with the types and hierarchy of leadership. For a long time, diversity has been quite limited in most of the top management positions in organizations in the Netherlands on different aspects including for instance gender, ethnicity, and age. By means of an example, less than 5% of the CEOs in the Netherlands in 2021 are women, compared to more than 95% of men (NRC, 2022). Since the top managers mostly come up with the strategy and management for an organization, it can be considered problematic that they are not diverse and inclusive themselves. As most managers are used to working in and having success in a non-diverse environment, it might be more difficult for them to see the value of innovation and market purposes for diversity implementation because humans are creatures of habit and are often not excited to change something that is already working fine.

Conclusively, this study showed how the prevalence of diversity perspectives, as communicated in annual reports, has developed over time and whether it differs between sectors. First of all, the outcomes, as shared in the summary of findings, have shown that the results regarding the development over time are aligned with trends as shared in previous studies (Hofhuis et al., 2021), which adds empirical evidence to the academic field and underlines the relevance of this study. Secondly, this study was the first to include the aspect of the working sectors in the discussion about diversity, filling a gap in the literature. This brought new and insightful results about the differences in diversity communication between organizations from distinct sectors and emphasized the relevance of this study. Furthermore, these insights on a sector level regarding diversity contribute to the international literature as it could be used as a foundation for further research on sectoral differences with other topics such as sustainability or CSR initiatives.

Research question one: Development over time

This study found significant and positive effects for the development of all three diversity perspectives, as communicated in annual reports, over time. Moreover, the moral perspective was the most popular over time among all sectors. As mentioned earlier, the reason behind communication moral diversity initiatives is often linked to a degree of societal or ethical responsibility, which can be considered an external motivation factor (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Hofhuis et al., 2021). It is interesting to discuss where this need for societal or ethical responsibility comes from since it also seems to grow in importance over time, making it a relevant topic for the future as well. Previous studies have revealed that the needs and expectations about social, environmental, and economic developments from a wider group of stakeholders have become more important to be addressed by organizations to be successful in today's business world (Dahlsrud, 2008; Hansen & Seierstad, 2017; Maier & Ravazzani, 2019; Rimmington & Alagic, 2017). Therefore, it can be reasoned that there is a relationship between the developments and trends in society and business and vice versa. Continuing in this line of thought, one could argue that society expects organizations to implement a diversity strategy and that organizations feel this responsibility, as this is an indicator of the moral perspective, which was found to be the most dominant perspective. A central question in this discussion is where society's changing perspectives and expectations on how we should deal with diversity come from. In order to find out where these expectations come from, a broader scope, including some historical developments is needed. In my opinion, society, in this case referring to the Netherlands, has extensively changed in the last few decades regarding diversity. A few cases to illustrate this are women empowerment in the work force and the rise of the LGTBQ+ community. First, it was around 66 years ago that (married) women got the right to work while men were already working ever since (Nationaal Historisch Museum, 2021). Nowadays, debates revolve around the (under)representation of women at the top of organizations, which reflects how diversity respecting gender in the workforce changed in importance in society. Another more recent example is the rise and normalization of the LGBTQ+ community, which was

unthinkable about a decade ago. If we go even further back in time to the period from pillarization, from 1880 till 1960, when the protestant and catholic churches were dominant in the Netherlands, society would outcast gay people, while nowadays, society outcasts people that are not supportive of gay people. These developments show that society is constantly evolving, which influences the perception of society on diversity. Eventually, this changing perspective is visible in distinct ways, including the diversity strategies chosen and communicated by organizations.

<u>Research question two: Development between sectors</u>

This study found differences in the prevalence of diversity perspectives between sectors. However, literature to explain the found results was absent as this study is the first to discuss diversity in organizations concerning sectoral differences. Consequently, this makes the interpretation of the outcomes of the study more complicated and based on my own insights, which will be shared now.

