

**Intercultural competence: the case of an Irish, not-for-profit, community based
organisation for the homeless in the Republic of Ireland**

Martin Toal

BA (Hons), MA

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Dublin City University

School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies

Supervisor: Dr Agnès Maillot

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A & I	Advice and Information
CAQDAS	Computer- Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CISP	Crisis Intervention Service Partnership
DVAS	Domestic Violence Advocacy Service
DOSH	Dublin Off-Site Housing
DCU	Dublin City University
EDS	Extended Day Service
FEANTSA	European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless
HAT	Homeless Action Team
HAP	Housing Assistance Payment
NTQ	Notice to Quit
PASS	Pathway Accommodation and Support System
PEA	Private Emergency Accommodation
PETE	Preparation for Education, Training & Employment Dublin
SLI	Support to Live Independently
TSS	Tenancy Support Service
TUSLA	Child and Family Agency

Intercultural competence: the case of an Irish, not-for-profit, community based organisation for the homeless in the Republic of Ireland

Martin Toal

ABSTRACT

This is an ethnographic study concerning the challenges that face staff in a not-for-profit homeless service provider in the Republic of Ireland called Focus Ireland (FI), in their support of clients who are culturally diverse. The study utilises participant observation and eighteen group interviews (in which fifty-three FI staff members took part) to explore these challenges. In addition, feedback evaluation forms were used in order to examine the effectiveness of an intercultural competence training programme that was designed in response to these issues. This is a timely study, given the significant increase in individuals not originally from Ireland who avail of homeless services.

Through the use of Thematic Analysis, a number of themes were identified in relation to the difficulties that staff face in the provision of an effective and appropriate service for customers who are culturally diverse. The findings indicate that they face challenges related to supporting customers in the semi-public and private spheres such as understanding the ways customers seek privacy or the varying childrearing practices customers might employ. Findings also show that FI staff had difficulty supporting families with diverse family structures and the manner in which this impacts on decision-making, power relationships and the nurture of children.

Findings also show that staff face the challenge of attempting to combat racist behaviour or discrimination by customers themselves, neighbours and private landlords. The study also found that staff need to develop language competence skills in order to overcome the language barrier they sometimes face, when interacting with customers who speak English as a second or additional language.

Analysis of feedback from participants in the second part of the study suggest that a bottom-up ethnographic approach to the design and delivery of a context-specific, intercultural competence training programme is very effective, as many FI staff developed in their level of intercultural competence in terms of knowledge, skills, language competence and attitudes.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Ireland has experienced a rising level of immigration, which, in turn, has led to an increased number of individuals from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds accessing the services of the not-for-profit homeless organisations. This has occurred within a context where homelessness itself has become a major social and political issue, with soaring numbers since the mid-2010s, resulting in the phenomenon of “hyper-homelessness” (O’Sullivan, 2020, p. 13). This study focuses on staff who work in a not-for-profit homeless service provider in the Republic of Ireland called Focus Ireland (FI) and sets out to explore the following: what are the challenges they face in their support of customers¹ who are culturally diverse in an appropriate and effective manner and can those challenges be met by intercultural competence training? The first part of this dissertation examines the theoretical conceptualisation of intercultural competence. This is followed by an explanation of the methodology used, namely, an ethnographic study incorporating two techniques, participant observation and group interviews (with fifty-three staff), to explore these challenges. The next part of the study explains the findings and analysis of the interviews that were conducted. Finally, the study describes the design and delivery of an intercultural competence training programme for FI staff, followed by an analysis of the effectiveness of this programme based on trainee evaluation feedback forms.

In order to situate the context in which this dissertation was researched, it is necessary to start with a discussion on the homelessness crisis in Ireland. Therefore, the first part of this chapter explores the background to the rise in the number of homeless people in the Republic of Ireland, with a particular focus on those seeking support who do not originate from Ireland. This is followed by a description of the history of FI- its origin and current services. I will then discuss my personal background and the overall rationale for the study and outline the overall research and the research questions. The final section provides a brief outline of each chapter.

¹ This is the term Focus Ireland use to refer to those people whom it supports.

1.2 Background: Homelessness in Ireland

At the start of 2020, Ireland experienced a surge in the numbers of homeless people as well as individuals who are at risk of losing their homes. This increase was unprecedented in the Irish State and has been described as a crisis (O'Sullivan, 2020). FI estimate that in November 2020 “there are up to 5,000 people at any one time who are homeless in Ireland” (www.focusireland.ie).

