Spring 2018

Exploring diversity workforce experiences of AHRD alumni

Kayce Croy

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/master201019

Part of the Adult and Continuing Education Commons, Higher Education and Teaching Commons, and the Training and Development Commons

Recommended Citation

https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/master201019/561

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the The Graduate School at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact dc_admin@jmu.edu.
Exploring Diversity Workforce Experiences of AHRD Alumni

Kayce Croy

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Masters of Science in Education

Adult Education and Human Resource Development

May 2018

FACULTY COMMITTEE:

Committee Chair: Dr. Noorjehan Brantmeier

Committee Members/ Readers:

Dr. Cheryl Beverly

Diana Meza
Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my incredible mom Peggy Croy. I cannot thank you enough for the love, support, strength, and wisdom you continue to give me. Thank you for always being there for me and encouraging me even when I wanted to give up. I would not be where I am today if it wasn’t for you.

In memory of

My grandma Irene Reynolds and father Carl Lewis Croy.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Noorjehan Brantmeier for her continuous support and guidance throughout the thesis process. This type of work was completely new to me and there were several times when I wanted to give up. However, Dr. Noorie believed in me and encouraged me to keep moving forward. I truly admire and appreciate her dedication, passion, and knowledge. Thank you again Dr. Noorie for everything that you have done to help me succeed in this program. I would also like to thank my family and close friends. Peggy Croy, Pam Ciamaricone, Patty and Mickey Life, Kelly and BJ Smith, Kayte Croy, and everyone else, I am very fortunate to have your constant love, support, and strength. I honestly would not be where I am today without you all in my life.
Table of Contents

Dedication.................................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgments ....................................................................................................... iii
Table of Contents ......................................................................................................... iv
List of Tables ................................................................................................................ vii
List of Figures ............................................................................................................... viii
Abstract ....................................................................................................................... ix
Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
  Problem Statement ...................................................................................................... 2
  Purpose of the Study ................................................................................................... 2
  Research Questions .................................................................................................... 3
  Key Terms and Definitions ......................................................................................... 4
  Brief Overview of Study ............................................................................................ 6
Literature Review .......................................................................................................... 7
  Conceptual Framework ............................................................................................... 7
  Theoretical Framework ............................................................................................... 8
    Context of Diversity in the U.S ................................................................................. 10
Diversity Education in Academic Settings ................................................................. 11
  Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills ..................................................................................... 13
  Diversity Instruction ................................................................................................ 14
Diversity Training in the Workforce ............................................................................ 15
Diversity in the HRD Field ......................................................................................... 18
  Teaching Diversity in the HRD Curriculum ............................................................... 20
Research Gap ............................................................................................................... 23
Methodology ............................................................................................................... 25
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Methods Diversity Scholarship</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population and Sample</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection and Procedure</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of Human Subjects</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Methods Design</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ 1</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ5</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ6</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ7</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion &amp; Conclusion</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation of Results</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Practice</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for Future Research</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: IRB Application and Approval</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Cover Letter/Consent Letter (Web)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1: Key Terms and Definition………………………………………………………..5
Table 2: Research and Survey Questions………………………………………………..28
Table 3: Demographics……………………………………………………………………..36
Table 4: Most Knowledgeable Areas of Diversity……………………………………..39
Table 5: Least Knowledgeable Areas of Diversity……………………………………..40
List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework.................................................................8
Figure 2.1: Requirements for Diversity Education........................................37
Figure 2.2: Options to Help Prepare Alumni in the Workforce.......................42
Figure 2.3: Required Diversity Course for AHRD Graduate Program...............44
Figure 2.4: Importance of Diversity in the Workforce....................................47
Figure 2.5: Workplace Training Requirements............................................48
Figure 2.6: Frequency of Workforce Diversity Training.................................49
Figure 2.7: Experience Working with International Organizations..................50
Abstract

Diversity plays a crucial role in everyday life, especially in academic and workplace settings. Despite increased attention to the value of diversity across settings, institutions of higher education, businesses, and organizations often do not provide adequate diversity initiatives to prepare students and employees for life and work in diverse environments. Therefore, to understand diversity education practices from formal college education and workforce experience, alumni who have graduated within the last five years from the Adult Education/Human Resource Development (AHRD) graduate program at James Madison University (JMU) were surveyed. The current study utilized a mixed methods survey approach that provided data on alumni’s perspectives of diversity generally, what diversity looks like in their current workplaces, diversity training as required in their organizations, as well as the perspectives on ways to strengthen diversity education in AHRD graduate program. The results from this study suggest that most AHRD alumni were not required to take diversity courses in their formal college education or participate in diversity training at their current organization but over half work with international organizations and individuals. Alumni surveyed also believe diversity courses should be required in graduate education and there are many benefits of providing diversity education to current students. Consequently, strengthening diversity education at the graduate level has the potential to positively influence future work environments and prepare students entering the workforce.

Key words: alumni, diversity, inclusion, diversity education, diversity initiatives, diversity training, human resource development (HRD)
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Considering that we live and work in a world of rapidly shifting demographics and are more connected to those around the globe than ever before, diversity education is more relevant than ever. Alumni of the Adult Education/Human Resource Development (AHRD) graduate program at James Madison University (JMU) often become organizational leaders and supervisors in the Human Resource Development (HRD) field, tasked with helping to foster inclusive workplace environments and advocate for diversity. To best prepare current and future graduate students for this reality, hearing the voices of alumni within the last five years has the potential to build toward more promising approaches for teaching and learning about issues of diversity. Scholars who conduct research at the intersections of human resource development and diversity believe the lack of diversity education and training does not prepare students for work environments, which further contributes to harassment, discrimination, and inequality often seen in today’s workforce (Bell, Connerley, & Cocchiara, 2009). Institutions of higher education have the opportunity to take a stance on the importance of diversity by requiring students to take diversity related courses and including them as part of the graduate curriculum. The ability to build connections with people from multiple diverse backgrounds, have the knowledge and skills to work across global environments, and engage in critical conversations can positively influence AHRD students as they move into their future careers. Therefore, data collected from this study focused on AHRD alumni conceptions of diversity, what inclusivity looks like in the workplace, the prevalence and types of diversity training received post-graduation, how globalization affects their current position, as well as their insights regarding ways their graduate education could have been strengthened.
Problem Statement

The 21st Century workforce is “characterized by increased numbers of women, minorities, ethnic backgrounds, intergenerational workers, and different lifestyles” (Roberson, 2006, p. 212). Based on these growing characteristics, diversity education is extremely important to prepare students entering the workforce as they often lack opportunities to interact with people different from themselves (Jayakumar, 2008). Jayakumar (2008) argues that colleges can positively affect students when their environment promotes diversity. For example, professors should be provided with diversity training which will encourage them to engage students with matters of diversity in their classrooms and explain how it holds importance in their student’s chosen careers. According to Cohn and Mullennix (2007), college students should be exposed to diversity curriculum, as it is no longer inescapable in our society and higher education should provide students with opportunities to develop their sense of cultural awareness. Along with providing diversity education for college students, diversity initiatives should be implemented in organizations as the workforce is becoming more diverse and individuals should feel comfortable in those environments since discrimination, sexism, as well as racism does exist (Rocco, Bernier, & Bowman, 2009). To encourage AHRD graduates to foster inclusive workplace environments and advocate for diversity initiatives, higher education should require diversity education as part of the preparation for the new diverse and global workplace.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to explore the need for diversity education and initiatives in higher education, specifically graduate programs, based on the experiences of alumni from the AHRD graduate program at James Madison University. Currently, little research exists regarding required diversity curriculum in master’s degree programs. Furthermore, research that examines
diversity education within the field of HRD has only become more prevalent in the last five to eight years. To build on the existing diversity education research in graduate HRD programs, a mixed methods survey approach was used. AHRD alumni provided feedback on what diversity looks like in their work places, diversity training requirements, as well as suggestions for diversity initiatives to be added to the AHRD graduate curriculum as graduate education has the potential to impact the broader HRD field. Being prepared to foster inclusive work environments is critical because census projections show that “Americans are more racially and ethnically diverse than in the past, and the U.S. is projected to be even more diverse in the coming decades. By 2055, the U.S. will not have a single racial or ethnic majority” (Caumont & Cohn, 2016, para.1). Given the shift in demographics of our country and the workplace, colleges and universities have an opportunity to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to interact with people culturally different than themselves before students enter the workforce. Thus, this study examines ways graduate education can better prepare future students for the realities of work in a global and interconnected world.

**Research Questions**

The following questions will provide insight into the research problem of this study:

RQ1: What percentage of AHRD alumni have taken a diversity course as part of their formal education?

RQ2: For those alumni who have taken diversity courses in higher education, how has that experience helped prepare them for their careers?

RQ3: In what areas related to human diversity are AHRD alumni least and most knowledgeable?
RQ4: Based on experiences in the field as a professional, how can graduate education best prepare students for the actualities of work in a diverse environment?

RQ5: How do alumni’s current organizations define diversity and how important is it?

RQ6: How often do alumni participate in diversity training as part of their current roles?

RQ7: How does globalization affect AHRD alumni’s current position?

**Key Terms and Definitions**

In Table 1 below you will find the key terms and definitions used throughout this study.
Table 1

**Key Terms and Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Citation(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>The “real or perceived differences among people with regard to race, ethnicity, sex, religion, age, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, and family status that affect their treatment, opportunities, and outcomes.”</td>
<td>(Bell, Connerley, &amp; Cocchiara, 2009, p. 598).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Attitudes “Encompass global attitudes toward diversity and diversity’s value or importance as well as more specific attitudes toward demographic or social groups.”</td>
<td>(Kulik &amp; Roberson, 2008, p. 312).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Course “A course that was developed and taught with the expressed intent of promoting the development of culturally proficient student affairs professional who are knowledgeable and sensitive to the histories, circumstances, and needs of culturally and racially diverse individuals.”</td>
<td>(Flowers, 2003, p.72).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Education “The goal is to facilitate awareness of diversity in our societies/professions, while encouraging dialogue between all in the classroom and use of the student’s ‘voice.’”</td>
<td>(Consoli &amp; Marin, 2016, p. 144).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>“Refers to formal efforts to enable development of awareness, knowledge, and skills to effectively work with, work for, and manage diverse others in various contexts.”</td>
<td>(Bell, Connerley, &amp; Cocchiara, 2009, p.598).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Knowledge When one learns about “the experiences, customs, and cultures of different groups, such as difference in communication styles and perceptions.”</td>
<td>(Kulik &amp; Roberson, 2008, p. 311).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Resistance “A range of practices and behaviors within and by organizations that interfere, intentionally or unintentionally, with the use of diversity as an opportunity for learning and effectiveness.”</td>
<td>(Thomas et al, 2010, p. 302).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Skills “Are the interpersonal skills necessary to work effectively and ethically with culturally diverse individuals, groups, and communities.”</td>
<td>(Kulik &amp; Roberson, 2008, p. 313).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Training “A distinct set of programs aimed at facilitating positive intergroup interactions, reducing prejudice and discrimination, and enhancing the skills, knowledge, and motivation of people to interact with diverse others.”</td>
<td>(Bezrukova, Jahn, &amp; Spell, 2012, p. 208).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>“The ability to contribute fully and effectively to an organization; a sense of belonging, respect, and being valued.”</td>
<td>(Bell, M.P. et al, 2011, p. 135).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Brief Overview of Study**

A mixed methods survey approach was used to understand the ways diversity education at the graduate level can be strengthened based on current AHRD alumni’s experience in the workplace. Along with consulting research databases for literature, a survey was created for graduate students, specifically AHRD alumni, to gauge their understanding of diversity initiatives from their formal education and how prepared they felt entering a diverse workforce. Survey results provided insight into alumni’s perspective of diversity from their formal education, current diversity trends in the workforce, and how the AHRD graduate program could have better prepared them. Therefore, the next chapter provides a review of the current literature with a conceptual and theoretical framework, along with research on diversity initiatives in higher education, the workforce, and the HRD field. Furthermore, the mixed methods survey approach is explored in depth in the methodology chapter followed by the findings from the survey, discussion, and conclusion of the study.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature provides a foundation to examine diversity education and initiatives, in both the academic and organizational settings. Methods of reviewing the literature involved using databases to include: ERIC, Business Source Complete, and JSTOR to review both academic and peer-reviewed articles. The general references that were consulted comprised of Harvard Educational Review, Academy of Management, Teaching in Higher Education, Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, Journal of Applied Social Psychology, Academy of Management Learning & Education, Advances in Developing Human Resources, and The Review of Higher Education. Common descriptors included: diversity training, human resource development curriculum, workforce diversity, higher education, diversity requirements, and diversity education. Overarching themes that emerged during review of current studies highlighted the importance of diversity education from formal education, challenges to diversity education, diversity in a growing society, how diversity affects HRD, current trends in the workforce, and future implications of diversity initiatives.