First of all, the type of business activities can be considered influential on whether, and based on what motivation, organizations from different sectors communicate about diversity. For instance, organizations in the services and consultancy sector focus on supplying help and operating their business activities in the foreground with their service and consultancy practices. Some examples of organizations in this sector are KPMG, Ordina, and Randstad. One could argue that organizations in such a prominent position tend to feel more pressure from society to meet the expectations from society to include diversity initiatives and to communicate about them, which would align with the high score for the moral perspective. Moreover, these organizations are frequently quite innovative and labeled as early adopters because they are ought to deliver service and consultancy to others and need to stay up to date on the newest developments such as implementing artificial intelligence technologies and offering flexibility in working from home. As diversity is considered to be a quite new and modern development, it would make sense that organizations in the services and consultancy sector belong to the first ones to adopt it. Consequently, this could explain why this sector sees the value of embracing diversity for innovation motivations, as aligned with the previously mentioned study from Ely and Thomas (2001), which reflects the high score for the innovation perspective. Another possible reason could be that organizations in the services and consultancy are frequently active in the human resources domain themselves, which makes it more likely that they follow related trends in the human resources domain such as diversity practices.

Another interesting result was that both the retail sector and agriculture and food processing sector appeared to be the sectors that communicated all three diversity perspectives the least. Due to the missing research on this topic, it is difficult to declare this outcome. Despite that, some possible explanations will be shared. Starting off, concerning the business activities of the agriculture and food processing sector, one could argue that their work happens mostly behind the scenes and that they are not really operating in the foreground. A few organizations in this sector are FrieslandCampina, Nutreco, and Davide-Campari Milano. In contrast with the services and consultancy sector, this might

be why they do not feel the need to meet the societal responsibility to include diversity for moral motivations. Adding to that, one could argue that organizations in this sector are used to getting a lot of criticism from society, for instance regarding environmental and sustainability issues, which makes them not feel compelled to communicate about diversity. Thereby, although the agriculture and food processing industry are quite known for its innovative processes respecting food, the sector is also known for its non-diverse management which could explain why they do not embrace diversity for innovation motivations (Fisher, 2021). In addition, one could argue that most of the organizations in this sector are rooted in family businesses with generations of family members that are operating in the same geographical surroundings for years which underlines the management according to habits, and it could explain the stagnation of change respecting topics like diversity. Then, the retail sector also scores remarkably low on the diversity perspectives, especially on the market perspective, which I consider remarkable as I would expect organizations in this sector, such as Albert Heijn, and Hema, to be aware of the operation in a culturally diverse market which makes a diverse workplace a valuable tool for accessing distinct groups of stakeholders (Hofhuis et al., 2021). A possible declaration could be that this study focuses on the period between 2010 and 2020 and that the appreciation for the market perspective has only recently started to receive more awareness.

Besides the popularity of diversity in terms of the most and least mentioned sectors, a few other insights will be shared. Overall, the construction and real estate, manufacturing, finance and insurance, transport, and media and (tele)communication sectors scored moderately. First of all, the construction and real estate sector, with organizations like Ballast Nedam and Wereldhave, scored below the average for all the perspectives, which did not surprise me as this sector is not known to be very diverse in terms of management and employees with a dominance of men (Murphy, 2020). As mentioned before, lacking diversity among employees within an organization, especially in the top positions, will most likely result in limited support for diversity initiatives in the organization. In addition, I would have expected this trend to be observable in the manufacturing and industry sector as well. Nonetheless, results show that this sector scored even above the average for the moral perspective. A possible explanation for this could be that this sector consists of large-sized organizations, such as Shell and Philips, that are well-known by the public and receive media attention regularly, which means that they have to deal with reputation management. Therefore, they might feel responsible for including diversity for moral motivations and communicating about it. Then, the finance and insurance sector scored above the average for the moral and market perspective, but it scored below the average on the innovation perspective, which was aligned with my expectations since organizations in this sector, such as banks, are often described as quite traditional instead of innovative. However, one could argue that in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, when financial institutions were forced to close and to operate digitally, these organizations were forced to innovate in the broadest sense, which could mean that a rising trend in the innovative perspective could be expected in the future (Erlebach et al., 2020). Furthermore, from my expectations, I foresaw that the transport sector would have a high score on the market perspective,

which aligned with the results. My reasoning for this expectation is that organizations in this sector, such as Schiphol and Port of Rotterdam, operate on a global level which means that they have to deal with a culturally diverse market so it would be logical if they would implement diversity for market motivations to be able to better understand the market. Lastly, the results of the media and (tele)communication sector were quite moderate overall. Beforehand, I might have predicted that the sector would have scored higher because the media sector is frequently recognized as quite modern and inclusive. However, in respect to the innovation perspective, the media and (tele)communication sector scores above the average, which makes sense considering the business activities of organizations in this sector, such as KPN and VEON, as they are working on innovative technologies.