Other sources estimated the number of homelessness in the Republic of Ireland as higher, pointing out that in July 2020 the figure was 8,728, adults and children (McDermott, 2020). According to FI, between 2014-2020 the number of families entering into homelessness in Ireland has increased by two hundred and thirty two percent.² Significantly, these figures do not account for “hidden homelessness,” that is, individuals or families who are not officially recorded as homeless, as they may be sleeping on sofas with friends nor do they include women or children who are resident in domestic violence refuges (FI, 2020). In 2019, 14,200 customers engaged with FI services (FI, 2019 annual report). This number accounts for those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless as well as customers who availed of the coffee shop services. It also includes 1,800 families and 4,300 children.

Officially, the 2011 and 2016 censuses were the first to attempt to capture the number of homeless people in Ireland. The figures from the tables below suggest that a significant proportion of ‘non-Irish’³ were categorised as homeless in this four-year period representing approximately fifteen percent of homeless people in 2011 (www.cso.ie). This dropped slightly to fourteen percent in 2016 (See table 1):

² This is when monthly figures for homelessness started to be published.

³ This is the categorisation used by the CSO.

Homeless Persons Usually Resident in the State 2011 (Number) by Nationality and Census Year	
All nationalities	3,791
Irish	3,071
UK	139
Polish	26
Lithuanian	75
Other European (1)	87
African (1)	140
Other nationalities (1)	86
Not stated	167

Homeless Persons Usually Resident in the State 2016 (Number) by Nationality and Census Year	
All nationalities	6,871
All Irish	5,171
UK	146
Polish	124
Romanian	62
Lithuanian	35
Latvian	26
Croatian	19
Other European	84
Nigerian	91
Somali	44
Other African	112
Asian (1)	66
Other nationalities	40
Not stated, including no nationality	851

Table 1 Homeless Persons Usually Resident in the State by Nationality, Census Years 2011 and 2016

Given these figures, we can postulate that since the early 2010's, not-for-profit homeless organisations within the Republic of Ireland have been supporting customers from other cultures whose values, norms and behaviour are different from those of the Irish community and, possibly, the workers within these charitable organisations. Because of these differences, the communication process may be problematic, resulting in barriers to many intercultural exchanges between worker and customer. Such encounters with 'otherness' require that an individual become interculturally competent in order for a successful communicative interaction to take place.

1.3 Personal background and rationale for the study

This study has its foundations in my personal interest in intercultural competence in the field of education, through my role as a lecturer of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Intercultural Studies since 2008. I also have a very keen interest in both the design and delivery of training as, I was involved in teacher training and ‘train the trainer’ training for nineteen years. In addition, I have experience designing ESOL related materials which have been published.

My interest in the development of intercultural competence for staff working in the not-for-profit homeless service provision sector began as a FI volunteer, where I designed and delivered an intercultural training programme initially to graduates involved in the Community Service Volunteer (CSV) programme⁴ and then to full-time staff who wanted to improve their intercultural competence skills and knowledge. Overall, staff were very happy with this training. However, whilst conducting the sessions, it became apparent that there was a need for a more tailor-made, context-specific training programme, which would consider specific issues that staff encountered in their daily intercultural interactions with culturally diverse customers.

1.4 The Study

To date, there is a paucity of research in relation to the development of intercultural competence for staff in Irish not-for-profit homeless organisations. Therefore, this study investigates the challenges which face FI staff in their provision of an appropriate and effective service to customers who are culturally diverse. In addition, it explores whether the subsequent intercultural competence training, which is based on the findings from the study, is effective.

This is a qualitative study involving staff working within this organisation⁵. The research was conceived in two stages. Stage one entailed an ethnographic approach, employing participant observations and group interviews in various FI sites located across Ireland in

⁴ Graduates from the field of social sciences are selected to work in FI for a year. They are required to work 39 hours per week and are paid a living allowance.

⁵ It was agreed in conjunction with FI HR that the study would not involve customers due to the sensitive nature of their situation and the need to protect privacy. This does not mean that customers will not be involved in later follow up studies.

order to collect data. The second stage involved the design and delivery of intercultural competence training sessions to FI staff; staff evaluation feedback forms were then used in order to analyse the effectiveness of this training programme.

1.4.1 Research questions

This study explores the following: what are the challenges FI staff face in their support of customers who are culturally diverse in an appropriate and effective manner and can those challenges be met by intercultural competence training?

The specific research questions explored in this study are:

1. What are the cultural challenges to successful intercultural encounters between Focus Ireland staff and their culturally diverse customers?
2. What are the key elements which can be used in the design and delivery of intercultural competence training sessions for staff in Focus Ireland?
3. To what extent has this training been successful?