Conceptual Framework

Overlapping themes emerged as part of the literature review. The conceptual framework was broken down into three categories: diversity in the HRD field, diversity education in academic settings, and diversity training in the workforce. Figure 1.1 represents the conceptual framework of this study along with guiding learning theories to ground this study.
Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky’s Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and Critical Race Theory (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011) were utilized as the theoretical framework for diversity education and training research. The context in which diversity courses are delivered is extremely imperative for learners as there is an emphasis on collaborative learning among students, especially with open discussions (Vygotsky, 1978). Diversity education often uses social interactions to help learners grasp concepts which is important as it will lead to development of skills such as working with different groups of people. Topics in diversity education are not learned overnight and Vygotsky’s theory helps to explain how cognitive structures will mature when working in collaboration with individuals (Vygotsky, 1978). Collaboration is extremely important for diversity instructors, but they first must create a safe environment for students to feel comfortable to participate with others.
Collaboration, along with a student’s knowledge, attitudes, and skills, are important to diversity education as their instructor must acknowledge the current backgrounds and range of learning styles which will lead to a better understanding of diversity (Consoli & Marin, 2016). Barrington (2004) believes Howard Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligence can also enhance diversity education as individuals are often comprised of the eight-intelligences proposed by Gardner. If the teacher can acknowledge each student’s unique way of learning, it will influence new ways to teach students lessons and encourage discussions for such a complex topic like diversity (Barrington, 2004). By using Vygotsky’s Social Constructivism and Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence theory, new methods of instruction will emerge and discussions on this complex topic will be encouraged.

To further encourage discussion and collaboration towards diversity in the HRD field and education, critical race theory (CRT) can be used as a theoretical approach (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). Critical race theory is considered an approach that provides a critical lens to analyze, process, and challenge inequalities currently faced in society (Rollock & Gillborn, 2011). When used in education, the critical race theory is the “framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 25). Along with providing a framework for education, it focuses on “the role of race and racism in education and works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of opposing or eliminating other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language, and national origin” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 25). According to Solorzano and Yasso (2002), CRT is based on five elements, which include “the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of
subordination, the challenge to dominant ideology, the commitment to social justice, the centrality of experiential knowledge,” and “the transdisciplinary perspective” (p. 25-26). Alfred and Chlup (2010) believe HRD educators can use those elements as discussion points in the classroom and provide case studies that can either support or dispute the five elements. Additionally, critical race theory assumes that not all individuals are equal when it comes to opportunities, which means issues of racism and race will be viewed differently by every individual, but CRT can challenge these inequalities (Alfred & Chlup, 2010). HRD professors and students need to be aware of the inequalities faced by people of color and integrate these concerns within HRD curriculum. Educators also need to take an inclusive approach by broadening conversations to include all perspectives of race and racism that are often shaped by one’s identity and relationships (Alfred & Chlup, 2010). The critical race theory is another approach towards developing diversity education in classroom settings and even training curriculum for organizations.

**Context of Diversity in the US**

As mentioned above, as a country the United States is becoming increasingly more diverse. According to the Pew Research Center (2015), the United States Census Bureau recognized five racial categories: Asian, White or European American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Black or African American, as well as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (“Multiracial in America: Proud, diverse and growing in numbers,” 2015). Based on the 2016 United States Census, additional racial categories, such as; “Hispanic or Latino” and “two or more races” (“Race and Hispanic origin,” 2016) were added, which shows how diverse society is becoming in the United States. Current U.S. demography indicates there are 76.9% Americans who identify as “white alone,” 13.3% Americans who identify as “Black or African American,” 1.3%
Americans who identify as “American Indian or Alaska Native,” 5.7% Americans who identify as “Asian alone,” 17.8% Americans who identify as “Hispanic or Latino,” and “2.6% Americans who identify as “two or more races” (“Race and Hispanic origin,” 2016). A census has not been performed for 2017-2018, but the population estimate of people living in the United States as of July 2017 is 325,719,178 (“Race and Hispanic origin,” 2016). Based on these statistics, the context of diversity in the United States is constantly evolving which promotes the need for diversity education and training.

**Diversity Education in Academic Settings**

There is growing recognition that in our diverse society, members are often underrepresented, such as “women, racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and other nondominant group members” (Bell, Connerley, & Cocchiara, 2009, p. 597). Additionally, individuals are often resistant to diversity initiatives (Bierema, 2010). When it comes to diversity training in the U.S., resistance often exists, but trainers have the potential to encourage diversity values in the workplace (Karp & Sammour, 2000). Consequently, such attitudes and lack of diversity knowledge will not prepare college students for the workforce, especially since our society often leads to discrimination and inequality among employees (Bell, Connerley, & Cocchiara, 2009). In fact, Jayakumar (2008) conducted a study that focused solely on white student’s exposure to college diversity and found that most have had limited interactions with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. The proven lack of interaction, represented through surveys, led to discussions on how higher education can positively affect students when their environment promotes diversity and how diversity significantly influences students during their time in college, but also in the future workforce (Jayakumar, 2008). Furthermore, a director for cultural competence, Tharp (2012), recognizes that college students place importance on
diversity, especially in today’s growing society, but need to be properly guided to understand and appreciate those differences. Authors argue that society is continuously evolving, creating a need for diversity education and training, which should start with college students (Hite & McDonald, 2010).

Several researchers have emphasized the need for higher education to teach courses on multiculturalism and diversity to better prepare students to live and work in diverse environments (Hite & McDonald, 2010). It is believed that diversity education encourages students to “move beyond our comfort zones, have hard conversations, grow smarter and translate what we’ve learned into interventions that make the world a fairer place” (Consoli & Marin, 2016, p. 143). Diversity education is relevant to daily interactions on college campuses as well as future generations who start their careers. For example, a study that focused on business students suggests that diversity education increases an individual’s work ethic when their work environment is free from concerns such as harassment and discrimination (Bell, Connerley, & Cocchiara, 2009). Diversity education is necessary to establish and maintain respect in the workforce but also helps students to become better individuals, as they should be more aware and responsible towards creating a positive change in our society. Despite the need for diversity courses, it has been found that there is lack of diversity among faculty itself which often correlates to less support of diversity curriculum. Women and people of color are often underrepresented within business school faculties for example, despite being more likely to promote and teach diversity classes since men tend to be less supportive of diversity initiatives (Bell, Connerley, & Cocchiara, 2009). Additionally, having a combination of mandatory and voluntary classes sends a mixed message to students. If a diversity class is mandatory, it demonstrates that the topic should be taken seriously (Bell, Connerley, & Cocchiara, 2009).
However, if it is voluntary, students often believe the topic does not apply to them or their future careers.

Other studies have sought to determine the number of campuses that require diversity courses besides business schools. According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities in 2002, “62% of the responding institutions either required a diversity course in their undergraduate curriculum or were in the process of developing a diversity course requirement” (Flowers, 2003, p.73). The Flowers (2003) study illustrates how diversity education is growing across the United States and evidence suggests that students who are encouraged to engage with individuals of diverse backgrounds will often have more respect for and willingness to interact with other cultures. This study also explored student affair graduate programs as these professionals will often interact with students from unique backgrounds through their own careers. Despite the importance of diversity education, it was found that these master students receive little training on how to work effectively with diverse student populations (Flowers, 2003). Flowers (2003) argues that a mandatory diversity course, along with an integration strategy, would provide student affair graduates the best opportunity to work with diversity on their college campuses.

Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills

Within the context of diversity education, developing an individual’s knowledge, attitudes, and skills are critical components. Researchers believe these terms fall under the concept of ‘diversity learning,’ which consists of goals to “increase knowledge about diversity, to improve attitudes about diversity, and to develop diversity skills” (Kulik & Roberson, 2008, p. 310). Diversity knowledge includes understanding how perceptions, especially stereotyping individuals or groups, strongly influences one’s attitudes and behaviors towards those who are
different from them (Kulik & Roberson, 2008). Developing diversity attitudes includes expanding individual and global attitudes towards certain diversity values or social groups, such as women, Blacks or African Americans, lesbians, and gays (Kulik & Roberson, 2008). Though this is important to address, diversity education has had mixed effects on attitudes toward specific groups. Finally, diversity skills include ways to efficiently work with others such as stronger teamwork and communication skills (Kulik & Roberson, 2008). Knowledge, attitudes, and skills are important attributes educators need to be aware of when planning and teaching education courses.

**Diversity Instruction**

The delivery of diversity education is extremely important to ensure students have the knowledge, attitude, and skills necessary to feel comfortable in a diverse environment. There are three common factors that have been identified as necessary for a successful diversity course: the credibility of the teacher(s), climate of the classroom, and the content of the diversity course (Consoli & Marin, 2016). Best practices for teaching diversity courses include nontraditional methods of teaching such as “discussion rather than solely lecture…journaling, case studies, immersion learning, team projects, and service learning” (Consoli & Marin, 2016, p. 146). Along with encouraging nontraditional methods of instruction, researchers Consoli and Marin (2016) conducted focus groups of graduate students who took required and elective diversity courses. They discovered seven themes related to teaching diversity based on their graduate student’s experience. These themes include: instructor characteristics and their teaching methods, the importance of peer interaction and having a diverse class climate, the uniqueness of courses based on diversity, consideration of graduate course requirements, improving future diversity courses for graduate students, and the overall impact on these students (Consoli & Marin, 2016).
The themes discovered in this study are significant to future required graduate diversity courses, but the researchers also noted how these students started the class with various levels of motivation, experience with diversity, and sense of identity which contributed to the course outcome. In addition, encouraging group participation and a respectful environment throughout the course is important for diversity learning to occur (Consoli & Marin, 2016).

Thomas, Tran, and Dawson (2010) propose an “alternative approach” to teaching diversity, regardless of instruction occurring in a classroom or workplace setting. Their approach to diversity education is teaching through the “lens of privilege, oppression, and identity in order to educate about diversity and promote multicultural competence as well as inclusion” (Thomas, Tran, & Dawson, 2010, p. 296). Their focus is on the structure and delivery of diversity content for the purpose of promoting diversity learning inclusion. The authors believe diversity instruction is most effective when instructors encourage self-awareness, discussions of similarities and differences, role play scenarios, and facilitate discussion among groups (Thomas et al, 2010). Other researchers agree that instructors play an important role in building a community that focuses on inclusive learning (Chapman & Gedro, 2009). But the most effective way to build community and create an environment conducive to learning is when both instructors and their students learn to embrace diversity within their own classroom by creating social interactions, building relationships, and communicating with each other (Chapman & Gedro, 2009). Therefore, diversity instruction should include several approaches to learning in addition to creating a safe and respectful environment for both students and instructors.

**Diversity Training in the Workforce**

Diversity training is crucial to stop discrimination from occurring in work settings (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012). For example, “The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity
commissions (EEOC) reported 99,992 workplace discrimination filings in the private sector during the 2010 fiscal year” which suggests inequities based on “age, race, gender, and other factors remains a major workplace problem despite the civil rights and related social movements of the past few decades” (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012, p. 207). Given the prevalence of workplace discrimination, diversity training may have the potential to address such social concerns (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012). Bezrukova, Jehn, and Spell (2012) believe diversity training is different from other training programs as it has the potential to challenge how one perceives their surroundings and handle issues they consider as emotional or personal. Typically, attitudes and perspectives of diversity are shaped before training which often contributes to diversity training being more emotional and politically focused than other forms of training (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012). Due to these challenges, the most vital objective for this type of training is for individuals to learn how to work positively with people different from themselves which will contribute to the success of those individuals as well as the organization (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012). After reviewing several case studies on diversity training, researchers found that an optimistic and inclusive approach to diversity training will be accepted more by employees rather than focusing on a specific diverse group (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012).