Moreover, another ANOVA was conducted as this would provide insight into whether time influenced the prevalence of the diversity perspectives per sector. However, for all three perspectives, results were not found to be significant, meaning that there were no significant differences in the prevalence of the diversity perspectives observed over time between the sectors. So, for all sectors, a positive trend was found in the prevalence of the diversity perspectives over time. This finding aligns with the results from the regression analyses conducted in this study, without a categorization into sectors, to find out how the prevalence of the three diversity perspectives have developed over time. Likewise, this aligns with the positive trend over time, as found by a study from Hofhuis et al. (2021).

Limitations and recommendations for future research

In this section, the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research will be shared.

One limitation of this study is that it focuses on the Dutch economy as it includes only organizations operating in the Netherlands. It would be interesting to see if the trends that were found in this study are also observable in other countries. A suggestion for future research would therefore be to conduct a similar study in other countries to take a cross-national approach.

Another limitation concerns the limited number of organizations included in each sector. In this study, a relatively high standard deviation was found which could be explained by the relatively small number of organizations within the sectors which makes it more difficult to draw generalizations as there is a risk of high variance among organizations. For future studies, it would be recommended to conduct this study with a larger sample size.

Adding to that, it is also worth mentioning that this study chose organizations based on their financial performance by picking mostly publicly listed organizations, as their annual reports were publicly accessible and because they were expected to fulfill the most powerful positions in the economy, with the most employees. Therefore, all conclusions about sectors only include the most profitable organizations within that sector. Thus, a larger sample with the inclusion of more organizations would be suggested for further research to minimize the risk of generalizing results about sectors. Also, this study left out non-commercial organizations, such as universities, and it would be interesting to see in the future if differences are observable in a comparative study.

Moreover, a limitation could be the time frame of the study. As earlier mentioned, it can be suggested that organizations might feel that they should implement diversity initiatives because they have a particular responsibility towards society, which is a moral motivation, and that they see the usefulness for market or innovation purposes to a lesser extent. A thought-provoking point is that the overall popularity of the moral perspective aligns with the trend that reflects expanding attention given to diversity by society. However, it would be interesting to see how organizations deal with diversity in unsettled times when other issues, such as rising gas bills and food scarcity, play a role within society. At the moment of writing this, organizations operate in a post-pandemic situation after two years of insecurity with Covid-19. There is also a war going on between Russia and Ukraine, which both influence society and organizations. It could be expected that the organizations that implement diversity solely for moral motivations, instead of for internal motivations out of conviction for organizational success, will be less likely to apply diversity policies in times where society considers diversity a less significant topic. From this point of view, diversity could be considered a topic that depends on how the wind is blowing. Therefore, it would be interesting to see more research on the social, economic, cultural, and political factors that might influence this changing perspective on diversity in general. For future scholars, I recommend conducting a similar study in the future and making a comparison with earlier years to find out if the developments in society, such as war or financial instability, impact the implementation of diversity within organizations.

In addition, a limitation of this study is that it only focuses on external communication from organizations in the form of annual reports. The type of communication form is an essential aspect to discuss. In this case, annual reports are strategically created each year to address a desired target audience and as part of reputation management (Elving et al., 2013). Therefore, one of the most common critiques revolves around the extent to which reflect the organization's actual strategy and its execution regarding diversity or whether they just tell what they expect that society wants to hear (Vassilopoulou, 2017). It would be helpful to see more large-scale research on how people in top management feel about implementing diversity, for instance in the form of interviews or focus groups, since they have a significant influence on the ultimate deployment of a diversity strategy. Adding to that, it would be interesting to see more on the communication from other platforms such as an organizations' website or social media posts in future research. For this to happen, on a large-scale, this would mean that the DivPAR should be developed further as well because the tool only works with annual reports at this moment. However, if that is possible in the future, comparing studies between different communication forms could be conducted, and this would most likely provide interesting insights.