In answering these questions, this study will make a valuable contribution to scholarly debate regarding the development of intercultural competence of individuals in a specific context, in this case the not-for-profit homeless sector in the Republic of Ireland. Moreover, it is hoped that this study can be the foundation for continued community engagement and future research in intercultural competence in other charitable organisations, within this sector and also with other charities that support vulnerable groups, both nationally and internationally. Indeed, Arasaratnam (2016) believes that the study of intercultural competence should also take place beyond academic publications in areas such as not-for-profit organisations which “engage with expressions of intercultural communication that are different from those that are observed among international students, expatriates, or medical, teaching, or business professionals, who inform a significant amount of intercultural competence research in academia.”⁶ This

⁶ As this encyclopaedia is online there is no page reference.

study aims to answer this call by giving a voice to service providers in a not-for-profit homeless organisation.

1.5 Focus Ireland

As previously stated, FI is one of the main not-for-profit homeless organisations within the Republic of Ireland.⁷ The organisation was founded by Sister Stanislaus Kennedy in Dublin in 1985. Initially, it provided advice and information, advocacy and support for young people in Dublin. It has now developed into a national not-for-profit organisation which supports individuals or families who are homeless or at risk of losing their homes (FI Annual Report, 2018). There are a number of locations in the Republic of Ireland:

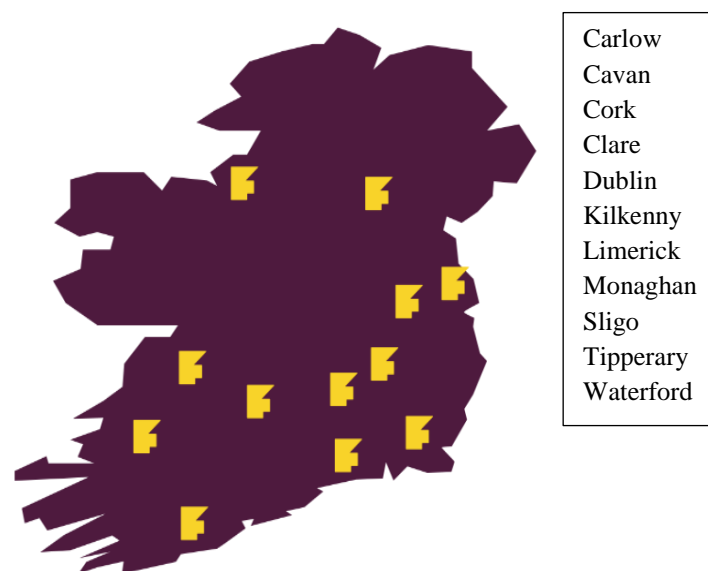


Figure 1 Focus Ireland Locations in the Republic of Ireland (FI, Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, 2016-2017)

⁷ The organisation was originally called Focus Point.

1.5.1 Sections within FI

Coffee shop (Temple Bar, Dublin)

This was the first FI location established in 1985. It provides affordable meals for the homeless in Dublin. Above this space are offices where FI Advice and Information (A & I) staff support individuals who are homeless or at risk of being homeless in their attempts to secure accommodation.

Advice and Information

Staff in the A & I section are called project workers. They have numerous roles. Primarily, they “provide information and advice on tenants’ rights and entitlements, homeless services, housing, social welfare and legal rights” (<https://www.focusireland.ie/>) to those experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. In addition, project workers assess customers’ needs in relation to housing and also advocate on behalf of their customer with other homeless agencies, landlords or local authorities. Finally, project workers may refer customers to other agencies related to homelessness in order to better assist them with their legal or social needs. A & I staff are located throughout Ireland in all the FI locations.

Catering

Catering staff provide healthy and affordable meals for customers in the coffee shop space including breakfast, lunch and tea. These meals are made fresh on-site every morning.

Contact workers

Contact workers greet customers at the door of the coffee shop and take their names. They also chat with them as well as monitor the coffee shop floor to make sure that a maximum of twenty-five customers are in the space at any one time. In addition, they manage the queue for food, check that customers have not been banned from the service and monitor use of the toilet. Contact workers are usually the first point of contact in this space, before customers see project workers in A & I.

Dublin Off-site Housing (DOSH)

Staff members working in DOSH are housing support workers whose primary goal is to support individuals or families who are in the process of adjustment towards independent living (www.focusireland.ie). These customers have all recently moved into private rented accommodation. The staff must also liaise with relevant external services such as property management companies or local authorities. Support for the families is manifold, ranging from conducting home visits in order to set up budget plans with the families, setting up bill payment for utilities or accompanying adults on school visits in relation to their children. The overall aim of staff working in this section is to move the family towards autonomous and independent living.

Support to Live Independently (SLI)

SLI is a partnership between FI and the Peter McVerry Trust. Staff working in this section support customers who have newly moved from homeless accommodation (e.g. B & B) into long-term accommodation and have just signed tenancy agreements on these properties. The overall aim of this programme is to support homeless people in the process of leaving homelessness and living independently, which includes assisting them in their attempts to integrate into the local community as well as attempting to prevent individuals returning to homelessness.