Other researchers believe diversity training is often overlooked by organizations because there is a lack of research on how to design this type of training and how “the evidence of its positive impact on organizational performance is far from conclusive” (Alheji, Garavan, Carbery, O’Brien, & McGuire, 2016, p. 96). To better understand diversity training outcomes, Alheji, Garavan, Carbery, O’Brien, and McGuire (2016) focused on the following theoretical perspectives: business case, social justice, and learning. For examples in business cases,
organizations have been reluctant to invest in diversity training due to unknown benefits, especially because it is difficult to measure the return on investment. Along with considering the value of diversity training, business tends to anticipate the social justice outcomes of such training, which is relevant to maintaining equal opportunity for employees and will challenge “organizations to address residual racism, gender exclusion, religion intolerance, and intolerance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employees” (Alheji et al, 2016, p. 98). Organizations who utilize the social justice perspective would show employees how they are supported by their organization. Finally, the learning perspective includes many characteristics, but represents how the culture of each organization will influence employees’ behaviors and make them aware of their privilege. Therefore, authors believe these three perspectives will heavily influence the creation of diversity training, but more research is needed to determine the long-term effects of the training’s outcomes (Alheji et al, 2016).

Another concern regarding diversity training in the workforce is resistance from employees. Resistance occurs in the workforce when individuals with visible differences can be viewed as not belonging to the homogeneous dominant group and the increasing pressures for diversity are often perceived as threats to the dominant group (Dass & Parker, 1999). To address these views, organizations should not just use a single approach, but encourage a transition from resistance to a learning perspective. For this transition to occur, the learning perspective includes active diversity initiatives, policies, and training in organizations (Dass & Parker, 1999). Other researchers have expanded this learning perspective by arguing how there are two themes for creating an effective training program. This type of program would include “increasing managers’ awareness of the legal and policy aspects of diversity. The second approach is focused on increasing the straight, white, American males’ (SWAM’s) sensitivity to the concerns of
people in groups different from their own” (Karp & Sammour, 2000, p. 453). Furthermore, there are several ways to deal with resistance if it were to occur during training, like; creating a contract with the participants and setting reasonable guidelines (Karp & Sammour, 2000). Trainers and managers should also show employees how to go about saying or doing things rather than lecturing them about diversity. Training points need to be made transparent to employees and the trainer should work with any resistance by asking employees to explain their opinions which can promote group discussions (Karp & Sammour, 2000). Researchers believe resistance will most likely happen in any diversity training, therefore, it is important to encourage open discussions, collaboration, and respect. Despite these concerns, if diversity training is run efficiently, it can lead to improved communication skills among groups, minority retention in the organization, and stronger sense of inclusiveness (Thomas et al, 2010).

**Diversity in the HRD Field**

Hite and McDonald (2010) believe the human resource development field is directly connected to diversity due to “its commitment to the development of people as well as systems, including responding to societal needs, developing proactive interventions, and helping people maximize their professional potential” (p. 284). Furthermore, several researchers believe diversity instruction in HRD can become a tool to encourage and facilitate changes in both behavior and perspectives among employees (Thomas et al, 2010). Though HRD journals have provided more research into diversity training, there has been limited literature that focuses on sexual orientation, especially when it comes to the “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities” (Chapman & Gedro, 2009, p. 95). Chapman and Gedro (2009) argue that material should be provided on issues of LGBT in the HRD curriculum to help with preconceived biases and further prepare students entering this field as understanding sexual
orientation for example, is very relevant to the current workforce. When it comes to providing diversity education and initiatives in the HRD field, the curriculum “should foster critical thinkers, ethical leaders, strategic planners, and savvy managers” to easily identify issues that arise, like with LGBT, and be effective in addressing such concerns (Chapman & Gedro, 2009, p. 100).

Though the world is diversifying, and globalization is occurring, diversity training in the HRD field is lacking in producing successful outcomes and considered a low priority for academic HRD training (Bierema, 2010). According to Bierema (2010),

“Graduates of HRD programs will be expected to be versed on issues of diversity and multiculturalism and be able to make effective interventions to address inclusion and a diversifying, global workforce. Diversity is a core competency for HRD professionals, yet the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) gives teaching of diversity in the college classroom little attention and few HRD academic programs have courses relating to diversity or multiculturalism, and even fewer require such courses as part of their core curriculum” (p. 5).

Though diversity is covered in some HRD courses, a study conducted by Kuchinke (2002) on HRD graduate curriculum discovered that “instructional design (78 percent) and instructional delivery and evaluation (both 75 percent) lead the list as the most frequently addressed areas…fewer programs addressed strategic and economic issues related to HRD (42 percent and 27 percent, respectively); this was also true for diversity (44 percent) and international HRD (35 percent)” (p. 138). Based on Kuchinke’s (2002) research, diversity education is not engrained in HRD graduate program’s core curriculum, which further creates a “gap between graduate education and emerging professional roles” (p. 140). Bierema (2010) argues this gap is caused by
limited HRD resources, such as; workshops for professional development, journals on diversity pedagogy, guidelines for diversity curriculum and instruction, and textbooks that focus on diversity content. Additionally, studies have discovered that HRD literature does not consistently focus on issues of workplace equity, social justice, gender, power, privilege, promotion of diversity, and other sensitive topics, like; “sexism, racism, patriarchy, heterosexism, or violence” (Bierema, 2010, p. 7). Despite the lack of HRD literature on diversity, Bierema (2010) argues that diversity courses should be created and included as required curriculum in academic programs, specifically for HRD students. Along with making diversity education required, there needs to be literature as well as tools that provide educators with the means to address several topics of diversity throughout the curriculum and instruction (Bierma, 2010). Finally, by including diversity in HRD curriculum, it will prepare students entering the field to create future diversity training offerings, especially since training is a common intervention tool to address diversity issues that arise in the workplace (Bierema, 2010).

Teaching Diversity in HRD Curriculum

Since HRD roles relate to interacting with a diverse labor force, researchers have proposed the question: “what are we doing to prepare our students not only to live and work in a diverse world but also to contribute to building more inclusive systems as HRD scholars and practitioners?” (Hite & McDonald, 2010, p. 283). The answer to such a significant question is to provide diversity education in both HRD undergraduate and graduate courses (Hite & McDonald, 2010). Since the 2000s, AHRD conferences and articles have advocated for adding diversity to the curriculum. However, research has found that though diversity is not completely absent from curriculum, there are few resources that connect diversity in organizations to effectively prepare HRD students (Hite & McDonald, 2010). This lack of diversity education in
HRD graduate programs has led to concerns by current HRD practitioners. Hite and McDonald (2010) argue that for HRD graduates to be prepared in their future positions, they must be understanding of diversity issues and have applicable skills to help sustain diversity initiatives even after training has occurred. Research into a diverse labor force, along with practitioner’s experiences, have made it clear that diversity is a continuous trend and crucial for a successful HRD professional, which is why required diversity education is an important component of HRD curriculum (Hite & McDonald, 2010).

Researchers Hite and McDonald (2010) recognize that there are challenges, like resistance from students, when it comes to teaching diversity, but are adamant about the importance of providing the education. To deliver this education, Hite and McDonald (2010) encourage instructors towards “balancing self-reflection with factual subject matter (e.g., theories, models), creating a supportive learning environment that also prompts students to stretch beyond their comfort zones, and determining how to appropriately assess performance” (p. 289). Alfred and Chlup (2010) agree with Hite and McDonald’s approach in that HRD instructors should also examine their own beliefs before teaching diversity in their course and allow for topics like racism to be brought up by students. Alfred and Chlup (2010) encourage instructors to be prepared for resistance from students by encouraging them to understand each other’s perspectives and working together towards eliminating racism in all settings.

To help students better understand issues of diversity and race, students should be required to “conduct research and participate in theory-building endeavors related to race and diversity issues. When students begin to conduct their own research, conversations naturally develop, and students become coinstructors in the process of addressing race and diversity across the HRD curriculum” (Alfred & Chlup, 2010, p. 343). Another strategy to teaching diversity as
part of the HRD curriculum is focusing on an inclusive strategy which combines diversity and inclusion (Thomas et al, 2010). Focusing on inclusion is part of “an education and teaching strategy that intentionally seeks to promote a value for inclusion and secondly that reduces diversity resistance by minimizing focus on comparisons and a difference-based approach to teaching about diversity and instead highlights commonalities” (Thomas et al, 2010, p. 298-99). Based on this strategy, there are several recommendations for designing an effective course, to include: design the agenda with inclusion in mind, be unafraid to talk about privilege, provide an experienced instructor or use a team approach, and expand the literature to provide different voices (Thomas et al, 2010). For the team approach, the researchers encourage creating a culturally diverse team who will be able to focus on increasing diversity competencies in a safe environment (Thomas et al, 2010). This type of approach can help students be more aware of diversity concerns and generate opportunities to establish relationships with other students based on support and equity. It is important to note that whoever becomes an instructor or is part of a team approach must be knowledgeable about the subjects but understand their own biases and perspectives of diversity before teaching others about diversity and inclusion (Thomas et al, 2010).

After deciding to use an individual instructor or team approach to teaching diversity, there are several models that educators should keep in mind when focusing on “diversity development” (Bierema, 2010). These models include “Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)” (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007) and “contact hypothesis model” (Bierema, 2010). For DMIS, it explores how individuals react to differences in cultures and how their responses will change over time through education and training (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). It focuses on six stages of diversity development which includes “denying
difference; defending against difference; minimizing difference; accepting difference; adapting to difference; and integrating difference” (Bierema, 2010, p. 12). These six stages range from least to most culturally aware and model the progress towards intercultural awareness (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). Communication skills should be developed by which instructors provide opportunities for face-to-face interactions, conversations with diverse partners, multiculturalism discussions, and interviewing people from different cultures (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007).

As for the “contact hypothesis model,” prejudice in groups can be reduced through conditions that encourage interactions (Bierema, 2010). Such conditions include, “equal status among group members; positive perceptions between groups; involvement of other majority group members; activities requiring intergroup cooperation; interdependence; more intimate than casual contact; and pleasant and rewarding social climate” (Bierema, 2010, p. 11). Development of diversity competencies can be challenging to teach, but researchers believe that if HRD programs are not preparing their students to support marginalized individuals in future organizations, then the field will not succeed in promoting its “humanistic and developmental vision” (Bierema, 2010, p. 11).

Research Gap

Currently, there is little research on graduate level diversity courses despite some colleges establishing courses for undergraduates. There is also little research to examine the effects of mandatory courses and training on the workforce. There is more literature that supports the ways diversity education can foster positive societal changes, both on campuses and within organizations, but measuring effectiveness is challenging. Other researchers have suggested conducting long term study that tracks students who have taken diversity courses against those
who are the control group (Bell, Connerley, & Cocchiara, 2009). Additionally, some researchers focus on the benefits after diversity education, but do not provide guidelines on how to create observable outcomes for programs or what type of evaluations would be most valuable. Though there is some literature to support including diversity education to higher education’s required curriculum, there are gaps on how to efficiently teach these courses or determine the long-term effects on student’s careers.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The current research study utilizes a mixed method survey approach to determine AHRD alumni’s perspective on workplace diversity trends and their preparation to work in diverse work environments through training or formal education. Participants also provided their recommendations and suggestions based on their experience in the AHRD field about ways to strengthen AHRD students’ diversity education in preparation for their careers after graduation. This methodology section will include a discussion of the research design used in this study, the population and sample, instrumentation, data collection and procedures, data analysis, and human subjects’ protections.

Research Design

A mixed methods survey approach was employed to collect and analyze a mix of quantitative and qualitative data provided by AHRD alumni. A mixed methods approach provides a stronger understanding of the subject and its context as well as generating confidence for the data conclusions based on the evaluation component (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). In a mixed methods approach, researchers collect data by using various approaches and strategies which results in several strengths and nonoverlapping weaknesses (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) identify several advantages of using a mixed methods approach, such as; “it is useful for describing complex phenomena, provides understanding and description of people’s personal experiences of phenomena, can determine how participants interpret ‘constructs,’” and “determines idiographic causation (i.e. determination of causes of a particular event)” (p.20). Despite many strengths, there are certain drawbacks associated with the use of mixed methods research, like how findings may not be generalized in relation to other individuals and environments, it can be more problematic to test
hypotheses and theories, data analysis can often be time consuming, and results could be influenced by the researcher’s biases (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 20). Though there are weaknesses of the approach, there is value in using a mixed methods approach as it relates to the current study.