Lastly, it was mentioned before that diversity is a comprehensive concept. It is important to keep that in mind by interpreting the results of this study because this means that organizations could also interpret diversity in different ways, making it difficult to draw conclusions over the prevalence of certain diversity perspectives in organizations or working sectors. However, the applied DivPAR tool

limited the risk of different interpretations of diversity by organizations because the script focuses on factors specifically related to cultural diversity and therefore leaves out other factors such as competencies and working styles (Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). Another way to mitigate this risk could be to add some qualitative research in the form of for instance interviews by employees from different organizations. By conducting interviews with employees, for example varying from people who write the annual report to strategy managers, it could become clear how they interpret diversity and how this is translated into the annual reports. Nonetheless, for future research, it would be recommended to pay attention to the conceptualization of diversity and the interim developments in the field. Furthermore, it would be a valuable addition to the academic field if other aspects than cultural diversity would be studied to see if there are similar trends in its prevalence over time and between sectors.

Practical implications

In previous sections, a summary of findings, some theoretical implications, limitations and recommendations for future research were discussed. In this last section, some practical implications will be shared for organizations and society.

To begin with, as this study provided insights in the development of diversity perspectives over time and between sectors, it can be beneficial for organizations to evaluate how they deal with diversity compared to other organizations within their sector and to organizations from other sectors. Based on these outcomes, CEOs or (diversity) managers can decide whether they want to follow the trends of other organizations or whether they want to set their own course in diversity management. In doing so, one of the central questions that should be thought of is what the organization's goal is with the implementation of diversity policies and communication about it. Moreover, for communication specialists, the results of this study can help them to better understand the trends regarding diversity, which they can use to improve communications, responses to critics from society, and ultimately to enhance an organizations' reputation.

Besides that, this study is useful for the working people in society because they look at the way how organizations from different sectors deal with diversity. This could be helpful when people are looking for a job and when they want to find an organization from a working sector that matches their personal values regarding diversity as some sectors score higher on certain diversity motivations than others. Furthermore, society can learn from this study how diversity communication has developed in the Netherlands over the past ten years, which, first of all, provides them with basic knowledge about a highly relevant topic in society, and secondly, gives them the tools to prepare for future developments.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study has analyzed the prevalence of three diversity perspectives (moral, market, and innovation) as communicated in annual reports, between organizations from different working sectors in the Netherlands from 2010 till 2020, using DivPAR, the automatic content analysis tool.

In short, significant, and positive effects for the development over time for all perspectives were found which means that all perspectives were mentioned to a greater extent over time in the annual reports. More precisely, the moral perspective was overall the most popular perspective in diversity communication among all sectors and found the strongest positive effect over time. Besides that, this study was the first to find out that there are significant differences in diversity communication between organizations from distinct working sectors, based on a manually created industry classification for the Dutch economy. In particular, the services and consultancy sector communicated mostly on diversity for all three motivations, while the sectors of agriculture and food processing, and retail scored the least on diversity communication. Despite that, this study found no significant differences regarding the development of diversity communication over time between the sectors, which means that all three diversity perspectives were communicated more over time in all sectors.

Altogether, the outcomes of this study reveal insights in organizational diversity communication over time and between sectors, which is, in the first place, useful for society and academics, to get a better understanding how organizations deal with diversity communication, and, in the second place, for communication professionals, to optimize communications and improve organizational reputation management.

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Appendix

A. Overview: All working sectors (8) including the Dutch organizations (n = 70) per sector.

1. Agriculture and food processing (n = 7)	FrieslandCampina, Heineken, Nutreco, Unilever, ForFarmers, Davide-Campari Milano, Corbion
2. Services and consultancy (n = 10)	Arcadis, Deloitte, E&Y, KPMG, Fugro, Ordina, WoltersKluwer, Brunel, Randstad
3. Construction and Real Estate (n = 9)	Ballast Nedam, BAM, Boskalis, Grontmij (Sweco), Eurocommercial, Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield, VastNed, BeverHolding, Wereldhave
4. Manufacturing and Industry (n = 12)	Aalberts, Arcelor, ASM, ASML, DSM, Essent, SBM, Shell, TataSteel, Philips, AkzoNobel, Airbus
5. Finance and Insurance (n = 10)	ABN Amro, Achmea, Aegon, APG, Binckbank, DeltaLloyd (NN Group), ING, Rabobank, SNS (Volksbank), Triodos
6. Retail (n = 7)	Ahold, Hema, Ikea, TenCate, GrandVision, Sligro, Steinhoff
7. Transport (n = 8)	DLG, KLM, NS, Port of Rotterdam, Schiphol, TomTom, PostNL, JustEatTakeaway
8. Media and (Tele)Communication (n = 7)	KPN, Tele2, VEON, Vodafone Ziggo, Persgroep, RELX, DigiCommunications