**Mixed Methods Diversity Scholarship**

Pitts and Wise (2010) encouraged the use of mixed methods after conducting meta-analysis of the use of mixed methods and diversity scholarship since 2000. After collecting and evaluating articles focusing on diversity in the workforce, they discovered that researchers of such articles need to collect more data about diversity trends and should include more qualitative methods since most of the articles focused solely on quantitative methods. Pitts and Wise (2010) believe that the lack of qualitative data can limit the researcher’s ability to comprehend the relationships that emerged from the study. By only using quantitative data, the study’s dynamics are not fully captured since “the casual mechanisms underlying the relationships between diversity, diversity management, and organizational outcomes are contingent and very complex” (Pitts & Wise, 2010, p. 62). Therefore, Pitts and Wise suggest researchers conducting case studies use mixed methods because of its potential to collect qualitative data and support quantitative researchers to identify the appropriate variables needed in the study.

For this research study, data was collected through a survey which included a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions. Along with using mixed methods in designing the questions, there are advantages to including surveys as part of a research design. First, data collected from the participants will lead to the description of some characteristics, like; “abilities, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge of the population of which that group is a part” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 390). Second, information is collected by asking questions of
members from a group, which will then establish data for a study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

The design of the survey was based on the following research questions:

RQ1: What percentage of AHRD alumni have taken a diversity course as part of their formal education?

RQ2: For those alumni who have taken diversity courses in higher education, how has that experience help prepare them for their careers?

RQ3: In what areas related to human diversity are AHRD alumni least and most knowledgeable?

RQ4: Based on experiences in the field as a professional, how can graduate education best prepare students for the actualities of work in a diverse environment?

RQ5: How do alumni’s current organizations define diversity and how important is it?

RQ6: How often do alumni participate in diversity training as part of their current roles?

RQ7: How does globalization affect AHRD alumni’s current position?

Furthermore, as shown in Table 2, each of the online survey questions provided insight into these research questions (RQs).
Table 2

*Research and Survey Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions (RQs)</th>
<th>Survey Questions Relevant to RQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1: What percentage of AHRD alumni have taken a diversity course as part of their formal education?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2: For those alumni who have taken diversity courses in higher education, how has that experience help prepare them for their careers?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3: In what areas related to human diversity are AHRD alumni least and most knowledgeable?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4: Based on experiences in the field as a professional, how can graduate education best prepare students for the actualities of work in a diverse environment?</td>
<td>4, 10, 11, 12, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ5: How do alumni’s current organizations define diversity and how important is it?</td>
<td>7 &amp; 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ6: How often do alumni participate in diversity training as part of their current roles?</td>
<td>5, 6, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ7: How does globalization affect AHRD alumni’s current position?</td>
<td>14 &amp; 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To answer the research questions, a survey was the best option to collect data from AHRD alumni since phone interviews and focus groups would have been difficult to organize based on alumni’s busy work and personal schedules. Despite alumni’s busy lifestyles, other researchers often use surveys as the best means to collect data. For example, Jayakumar (2008) conducted a study that focused solely on white student’s exposure to college diversity as he believed most of them have had limited interactions with people of different race and backgrounds. The proven lack of interaction, represented through survey responses, led to the discussion on how colleges can positively affect students when their environment promotes
diversity. Though this article focused on undergraduate students, it represents how effective surveys are in encouraging honest opinions from the participants. Another survey study, conducted by the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) at the University of Maryland, reached out to its alumni about their perspectives of diversity based on their undergraduate experiences (Alumni Perceptions of Diversity, 2015). The Campus Assessment Working Group perception study and research questions of this study led to the creation of open and close-ended questions for AHRD alumni which resulted in quantitative and qualitative data.

**Population and Sample**

The target population for this study included alumni of the AHRD graduate program at James Madison University. AHRD alumni were selected as they have the most experience with diversity trends in the workforce and can provide insight regarding ways to best prepare AHRD graduate students for their careers based on their current workplace experiences. For inclusion in the study, participants must have graduated from the AHRD program within the last five years, specifically from 2012 to 2017. The total number of participants in this study was thirty-one, representing a 56% response rate. AHRD program alumni tend to work in the Human Resource Development (HRD) field and are between the ages of 21 to 35 years old. Current AHRD graduate students were not included in this study because most do not have a wide range of workforce experiences as do the alumni who have been working in the field as professionals.

**Instrumentation**

The data collection instrument for the current study was an anonymous online survey sent to AHRD alumni through social media, specifically LinkedIn. The online survey had a total of twenty-one questions (see Appendix D for Survey Questionnaire) and began with questions that focused on alumni’s formal college education experiences. Fifteen questions from the survey
provided a mix of quantitative and qualitative findings. The remaining six questions ended with demographic questions which included the participant’s gender, age range, race and ethnicity, level of education, current employment status, and political affiliation. The survey took between fifteen to twenty minutes for alumni to complete. Open-ended questions were used the most to encourage individualized answers (Frankel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). An example of an open-ended question included; “how diversity is defined at your organization” and “how important diversity is to your current position?” Along with five open-ended questions, there were ten close-ended questions and three rating questions. An example of a rating question is “on a scale of 0 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how prepared do you feel interacting with diversity after graduating college?” These rating questions were used in the survey to produce quantitative results.

The survey was confidential, and the data collected was based on anonymous perspectives from AHRD alumni. Research has shown that if a survey is considered sensitive, participants initially have a low willingness to respond but the concerns elevated by the topic itself can be reduced by assuring participants of the survey’s confidentiality which can increase the survey’s response rate (Singer, Hippler, & Schwarz, 1992). The survey was designed with confidentially in mind as diversity can be a sensitive topic to discuss, therefore; it encouraged alumni to provide honest answers about their AHRD experience as well as current diversity trends in the workforce.

After reviewing the literature, I decided to develop a new survey instrument to answer my research questions because any existing instruments were not appropriate. Some of the questions were adapted from a published survey conducted by the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) at the University of Maryland regarding their alumni’s perceptions of diversity.
Because the survey I developed had not been previously used, efforts were made to strengthen the validity and reliability of the survey instrument. The survey was pilot tested with a small group of current students and reviewed by AHRD faculty members. When designing the instrument, I was aware of leading questions, specifically when creating the open-ended questions as they can be more difficult to comprehend, harder to score, and there are various responses received (Frankel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). This survey focuses on content-related evidence of validity since the questions represent the data that was assessed, and the content was appropriate (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Additionally, the survey questions were arranged by specific categories for assessment. These categories include: formal college education, AHRD graduate experience, workplace experience, perspective of diversity, and demographics. As for reliability of the survey, it is difficult to determine the consistency of the data as it was only taken once by the participants.

**Data Collection and Procedure**

After receiving Institutional Review Board permission to begin the study (see Appendix A for IRB Application and Approval), I contacted the AHRD alumni through social media. The social media used for survey distribution was LinkedIn, a professional networking website designed to connect potential employees with organizations. LinkedIn was used to distribute the survey link because the AHRD program alumni belong to a private group to share resources, network, and stay connected. An invitation to participate in the survey with a consent form was shared on the group page (see Appendix C for LinkedIn Web Post). If alumni chose to participate, they had to read the consent form on the post, agree to participate in the study, and click on the link to start the survey (see Appendix B for Consent Form). The survey was open from December 2017 to February 2018. During that time frame, alumni were sent reminders to
participate in the study as there were fewer than five responses during the first two weeks that the survey was open. However, by the time the survey was closed, there were thirty-one responses from AHRD alumni. Though there were thirty-one participants in the survey, not every question received thirty-one responses as some were not answered by alumni since it was not mandatory to answer every question. After the survey was closed, Qualtrics provided a report breakdown of each question that led to an in-depth data analysis of the responses. Qualtrics is a software system that allows the researcher to organize the survey process through creating and distributing surveys, collecting data for reports, and providing analysis of the data (“Research and Assessment,” 2017).

Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis for this study included primarily descriptive statistics and was analyzed using Qualtrics. Descriptive analysis techniques were used because they are often used to document the specific situation, occasion, or conditions of the subject at hand (Fraenkel et al, 2012). Charts and graphs were used to illustrate measures of central tendency, or averages, such as the mean and mode of responses.

The qualitative data analysis included data reduction of the open-ended survey responses. The qualitative data collected in the current study was analyzed using Microsoft Word. Qualitative data analysis involved first reviewing the open-ended survey responses to become familiar with participant’s responses and to begin seeing patterns. Next, I generated an initial list of codes using inductive coding to construct themes. Coding was conducted in partnership with my research chair to mitigate bias.
Protection of Human Subjects

Protection of human subjects was fully taken into consideration (see Appendix A for IRB Application and Approval). The researcher did not perceive any risks associated with involvement as participation was voluntary and the survey was completely anonymous. Due to the nature of the anonymity for this survey, combined with the use of qualitative and quantitative designed questions, these factors were intended to encourage participants to provide thoughtful and honest answers to what can be considered a sensitive topic to discuss. Therefore, a mixed methods approach was the best method to utilize as the data produced from the survey positively correlated to the purpose and research questions of this study.
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

This study includes quantitative and qualitative data obtained through a mixed methods survey. Due to the mixed methods design, the data analysis procedure involved a convergent, or triangulation, approach in which data was collected through a twenty-one-question survey using Qualtrics. Thirty-one AHRD alumni participated in this survey and their feedback provided insight into current workplace diversity trends as well as suggestions for diversity initiatives to be included in higher education to better prepare students entering the workforce. The following section will address the triangulation approach, demographics, and alumni’s responses to the survey questions by connecting them to the seven research questions (RQs) of the study.

Mixed Methods Design

As part of a mixed methods research design, the data analysis portion focused on a triangulation approach. This approach is based on the perspective that qualitative and quantitative methods should be regarded as complementary forces rather than rival entities (Jick, 1979). Triangulation encourages researchers to use more than one method, such as quantitative and qualitative, to assist in the “validation process to ensure that the variance reflected that of the trait and not of the method. Thus, the convergence or agreement between two methods…enhances our belief that the results are valid and not a methodological artifact” (Jick, 1979, p. 602). By combining two methods, it provides stronger interpretations of data and even if unique viewpoints arise, it allows theories to be reimagined (Jick, 1979). Additionally, this approach can assist with any subject matter in variety of levels which can improve the quality of the data collected and accuracy when it comes to the researcher’s interpretations of data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).
Demographics

Demographics did not play a key factor when shaping the research questions however they provide a broader understanding of the AHRD alumni who participated in this study. The participants’ gender is illustrated in Table 3 in which female participants made up 86% of the respondents and male participants made up 14%. As for age ranges, most participants fell within the range of 25 to 30 years of age which comprised 62% of the data pool. There were no participants under the age of 18 since this study was for alumni of the AHRD master program who are typically older than 21 years of age when they graduate. There were also participants who fell within the age range of 35 and older. As for highest level of education, 29 out of the 31 participants currently have a master’s degree, but none have gone on for additional degrees. Furthermore, 29 out of the 31 participants are employed full time. The study’s demographics are represented in Table 3.
Table 3

**Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 and older</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino(a)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest level of education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-year degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is your current employment status?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed full time</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed looking for work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed not looking for work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Affiliation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RQ1: What percentage of AHRD alumni have taken a diversity course as part of their formal education?

To answer this research question, survey question one asked alumni if they were required to take a diversity course as part of their formal college education, which included undergraduate education. Thirty out of thirty-one participants answered the question and the results are displayed in Figure 2.1 below.

![Figure 2.1: Requirements for Diversity Education](image)

Based on alumni’s responses, 63.33% were not required to take a diversity course, 16.67% were required, with 20% answering “maybe” and “unsure.” Since over half of alumni were not required to take a diversity course in their formal college education, mainly from undergraduate careers as mentioned in the qualitative survey responses, this data highlights the need for graduate programs to provide those courses to prepare students to work in a diverse setting.
RQ2: For those alumni who have taken diversity courses in higher education, how has that experience helped prepare them for their careers?

Survey question two correlates to this research question as it asked alumni to answer if they took a diversity course as part of their formal college education, did they find it helpful in their future career? Why or why not? As an open-ended question, there were mixed responses, but the most common theme was how a diversity course was considered helpful in future careers. These courses were viewed as beneficial as alumni stated how it encouraged them to gain a “broader understanding of the multiple identities diversity can encompass.” “made me enlightened about social issues prevalent in our society,” and expanded their “knowledge of other races and cultures. It also helped me to realize that not everyone’s voice is always represented and to think of ways to get everyone’s voice at the table.” Several alumni mentioned how such a course raised their awareness of diversity, especially how to be respectful of different cultures, genders, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. Due to taking a diversity course, alumni felt more confident in their ability to convey respect for those differences and it prepared them in their career when working with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, several alumni mentioned how these diversity courses were taken in their undergraduate education but were not required as part of the AHRD graduate program.

RQ3: In what areas related to human diversity are AHRD alumni least and most knowledgeable?

Survey question three asked alumni to reflect on their AHRD graduate experience with how frequently they were informed of different areas of diversity. These areas included social justice/privilege, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion and spirituality, political views, race/ethnicity/culture, gender, disability, education level, and age. This question was
based on a five-point likert scale where alumni could rate each area with the choice “very frequently, frequently, occasionally, rarely, and never” for how informed they were regarding different areas of diversity. For the purposes of this analysis, very frequently/frequently percentages were combined, occasionally scores were removed, and rarely/never percentages were also combined. By combining these scores, it allowed the researcher to have a better understanding of where students felt the most and least knowledgeable in key areas of diversity based on the AHRD graduate experience. The areas of diversity where alumni feel the most knowledgeable is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

*Most Knowledgeable Areas of Diversity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Diversity</th>
<th>Very Frequently/Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice/Privilege</td>
<td>17.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic status</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion &amp; Spirituality</td>
<td>13.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Views</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity/Culture</td>
<td>31.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>31.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>24.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td><strong>42.83</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td><strong>39.38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AHRD alumni feel the most knowledgeable about “education level” and “age” followed by a tied score for “race/ethnicity/culture” and “gender.” This data was not surprising given the AHRD program often discusses age and education level of learners as it is important to keep in mind when designing the training curriculum for organizations. Though the James Madison University HRD program has the perspective that they infuse diversity throughout the curriculum and it is working to some extent, the data shows there are key areas that are missing based on AHRD alumni’s feedback. As seen in Table 5, there are several areas of diversity where alumni feel the least knowledgeable.

Table 5

Least Knowledgeable Areas of Diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Diversity</th>
<th>Rarely/Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice/Privilege</td>
<td>48.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic status</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>48.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion &amp; Spirituality</td>
<td>51.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Views</td>
<td>55.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity/Culture</td>
<td>27.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>34.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>37.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>13.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>20.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the data gathered, AHRD alumni feel the least knowledgeable about “social justice/privilege, sexual orientation, religion/spirituality, and political views.” The largest gap in the data came from “sexual orientation” as it received a 6.9 score for very frequently/frequently and a 48.27 score for rarely/never informed of this area of diversity. Based on this information and qualitative responses, alumni would have felt more prepared entering the workforce if they were informed of all areas of diversity in the AHRD program, not just education level and age.

**RQ4: Based on experiences in the field as a professional, how can graduate education best prepare students for the actualities of work in a diverse environment?**

Survey questions four, ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen provided insight into this research question. Survey question four was a scaled question, with the scale being from 0 to 5, with 5 being the highest, which asked alumni to rate how prepared they felt interacting in a diverse work environment after graduating from college. The data was analyzed utilizing Qualtrics which produced a mean score of 3.86 out of 5. Twenty-nine out of thirty-one participants answered this quantitative question which means those who responded felt somewhat prepared interacting in a diverse workplace but not completely prepared based on the mean score.

For survey question ten, participants were asked to respond regarding the ways their graduate education could have better prepared them to succeed in a diverse work environment. These options included: “interacting on my own with JMU students different from me, taking more diversity-related courses through the AHRD program, working on AHRD group projects with students who are different from me, going to more diversity programming or initiatives hosted by JMU, study abroad opportunity, none of these would have helped, and none as I am adequately prepared.” Since alumni could choose multiple answers, it was not clear how many
responded to this question. The bar graph in Figure 2.2 provides a breakdown by percentage of alumni’s responses.

![Bar Graph: Options to Help Prepare Alumni in the Workforce](image)

**Figure 2.2: Options to Help Prepare Alumni in the Workforce**

Alumni’s primary suggestion, at 62.07%, was “going to more diversity programming or initiatives hosted by JMU.” The next highest suggestion for preparedness was tied at 44.83% which was “interacting on my own with JMU students different from me” and “taking more diversity-related courses through the AHRD program.” As for “study abroad opportunity” and “working on AHRD group projects with students who are different from me,” both were scored below 40%. Though there is a range of scores, less than 4% of alumni did not view these opportunities as helpful. These scores indicate that alumni believe diversity initiatives are helpful to prepare individuals entering the work force.
Survey question eleven was a qualitative question which asked alumni if they believed AHRD students need to be aware of areas of diversity to help them be successful in their future careers. They were also encouraged to explain why or why not. Twenty-eight participants provided responses and only one alumni did not believe AHRD students need to be aware of area of diversity since they “did not feel as though the content we learned in our classes reflected what is needed to work with diverse populations.” Despite this perspective, twenty-seven participants said “yes” that AHRD students need increased awareness of areas related to diversity. Common themes from these responses included how knowledge of diversity will better prepare students to design curriculum and training for future clients, make them stronger HRD professionals, be aware of those from different backgrounds, and stay in tuned with the “increasingly global and diverse world.” One AHRD alumni stated that “it is more important than ever to have knowledge of diversity and how to navigate it in the workplace. As AHRD professionals, HR folks are the ones to set examples, handle complaints, develop training, identify needs, etc.” Additionally, other alumni wrote that “in a field of work where you are almost always interacting with other people, it is important to understand how others, as well as yourself, think and act in those settings” and “today’s workforce is not only changing but its becoming more global. Being able to work and understand a vast array of cultures can only benefit someone in any industry.” Several alumni noted that as AHRD professionals, one needs to be aware of diversity issues to find success in such a growing field. Therefore, graduate education can better prepare students for the workforce by creating required courses on diversity and/or incorporating several areas of diversity in current established courses.

Survey question twelve asked alumni to reflect on their experience in the workforce and answer if they would recommend diversity courses to be required within the AHRD program.
Based on twenty-nine out of thirty-one participants, 75.86% answered “yes,” 20.69% “maybe,” and 3.45% answered “no,” as represented by Figure 2.3. Based on these results, a majority of alumni respondents believe students will be better prepared for the actualities of work in a diverse environment by participating in AHRD supported diversity courses. Survey question twelve results are represented in Figure 2.3 below.

![Pie Chart](image)

Figure 2.3: Required Diversity Course for AHRD Graduate Program

Finally, survey question thirteen asked alumni what diversity initiatives need to be in place, if any, at the graduate level to better prepare students entering the workforce. As a qualitative question, there was a wide variety of responses from twenty-one out of the thirty-one participants. Most alumni agree that a graduate course specifically focusing on diversity would be the most helpful to prepare students entering the workforce. Based on this common theme, alumni suggested that a diversity graduate course concentrate on the following class topics, such as; “race, gender, cultural diversity, religion, societal issues, privilege,” “working with individuals of a lower socioeconomic needs to be a point of more emphasis,” and “awareness,
inclusion, how to investigate and resolve discrimination claims in the workplace.” Alumni also believe there should be a focus on “understanding differences in thoughts, embracing other ideas, having difficult conversations,” and “accountability, professionalism, and respect when addressing and responding to discrimination, harassment, and disrespectful behavior,” as well as addressing “diversity of age, experience with technology, and gender in particular. Its important to talk through these things and have experience in how to handle them before you enter the workplace.” In addition, alumni recognize the AHRD program could benefit from a required diversity course as one stated “diversity in the workplace should be addressed in the AHRD program by utilizing problem-solving skills that employers have to use on a daily basis (ex. Gender identity discrimination). Becoming a HRD professional should include how modern problems are affecting the workplace and what can be done to resolve them.” Some alumni also suggested that the AHRD program “should enroll a more diverse set of students to increase exposure” and have a “partnership with university diversity initiatives.” Alumni’s experience in the workforce has exposed them to many aspects of diversity, especially concerns of discrimination and harassment. Based on this new knowledge, the AHRD graduate program has an excellent opportunity to learn from alumni and incorporate areas of diversity to help prepare students for the actualities of work in a diverse environment.

**RQ5: How do alumni’s current organizations define diversity and how important is it?**

Responses to survey questions seven and nine provided insight into current diversity trends in the workplace. Survey question seven asked alumni how diversity is defined at their organization. Twenty-two alumni responded and provided a variety of answers. Several responses mentioned diversity is defined by race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and background, sexual identity, national origin, age, disability, veteran/military service status, and
religion. One alumni expanded on these perspectives as “there are other aspects of diversity, including geographic location, education, and language that play a huge role when working for a global company.” Other responses mentioned that diversity equates to differences. For example, one alumni wrote diversity is defined as the “difference of ideas/opinions/thoughts, experience, backgrounds in addition to the traditional aspects (race, religion, gender, age, socioeconomic, political)” and “bridging differences to create inclusion.” Though there were many definitions provided, at least five responses stated they were not sure how it was defined, that it is not explicitly defined, and “I don’t think it is discussed (or defined) as often as it should be.” Based on the variations, it was made clear that there is not one definition for there is a range from specific to more broad definitions.

Survey question nine asked alumni how important diversity is to their current position in the workplace. Alumni could choose between extremely important, very important, somewhat important, and not important. Twenty-nine alumni answered this question and their responses were calculated through Qualtrics, as represented in Figure 2.4 below.
Figure 2.4: Importance of Diversity in the Workforce

Based on the findings, almost 75% of alumni believe diversity is extremely important or very important in their position. According to alumni, diversity is relevant to their current position which means graduate students would benefit from diversity education as it holds significance in the workforce.

**RQ6: How often do alumni participate in diversity training as part of their current roles?**

Survey questions five, six, and eight provided insight into workplace diversity training requirements. Survey question five asked alumni if they are required to participate in diversity training within their workplace. Twenty-eight participants responded to this inquiry and their answers are represented in Figure 2.5 below.
Based on the data, 64.29% of alumni are not required to participate in diversity training at their current place of work. In comparison, 28.57% are required to take diversity training. Though our society is becoming increasingly more diverse, most alumni respondents are not required to participate in diversity training at their organizations.

Survey question six asked alumni if diversity training is required in their workforce, how often do they participate in this type of training. Nine alumni responded and of those nine, only 66.67% of alumni participate in diversity training once a year, followed by 22.22% every 1 to 3 months, and 11.11% every 6 months as represented in Figure 2.6 below.
Finally, survey question eight asked alumni to rate on a scale from 0 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how diverse they view their immediate work setting. Twenty-eight alumni responded and there was a mean score of 2.86 out of 5. This score relates to how alumni work in diverse environments, yet over 64% are not required to participate in diversity training. Consequently, to better prepare students entering the workforce, graduate programs need to provide diversity education, especially since most organizations do not require diversity training.

**RQ7: How does globalization affect AHRD alumni’s current position?**

Survey questions fourteen and fifteen focused on alumni’s perspective of globalization in the workforce. Survey question fourteen asked alumni if they are currently working with international individuals, groups, and/or business. Twenty-nine participants responded, and their answers are represented in Figure 2.7 below.
Based on the data, 55.17% of alumni interact with international organizations whereas 37.93% do not. Even though AHRD students have not received much experience with diversity education or training, the reality is that over half of AHRD alumni are working across cultures and interacting with international individuals, groups, and/or business.

Lastly, survey question fifteen asked alumni what the challenges and/or benefits of working internationally. Twenty alumni responded to this question. Common themes around challenges included: language barriers, time zones, and cultural/societal differences. Alumni stated it can be difficult to be “aware of cultural norms. What’s acceptable to us, may not be to them—for example, hand gestures or certain pronunciations of words” and “time zones can be challenging to work with, when you are trying to meet with someone who lives half way across the world. There are also language and education barriers.” Alumni also provided insight into the benefits of working with international people. Several alumni believe benefits include gaining new perspectives, working with variety of individuals, and “having a more worldly view of
people, and understanding people of other cultures.” Alumni also believe skills can be gained, such as; “diverse problem solving and critical thinking,” “experiencing and learning from other cultures, forming global connections,” and “learning about the world outside of your current environment, and the cultural and societal differences in those areas.” Alumni’s experience working with international organizations and individuals further highlights the need for graduate programs to provide diversity education since globalization is a growing workforce trend and will continue to be an important component of workplace preparedness.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore AHRD alumni’s perspectives on their current context of workplace diversity and their educational preparation for work in a diverse and global environment. Alumni were asked to respond about their formal college education preparation, their current workplace, required diversity training, the effects of globalization on their work, as well as potential areas of improvement for diversity initiatives within the AHRD graduate program. Based on the mixed methods approach, the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that diversity education is important and helpful to ensure AHRD graduates are prepared for their careers. In addition, AHRD students need to be aware of several areas of diversity to become knowledgeable and competent HRD professionals who can address diversity concerns and foster inclusive organizations. The limitations, interpretation of results, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research are discussed in this chapter.

Limitations

This research had several limitations that arose throughout the course of the study. First, this study had thirty-one participants, but alumni did not answer every survey question. Such small sample size can lead to less conclusive results and data must be interpreted very carefully as it can be difficult to determine significant relationships from those small sample sizes (Brutus, Aguinis, & Wassmer, 2013). If this study were to be conducted again, researchers should strive for a larger sample size which will help identify more trends among alumni, especially concerning diversity in the workforce and from formal college education. There was also limited data and literature on diversity education in academic settings which can be challenging when trying to discover trends and noteworthy relationships from data (Brutus et al, 2013). Another concern when researching literature was the many definitions and terminology used for diversity
which made it more difficult to find articles relevant to this study. This causes a problem of scholarship since researchers do not agree on best practices for delivering diversity instruction. These limitations, especially the lack of literature on diversity education, could be because the HRD field has not established common guidelines for diversity curriculum or training. Another limitation of the study was self-reported data as the researcher could not verify data with AHRD alumni. Biases can occur from self-reported data as participants might have mixed feelings about diversity education and training.

**Interpretation of Results**

Over half of the alumni who participated in the study were not required to take a diversity course in their formal college education. Based on this lack of required diversity education in both undergraduate and graduate careers, as well as participants’ current experience in the workforce, majority of alumni respondents believe diversity initiatives in the AHRD graduate program should be required as it will better prepare students entering a diverse and increasingly global work setting. AHRD alumni respondents believe current graduate students should be informed of several areas of diversity, not just education level and age, which is often discussed in the HRD curriculum, as they have realized key areas of diversity that were missing from their AHRD graduate experience. Based on the findings, alumni would have felt more prepared in their current positions if they were informed of several areas of diversity to address discrimination and harassment in the workforce.

Additionally, AHRD alumni respondents’ perspective of required diversity education is relevant to the literature review. Researchers agree there should be required diversity courses provided in graduate programs as they are extremely helpful to not only prepare students who enter the HRD field but contribute to a more inclusive environment. Literature also highlights
that diversity language, definitions, and key issues are constantly evolving. Alumni suggested that incorporating multiple areas of diversity knowledge will help better prepare HRD professionals for the actualities of work in diverse environments. A required diversity course was viewed in a positive manner by alumni respondents as it has the potential to expand student’s knowledge and understanding of those with different backgrounds, create stronger skills for designing diversity curriculum and training, and contribute to generations of more well-rounded HRD professionals.

**Implications for Practice**

Based on the literature review and data analysis, there are several implications for practice. First, this study encourages James Madison University’s AHRD graduate program to create a required diversity course as part of the core curriculum as there are many benefits to teaching diversity as addressed by AHRD alumni. The alumni respondents provided insightful knowledge of current diversity trends that would need to be emphasized in a diversity course, specifically learning about various areas of diversity, how to plan diversity training, and means to address diversity concerns in the workforce. Second, by utilizing learning theories, diversity models, and a variety of instructional methods, HRD educators have an understanding of how to go about planning and implementing diversity education within higher education courses. Third, providing diversity education to HRD students allows them to be more comfortable and accountable to addressing disrespect, harassment, and discrimination in the workforce, which is evident today. The HRD field can no longer ignore diversity as it relates to the growing realities of this position which includes maintaining productivity, encouraging professional growth and a respectful learning culture, as well as fostering an inclusive work environment.
Recommendations for Future Research

There are several recommendations for future research after conducting this study. It is highly suggested that this type of study be conducted again in the future, especially comparing alumni who have not taken a diversity course in the AHRD program versus those who might soon. There is also a need for more research on HRD education for both undergraduate and graduate programs. Though this study focused predominately on graduate education, undergraduate programs have the potential to become the base for diversity education which would be expanded by graduate curriculum. If students do not proceed with a master’s degree, then required diversity courses in every undergraduate field have the potential to better prepare students for diverse work environments across several career paths. Higher education has an opportunity to provide diversity education for students which can contribute to a more inclusive workplace, especially since we are living in an increasingly global world.

Furthermore, there should be in depth research on promising approaches and practices for teaching a challenging topic like diversity. Though the literature review provided some models and nontraditional methods for diversity instruction, both in academic and workplace settings, there are no established and proven guidelines for creating diversity courses. Conversely, there should be a case study on different practices and approaches to teaching diversity since all learners are unique, regardless of being students in a college setting or adults in a workplace setting. Future studies should also consider more intensive qualitative approaches, such as interviews and focus groups. By having in-person conversations on diversity, researchers would be able to better understand participants’ reactions and perspectives towards such a relevant topic. Though researchers would have to keep their own biases in mind, a qualitative study with a large sample population would produce more conclusive and meaningful data. In addition,
there should be a longitudinal study on the impact of diversity education for students who enter their respective fields of study. This type of study should monitor students who take a diversity course in their undergraduate and/or graduate education then evaluate how they apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained from diversity courses to their position. This type of study would require energy, time, and money, but potential data could highlight the important need for required diversity education across multiple sectors, not just academic settings. Diversity may be the physically or mentally perceived notion of others but providing required diversity curriculum in higher education, especially in HRD graduate programs, creates many opportunities to enhance workplace preparedness of current students and positively influence HRD professionals in generating environments inclusive to all.
Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Application and Approval

---

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
James Madison University

Human Research Review Request

FOR IRB USE ONLY:
Exempt: ☐  Protocol Number: 1st Review: ______  Reviewer: ________________
Expedited: ☒  IRB: 18-0248  2nd Review: ______  Reviewer: ________________
Full Board: ☐  Received: 11/07/17  3rd Review: ______

Project Title: Exploring Diversity Workforce Experiences of AHRD Alumni
Project Dates: From: 11/26/2017 To: 4/11/2018
(Not to exceed 1 year minus 1 day)

Responsible Researcher(s): Kayce Irene Croy
e-mail Address: croykd@dukes.jmu.edu
Telephone: (540)647-5697
Department: Adult Education and Human Resource Development
Address (MSC): 6913
Please Select: ☐ Faculty  ☐ Administrator/Staff Member  ☐ Undergraduate Student  ☒ Graduate Student

(If Applicable):
Research Advisor: Dr. Noorjehan Brantmeier
e-mail Address: brantmnr@jmu.edu
Telephone: (540)568-4530
Department: AHRD/TLE
Address (MSC): 6913

Minimum # of Participants: 20
Maximum # of Participants: 50

Funding:
External Funding: ☐ Yes: ☒ No: ☐ If yes, Sponsor: ______
Internal Funding: ☐ Yes: ☒ No: ☐ If yes, Sponsor: ______

Incentives:
Will monetary incentives be offered? Yes: ☐ No: ☒
If yes: How much per recipient? $0.00 In what form? ______

Must follow JMU Financial Policy:
http://www.jmu.edu/facmanual/procdoc/rr/2005-2006/convey/research Subjects

Institutional Biosafety Committee
Review/Approval:
Use of recombinant DNA and synthetic nucleic acid molecule research:
☐ Yes  ☒ No
If "Yes," approval received: ☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Pending
IBC Protocol Number(s):
Biosafety Level(s):

Will research be conducted outside of the United States?
☐ Yes  ☒ No
If "Yes," please complete and submit the International Research Form along with this review application:
http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/forms/irbinternationalresearch.docx
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
James Madison University

Certain vulnerable populations are afforded additional protections under the federal regulations. Do human participants who are involved in the proposed study include any of the following special populations?

☐ Minors
☐ Pregnant women (Do not check unless you are specifically recruiting)
☐ Prisoners
☐ Fetuses
☑ My research does not involve any of these populations

Some populations may be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence. Does your research involve any of the following populations?

☐ Elderly
☐ Diminished capacity/Impaired decision-making ability
☐ Economically disadvantaged
☐ Other protected or potentially vulnerable population (e.g. homeless, HIV-positive participants, terminally or seriously ill, etc.)
☑ My research does not involve any of these populations

Investigator: Please respond to the questions below. The IRB will utilize your responses to evaluate your protocol submission.

1. ☐ YES ☑ NO Does the James Madison University Institutional Review Board define the project as research?

The James Madison University IRB defines "research" as a "systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge." All research involving human participants conducted by James Madison University faculty and staff and students is subject to IRB review.

2. ☐ YES ☑ NO Are the human participants in your study living individuals?

"Individuals whose physiologic or behavioral characteristics and responses are the object of study in a research project. Under the federal regulations, human subjects are defined as: living individual(s) about whom an investigator conducting research obtains: (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual; or (2) identifiable private information."

3. ☐ YES ☑ NO Will you obtain data through intervention or interaction with these individuals?

"Intervention" includes both physical procedures by which data are gathered (e.g., measurement of heart rate or venipuncture) and manipulations of the participant or the participant's environment that are performed for research purposes. "Interaction" includes communication or interpersonal contact between the investigator and participant (e.g., surveying or interviewing).

4. ☑ YES ☐ NO Will you obtain identifiable private information about these individuals?

"Private information" includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, or information provided for specific purposes which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (e.g., a medical record or student record). "Identifiable" means that the identity of the participant may be ascertained by the investigator or associated with the information (e.g., by name, code number, pattern of answers, etc.).

5. ☐ YES ☑ NO Does the study present more than minimal risk to the participants?

"Minimal risk" means that the risks of harm or discomfort anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. Note that the concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes psychological, emotional, or behavioral risk as well as risks to employability, economic well being, social standing, and risks of civil and criminal liability.

CERTIFICATIONS:
For James Madison University to obtain a Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) with the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, all research staff working with human participants must sign this form and receive training in ethical guidelines and regulations. "Research staff" is defined as persons who have direct and substantive involvement in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research and includes students fulfilling these roles as well as their faculty advisors. The Office of Research Integrity maintains a roster of all researchers who have completed training within the past three years.

Test module at ORI website [http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/irbtraining.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/irbtraining.shtml)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Researcher(s) and Research Advisor</th>
<th>Training Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kayce Irene Croy</td>
<td>1/24/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Noorjehan Brantmeier</td>
<td>1/4/2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For additional training interests, or to access a Spanish version, visit the National Institutes of Health Protecting Human Research Participants (PHRP) Course at [http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php](http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php).

By signing below, the Responsible Researcher(s), and the Faculty Advisor (if applicable), certifies that he/she is familiar with the ethical guidelines and regulations regarding the protection of human research participants from research risks. In addition, he/she agrees to abide by all sponsor and university policies and procedures in conducting the research. He/she further certifies that he/she has completed training regarding human participant research ethics within the last three years.

Principal Investigator Signature  
Date

Principal Investigator Signature  
Date

Principal Investigator Signature  
Date

Faculty Advisor Signature  
Date

Submit an electronic version (in a Word document) of your ENTIRE protocol to researchintegrity@jmu.edu.
Provide a SIGNED hard copy of the Research Review Request Form to:
Office of Research Integrity, MSC 5758, 601 University Boulevard, Blue Ridge Hall, Third Floor, Room # 342
Purpose and Objectives
Please provide a lay summary of the study. Include the purpose, research questions, and hypotheses to be evaluated. (Limit to one page)

The purpose of the study is to collect information about current diversity training trends and education from alumni of the Adult Education and Human Resource Development (AHRD) graduate program at James Madison University. The researcher wants to understand their perspective of diversity, what it might look like in their current workplace, if diversity training is required in their organization, as well as insight or suggestions for diversity initiatives within the AHRD graduate program. The research question is as follows:

Based on current AHRD alumni’s workforce experience, what diversity initiatives need to be in place, if any, at the graduate level to better prepare them in the workforce?

Furthermore, researching diversity education and training is important as it is a growing trend for campuses and society. Currently, there is not an overwhelming amount of research into diversity education or training provided by higher education. The researcher wants to understand if there were diversity initiatives that AHRD alumni participated in from their college career as well as their current position in the workplace. If alumni have experience with diversity initiatives, this might have influenced them to be more accepting of differences that they come across daily and in their career. Therefore, the following hypotheses will be tested:

Hypothesis 1: Alumni’s experience in the workforce will lead to the discussion of improvement or new ideas for diversity initiatives within the AHRD program.
Hypothesis 2: Diversity initiatives from a formal college education will encourage students to be more aware and respectful of diversity in several environments, especially the workplace.

Diversity is important to acknowledge in our society; therefore, graduate programs like AHRD have an excellent opportunity to learn from alumni’s perspective of current trends to encourage the transition from classroom to a diverse workplace setting.

Procedures/Research Design/Methodology/Timeframe
Describe your participants. From where and how will potential participants be identified (e.g. class list, JMU bulk email request, etc.)?

Participants in this study will be Adult Education and Human Resource Development (AHRD) alumni. There is no age limitation associated with this study however it is required that they have graduated from the AHRD program within the last ten years. These adult participants will be identified through the online website LinkedIn as there is a JMU AHRD Students & Alumni group that the researcher follows through their own account.

How will subjects be recruited once they are identified (e.g., mail, phone, classroom presentation)? Include copies of recruitment letters, flyers, or advertisements.

Since the researcher belongs to the JMU AHRD Students & Alumni group page on LinkedIn, alumni will be asked to participate in the study through this website. Below is what the researcher will post to the LinkedIn page:

Hello AHRD Alumni!

My name is Kayce Croy and I am finishing my second year of the AHRD program. This year I am enrolled in Dr. Bonnie Tucker’s Thesis class in which I am focusing on diversity initiatives from formal college education and current workplace trends based on the perspective of AHRD alumni. Therefore, I would truly appreciate your time to complete an anonymous online survey for my study. If you choose to participate in this study, please read the following information then click on the provided link which will lead you directly to the survey conducted through Qualtrics. Thank you in advance for your time and contribution to my study!
After this introduction, the “Web Cover Letter” will be posted below it. If the participants consent to the study, they will be able to click on the survey link which is located at the bottom of the cover letter.

Describe the design and methodology, including all statistics, IN DETAIL. What exactly will be done to the subjects? If applicable, please describe what will happen if a subject declines to be audio or video-taped.

A mixed methods survey approach will include conducting an anonymous, web-based Qualtrics survey distributed to AHRD alumni through a LinkedIn post on the JMU AHRD Students & Alumni group page. The LinkedIn post from the researcher will include the “Web Cover Letter (used in anonymous research)” requesting voluntary consent to participate in the survey, as well as the direct link to the Qualtrics survey. It is anticipated that the survey should take fifteen to twenty minutes to complete. This survey will contain one methodology to collect data, yielding both quantitative and qualitative responses (consisting of Likert scaled and open-ended questions). There will be several demographic questions asked at the end of the survey, like the participant’s gender, ethnicity, age, as well as current employment status and political affiliation. The survey will include a mix of mostly closed and open-ended questions since the researcher is using a mixed method approach. A Likert-type scale will be used with the intentions of understanding participant’s opinions towards diversity. The researcher will collect data over a two-month period and will send one to two follow up reminder posts throughout that time to ensure participation. Data collected will be kept with confidentiality in mind as individual responses are recorded anonymously and online through the Qualtrics system. There will be no identifiable information collected from the participants but it will be known that the participants are alumni of the AHRD program. The data collected will include AHRD alumni’s perspective of diversity from their formal college education, graduate program, and current workplace. Additionally, data collected will include suggestions for diversity initiatives, if any, which could be included in the AHRD program to better prepare graduate students for the workforce.

Emphasize possible risks and protection of subjects.

It is anticipated that there will be no more than minimal risks associated with this research, which includes no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life.

What are the potential benefits to participation and the research as a whole?

Although there are no personal benefits to participating in this study, AHRD alumni can help the graduate program grow by offering diversity initiatives suggestions to include in the curriculum. These suggestions can potentially better prepare graduates entering the workforce.

Where will research be conducted? [Be specific; if research is being conducted on JMU’s campus a site letter of permission will be needed]

The research will be conducted on JMU’s campus as the participants are alumni of JMU. The research will be conducted through an anonymous and online survey completed at the AHRD alumni’s convenience.

Will deception be used? If yes, provide the rationale for the deception. Also, please provide an explanation of how you plan to debrief the subjects regarding the deception at the end of the study.

No, deception will not be used in this study.

What is the time frame of the study? [List the dates you plan on collecting data. This cannot be more than a year, and you cannot start conducting research until you get IRB approval]

The time frame of this study ranges from the time of pending IRB approval through April 11th, 2018. After receiving IRB approval, a survey will be sent using Qualtrics which will be issued via LinkedIn immediately after approval is received, beginning November 26th, 2017. This survey will be available for two months of the date that it was issued on LinkedIn as this will ensure timely alumni participation as they provide insight into diversity training and education. The survey will be open over two months to ensure participation from alumni who often lead busy lives and two reminder posts will be sent through LinkedIn to encourage this
participation. This research will be conducted over the course of the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters to ensure sufficient time to collect and analyze data.

Data Analysis

**How will data be analyzed?**

Data will be analyzed within Qualtrics, the online survey instrument being utilized for this research project.

**How will you capture or create data? Physical (ex: paper or tape recording)? Electronic (ex: computer, mobile device, digital recording)?**

Data will be captured by an online survey through the Qualtrics system.

**Do you anticipate transferring your data from a physical/analog format to a digital format? If so, how? (e.g. paper that is scanned, data inputted into the computer from paper, digital photos of physical/analog data, digitizing audio or video recording?)**

There will be no need to transfer data from a physical format to a digital format as all data will be analyzed and stored through the online Qualtrics survey system.

**How and where will data be secured/stored? (e.g. a single computer or laptop; across multiple computers; or computing devices of JMU faculty, staff or students; across multiple computers both at JMU and outside of JMU?) If subjects are being audio and/or video-taped, file encryption is highly recommended. If signed consent forms will be obtained, please describe how these forms will be stored separately and securely from study data.**

Data will be stored and secured through the online Qualtrics survey system. The survey being issued will be anonymous, in that there will be no identifying information attached to any of the research questions being asked. The researcher will not be present while the survey is being completed.

**Who will have access to data? (e.g. just me; me and other JMU researchers (faculty, staff, or students); or me and other non-JMU researchers?)**

The researcher and Dr. Brantmeier, who is the committee chair of this research, will be the only individuals to have access to this data, which will remain within a password-protected electronic file once the research has been completed.

**If others will have access to data, how will data be securely shared?**

Any statistical information being analyzed for reporting purposes will be stored on a personal laptop computer that is password protected, with any statistical documents being password protected as well. A back-up copy of these documents may be kept on a portable hard drive, which will also be password protected and all passwords would only be shared with Dr. Brantmeier.

**Will you keep data after the project ends? (i.e. yes, all data; yes, but only de-identified data; or no) If data is being destroyed, when will it be destroyed, and how? Who will destroy the data?**

At the end of the study, all records will be destroyed by the researcher.

**Reporting Procedures**

**Who is the audience to be reached in the report of the study?**

The audience to be reached in the report of this study is the researcher’s committee members. This committee consists of three graduate faculty members within the AHRD/LTLE graduate school at James Madison University. These members include:

- Dr. Noorjehan Brantmeier – Committee Chair
- Dr. Cheri Beverly – Committee Member/LTLE Instructor
- Diana Meza – Committee Member/LTLE Instructor
How will you present the results of the research? (If submitting as exempt, research cannot be published or publicly presented outside of the classroom. Also, the researcher cannot collect any identifiable information from the subjects to qualify as exempt.)

The results of this research will be presented to a Research Review Committee in a formalized classroom to the committee members listed above through a “defense” of the research and the resulting findings.

How will feedback be provided to subjects?
Within the consent form in the email being sent to the participants of the anonymous survey, the researcher and committee chair’s email address will be included, which will allow the participants to contact the researcher with feedback, questions or concerns regarding the study, as well as to give them the opportunity to learn about the results of the study, if they choose to inquire.

Experience of the Researcher (and advisor, if student):
The researcher, Kayce Irene Croy, received an undergraduate degree from Christopher Newport University in English in May of 2016 then enrolled in the Adult Education and Human Resource Development (AHRD) graduate program at James Madison University the summer of 2016. She is a full-time student within the program and is anticipated to receive her master’s degree in AHRD in May of 2018. The following graduate courses have been completed as of to date:

- AHRD 520 - Foundations of AHRD
- LTLE 570: Design and Development of Digital Media
- EDUC 641: Learning Theories and Practice
- AHRD 630 - Research Methods and Inquiry in AHRD
- AHRD 600 - Performance Analysis and Needs Assessment in AHRD
- LTLE 610: Instructional Design in AHRD

Dr. Noorie Brantmeier has a Ph.D. in Adult Education and Human Resource Studies with a specialization in research methods from Colorado State University. She has a master’s degree in social work from Washington University in St. Louis where she conducted research on social and economic development in Native American communities. Dr. Brantmeier has been a principal investigator, co-principal investigator, and/or research coordinator on studies related to the measurement of student attitudes regarding diversity in higher education; youth civic engagement; and adolescent attitudes toward violence. She holds the rank of Graduate Faculty at JMU and teaches research methods courses at both the master’s and doctoral levels. Dr. Noorie Brantmeier will help guide me through my research.

Past and current research methods courses taught include:
- PSY 840: Qualitative and Mixed Research Methods
- AHRD/EDUC 630: Research Methods & Inquiry
- AHRD 680/700: Reading & Research/Thesis
Exploring Diversity Workforce Experiences of AHRD Alumni

“Web”/“Email” Cover Letter (used in anonymous research)

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Kayce I. Croy from the Adult Education and Human Resource Development (AHRD) graduate program at James Madison University. The following survey should take fifteen to twenty minutes to complete and its purpose is to gather data from AHRD alumni to understand their perspectives of diversity initiatives within their current workplace as well as from their formal college education. The information that you provide will remain anonymous and you will be asked a series of 21 questions. This study will contribute to the researcher’s completion of her master’s research for the AHRD program.

Research Procedures
This study consists of an anonymous online survey that will be administered to individual participants through the Qualtrics software. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to diversity in the workplace and from the AHRD graduate program.

Time Required
Participation in this study will require 15 to 20 minutes of your time.

Risks
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits
Although there are no direct benefits from your participation in this anonymous and online survey research study, any feedback you provide will help to determine what diversity initiatives, if any, need to be in place at the graduate level to better prepare students for the workforce.

Confidentiality
The results of this research will be presented to a Research Review Committee comprised of three graduate faculty members from the Adult Education and Human Resource Development program. While individual responses are anonymously obtained and recorded online through the Qualtrics software, data is kept in the strictest confidence. No identifiable information will be collected from the participant and no identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. All data will be stored in a secure location only accessible to the researcher. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. At the end of the study, all records will be destroyed. Final aggregate results will be made available to participants upon request.

Participation & Withdrawal
Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. However, once your responses have been submitted and anonymously recorded you will not be able to withdraw from the study.
Questions about the Study
If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Kayce I. Croy
Adult Education and HR Development
James Madison University
croyki@dukes.jmu.edu

Dr. Noorjehan Brantmeier
Adult Education and HR Development
James Madison University
brantmnk@jmu.edu
(540) 568-4530

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject
Dr. David Cockley
Chair, Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
(540) 568-2834
cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about this study. I have read this consent and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age. By clicking on the link below, and completing and submitting this anonymous survey, I am consenting to participate in this research.

Please click below to begin the survey:
http://jmu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4iWtx4B1A7UEwlv

Kayce I. Croy
Name of Researcher (Printed)
November 6th, 2017
Date

This study has been approved by the IRB, protocol # 16-0248
Survey Questions and Qualtrics Link

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Kayce I. Croy from the Adult Education and Human Resource Development (AHRD) graduate program at James Madison University. The following survey should take fifteen to twenty minutes to complete and its purpose is to gather data from AHRD alumni to understand their perspectives of diversity initiatives within their current workplace as well as from their formal college education. The information that you provide will remain anonymous and you will be asked a series of 21 questions. This study will contribute to the researcher’s completion of her master’s research for the AHRD program.

Thank you for participating in this research study!

Research Procedures
This study consists of an anonymous online survey that will be administered to individual participants through the Qualtrics software. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to diversity in the workplace and from the AHRD graduate program.

Time Required
Participation in this study will require 15 to 20 minutes of your time.

Risks
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits
Although there are no direct benefits from your participation in this anonymous and online survey research study, any feedback you provide will help to determine what diversity initiatives, if any, need to be in place at the graduate level to better prepare students for the workforce.

Confidentiality
The results of this research will be presented to a Research Review Committee comprised of three graduate faculty members from the Adult Education and Human Resource Development program. While individual responses are anonymously obtained and recorded online through the Qualtrics software, data is kept in the strictest confidence. No identifiable information will be collected from the participant and no identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. All data will be stored in a secure location only accessible to the researcher. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. At the end of the study, all records will be destroyed. Final aggregate results will be made available to participants upon request.

Participation & Withdrawal
Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. However, once your responses have been submitted and anonymously recorded you will not be able to withdraw from the study.

Questions about the Study
If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Kayce I. Croy
Adult Education and HR Development
James Madison University
croyki@dukes.jmu.edu

Dr. Noorjehan Brantmeier
Adult Education and HR Development
James Madison University
brantmnk@jmu.edu
Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject
Dr. David Cockley
Chair, Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
(540) 568-2834
cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about this study. I have read this consent and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age. By clicking on the link below, and completing and submitting this anonymous survey, I am consenting to participate in this research.

Q1 Were you required to take a diversity course as part of your formal college education?

Q3 Based on your AHRD graduate experience, how frequently were you informed about the following areas of diversity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Frequently (1)</th>
<th>Frequently (2)</th>
<th>Occasionally (3)</th>
<th>Rarely (4)</th>
<th>Never (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social justice/Privilege (1)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic status (2)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation (3)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion and Spirituality (4)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Views (5)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity/Culture (6)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (7)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability (8)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level (9)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (10)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4 On a scale of 0 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how prepared do you feel interacting with diversity after graduating college?

Q5 Within your workplace, are you required to participate in diversity training?

Q6 If diversity training is required in your workplace, how often do you participate in this type of training?
Q7 How is diversity defined at your organization?

Q8 On a scale from 0 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how diverse do you view your immediate work setting?

Q9 How important is diversity to your current position in the workplace?

Q10 Which of the following do you think could have better prepared you to succeed in a diverse work environment? Please select all that apply.

Q11 Do you believe AHRD students need to be aware of areas of diversity to help them be successful in their future careers? Why or why not?

Q12 Based on your experience in the workforce, would you recommend diversity courses to be required within the AHRD program?

Q13 What diversity initiatives need to be in place, if any, at the graduate level to better prepare students entering the workforce?

Q14 In your position, are you currently working with international individuals, groups, and/or business?

Q15 What are the challenges and/or benefits of working with international people?

Q16 What is your gender?

Q17 What is your age?

Q18 What is your race/ethnicity?

Q19 What is your level of education?

Q20 What is your current employment status?

Q21 What is your political affiliation?
IRB Approval Notification

Morgan, Cindy - morgancs@jmu.edu>
Wed 11/8/2017, 4:53 PM
Gray, Kayce Irene - czykc@noanoenjmele

Flag for follow up. Completed on Thursday, March 22, 2018

Action Items

Dear Kayce,

I wanted to let you know that your IRB Protocol entitled, "Exploring Diversity Workforce Experience of AEDO Alumni," has been approved effective from 11/6/2017 through 6/11/2018. The signed action of the board form, approval memo, and close-out form will be sent to you via campus mail. Your protocol has been assigned No. 16-0248. Thank you again for working with us to get your protocol approved.

All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission, meaning that you will follow the research plan you have outlined in your protocol, use approved materials, and follow university policies.

Please take special note of the following important aspects of your approval:

- Any changes made to your study require approval before they can be implemented as part of your study. Contact the Office of Research Integrity at researchintegrity@jmu.edu with your questions and/or proposed modifications. An addendum request form can be located at the following URL: http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/forms/irbabaddendum.doc.

- As a condition of the IRB approval, your protocol is subject to annual review. Therefore, you are required to complete a Close-Out form before your project end date. You must complete the close-out form unless you intend to continue the project for another year. An electronic copy of the close-out form can be found at the following URL: http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/forms/irbcloseout.doc.

- If you wish to continue your study past the approved project end date, you must submit an Extension Request Form indicating a renewal, along with supporting information. An electronic copy of the close-out form can be found at the following URL: http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/forms/irbextensionrequest.doc.

- If there are any adverse events and/or any unanticipated problems during your study, you must notify the Office of Research Integrity within 24 hours of the event or problem. You must also complete the adverse event form, which can be located at the following URL: http://www.jmu.edu/researchintegrity/irb/forms/irbandversevent.doc.

Although the IRB office sends reminders, it is ultimately your responsibility to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure there is no lapse in IRB approval.

Thank you again for working with us to get your protocol approved. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Wishes,
Cindy

Cindy Morgan
Administrative Assistant
Appendix B: Cover Letter/Consent Letter (Web)

Exploring Diversity Workforce Experiences of AHRD Alumni

“Web”/“Email” Cover Letter (used in anonymous research)

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Kayce I. Croy from the Adult Education and Human Resource Development (AHRD) graduate program at James Madison University. The following survey should take fifteen to twenty minutes to complete and its purpose is to gather data from AHRD alumni to understand their perspectives of diversity initiatives within their current workplace as well as from their formal college education. The information that you provide will remain anonymous and you will be asked a series of 21 questions. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her master's research for the AHRD program.

Research Procedures
This study consists of an anonymous online survey that will be administered to individual participants through the Qualtrics software. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to diversity in the workplace and from the AHRD graduate program.

Time Required
Participation in this study will require 15 to 20 minutes of your time.

Risks
The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits
Although there are no direct benefits from your participation in this anonymous and online survey research study, any feedback you provide will help to determine what diversity initiatives, if any, need to be in place at the graduate level to better prepare students for the workforce.

Confidentiality
The results of this research will be presented to a Research Review Committee comprised of three graduate faculty members from the Adult Education and Human Resource Development program. While individual responses are anonymously obtained and recorded online through the Qualtrics software, data is kept in the strictest confidence. No identifiable information will be collected from the participant and no identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. All data will be stored in a secure location only accessible to the researcher. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. At the end of the study, all records will be destroyed. Final aggregate results will be made available to participants upon request.

Participation & Withdrawal
Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. However, once your responses have been submitted and anonymously recorded you will not be able to withdraw from the study.
Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Kayce I. Croy  
Adult Education and HR Development  
James Madison University  
crovki@dukes.jmu.edu

Dr. Noorjehan Brantmeier  
Adult Education and HR Development  
James Madison University  
brantmnk@jmu.edu (540) 568-4530

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject

Dr. David Cockley  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
James Madison University  
(540) 568-2834  
cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about this study. I have read this consent and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age. By clicking on the link below, and completing and submitting this anonymous survey, I am consenting to participate in this research.

Please click below to begin the survey:
http://jmu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_41Wbx4B1A7UEwty

Kayce I. Croy  
Name of Researcher (Printed)  
November 6th, 2017  
Date

This study has been approved by the IRB, protocol # 18-0148
Appendix C: LinkedIn Post (Web)

Survey: Exploring Diversity Workforce Experiences of AHRD Alumni

Hello AHRD Alumni!

My name is Kayce Croy and I am finishing my second year of the AHRD program. This year I am enrolled in Dr. Brantmeier’s Thesis class in which I am focusing on diversity initiatives from formal college education and current workplace trends based on the perspective of AHRD alumni. Therefore, I would truly appreciate your time to complete an anonymous online survey for my study. If you choose to participate in this study, please click on the provided link which will lead you directly to the Cover Letter then survey which is conducted through Qualtrics. Thank you in advance for your time and contribution to my study!

http://jmu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4IWtx4B1A7UEw1v

Show less

Online Survey | Built with Qualtrics Experience Management™
Qualtrics makes sophisticated research simple and empowers users to capture customer, product, brand & employee experience insights in one place.

Like Comment
Appendix D: Survey Questionnaire

Exploring Diversity Workforce Experiences of AHRD Alumni

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Kayce I. Croy from the Adult Education and Human Resource Development (AHRD) graduate program at James Madison University. The following survey should take fifteen to twenty minutes to complete and its purpose is to gather data from AHRD alumni to understand their perspectives of diversity initiatives within their current workplace as well as from their formal college education. The information that you provide will remain anonymous and you will be asked a series of 21 questions. This study will contribute to the researcher’s completion of her master’s research for the AHRD program.

Thank you for participating in this research study!

Q1 Were you required to take a diversity course as part of your formal college education?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Maybe
   - Unsure
   If Yes is Selected, then skip to Question 2

Q2 If you took a diversity course as part of your formal college education, did you find it helpful in your future career? Please explain why or why not,

Q3 Based on your AHRD graduate experience, how frequently were you informed about the following areas of diversity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social justice/Privilege</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion and Spirituality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Views</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity/Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4 On a scale of 0 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how prepared do you feel interacting with diversity after graduating college?

Q5 Within your workplace, are you required to participate in diversity training?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Maybe
   - Unsure

Q6 If diversity training is required in your workplace, how often do you participate in this type of training?
   - Every 1 to 3 months
   - Every 6 months
   - Once a year
   - 1 to 3 years
   - Not Applicable

Q7 How is diversity defined at your organization?

Q8 On a scale of 0 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how diverse do you view your immediate work setting?

Q9 How important is diversity to your current position in the workplace?
   - Extremely Important
   - Very Important
   - Somewhat Important
   - Not Important

Q10 Which of the following do you think could have better prepared you to succeed in a diverse work environment? Please select all that apply.
   - Interacting on my own with JMU students different from me
   - Taking more diversity-related courses through the AHRD program
   - Working on AHRD group projects with students who are different from me
   - Going to more diversity programming/initiatives hosted by JMU
   - Study Abroad Opportunity
   - None of these would have helped
   - None as I am adequately prepared

Q11 Do you believe AHRD students need to be aware of areas of diversity to help them be successful in their future careers? Why or why not?
Q12 Based on your experience in the workforce, would you recommend diversity courses to be required within the AHRD program?
  o Yes
  o Maybe
  o No

Q13 What diversity initiatives need to be in place, if any, at the graduate level to better prepare students entering the workforce?

Q14 In your position, are you currently working with international individuals, groups, and/or business?
  o Yes
  o Maybe
  o No

If Yes is Selected, then skip to Question 15

Q15 What are the challenges and/or benefits of working with international people?

Q16 What is your gender?
  o Male
  o Female
  o Transgender

Q17 What is your age?
  o 18 to 21 years old
  o 21 to 25 years old
  o 25 to 30 years old
  o 30 to 35 years old
  o 35 years and older

Q18 What is your race/ethnicity?
  o Asian/Pacific Islander
  o American Indian/Alaska Native
  o Black/African American
  o Hispanic/Latino(a)
  o Middle Eastern
  o Native Hawaiian
  o White
  o Multiracial
  o I prefer to not respond to this question

Q19 What is your level of education?
  o Less than high school
  o High school graduate
  o Some college
  o 2 year degree
Q20 What is your current employment status?
   - Employed full time
   - Employed part time
   - Unemployed looking for work
   - Unemployed not looking for work
   - Retired
   - Disabled
   - Student

Q21 What is your political affiliation?
   - Republican
   - Democratic
   - Independent
   - None
References


Consoli, M.L., & Marin, P. (2016). Teaching diversity in the graduate classroom: The instructor, the students, the classroom, or all of the above? *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 9*(2), 143-157. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0039716


Research and Assessment. (2017). Retrieved from


doi:10.1002/abc.21091