Tenancy Support Service/ Tenancy Sustainment and Support (TSS)

The overall aim of TSS is to support individuals or families who live in council properties⁸, but who have been identified by the relevant council as being at risk of losing this property due to rent arrears issues. Staff support these customers by visiting the families and drawing up budgetary plans for the families.

The staff interviewed for this study work in the sections described above. There are a number of other roles within this national organisation, some of which will be referred to during the analysis of findings.

⁸ This is a social housing property that is built by local authorities called city or county councils. Tenants pay rent directly to these councils.

1.5.2 The customers

During the interviews, FI staff members referred to a number of different ethnic groups that they supported. The ten groups most frequently listed by staff in terms of nationality or ethnicity were: Irish, Irish Travellers, Polish, African, Romanian, Nigerian, foreign, Somalian, Eastern- European and Czech, in that order (see Appendix A for a full list). Interestingly, the second most referred to group from this list after Irish were Irish Travellers. The 2016 census figures show that there were 30,987 Irish Travellers in the Republic of Ireland, which represents 0.7% of the population (CSO). The data also indicates that they were the third highest cohort of homeless in the state:

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Irish	2,369	1,484	3,853
Irish Traveller	230	287	517
Any other white background	293	144	437
African	263	335	598
Any other black background	13	9	22
Asian, including Chinese	35	44	79
Other	108	115	223
Not Stated	688	454	1,142
Total	3,999	2,872	6,871

Table 2 Homeless persons by ethnicity and gender

There is general agreement that Irish Travellers are a distinct ethnic group (Norris and Whinston, 2005; Visser, 2018). This was officially recognised by the Taoiseach⁹ Enda Kenny in March 2017 (www.gov.ie). Thus, Irish Travellers can be described as a separate group with distinctive cultural differences to those of the majority Irish (settled) population. Norris and Whinston (2005, p. 804) list these particular cultural features as:

endogamy or a tendency to marry within their own community; shared fundamental cultural values which are distinctive from those of the settled community, in particular nomadism; culturally distinct rituals such as funerals; their own language (Gammon or Shelta), which means that their use of English is distinctive; the importance of the extended family; and the fact that they define themselves and are defined by the settled Irish population as separate.

⁹ This is the Irish word for Prime Minister.

In their report on Irish Travellers in Ireland, Watson et al. (2017, p. vii) maintain that demographically they represent approximately one-percent of the overall population of the Republic of Ireland and that they experience discrimination in housing, access to health services employment and education as well as “exceptionally strong levels of prejudice.” Indeed, in a Behaviour and Attitudes survey conducted in 2017, Ninety percent of Irish Travellers stated that they had encountered discrimination in their lifetime and seventy-seven percent had experienced it in the previous year (O’Mahony, 2017).

Some of the characteristics identified by Norris and Whinston (2005) in the quotation above are salient with regards to FI staff members supporting Irish Travellers who are homeless. In the interviews, staff commented on challenges around Irish Travellers’ use of English and literacy issues, their different expectations in relation to gender roles, their childrearing practices, and the need by staff to combat racist or discriminatory practices by private landlords and some local community members.

1.6 Training

FI Staff are encouraged to attend training sessions in order to continue their professional development. In 2019, FI conducted one hundred and seventeen training and learning events and in total, one thousand and twenty participants attended. The purpose of these training sessions is to provide staff “with the required upskilling and refresher training to ensure a quality service is continually delivered” to their customers (FI Annual Report, 2019). The content of training is various, with core training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention¹⁰, Occupational First Aid, Child Protection and an introduction to the Children First E-learning Programme.

1.7 Concepts and terminology

If staff lack the knowledge and skills to support culturally diverse customers appropriately, then it is likely that interactions will result in “well-meaning clashes” (Brislin, 2000, p. 11). These are communicative misunderstandings during well-intentioned interactions, which might break down because both interlocutors are acting

¹⁰ This is training in the use of verbal and non-verbal skills to calm agitated, aggressive or ‘heightened’ customers.

from their own cultural standpoint. These misunderstandings may be lessened if an individual can develop intercultural competence.

1.7.1 Definition of competence

As Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) point out, the concept of competence became prominent after World War II. Boyatzis (2008) highlights the importance of the work of McClelland in the 1970s for the development of this concept. He also maintains that competencies are categorised into emotional, cognitive and social components (2008). Meanwhile, Buckley and Caple (2007) argue that the concept is controversial, but that it could include skills, values and attitudes. More specifically, Spitzberg and Changnon (2009, p. 6) define competence as a skill or ability which “attempts to account for the process of managing interaction in ways that are likely to produce more appropriate and effective individual, relational, group, or institutional outcomes.”

1.7.2 Definitions of Intercultural competence

The concept of intercultural competence is equally contested with a plethora of definitions and synonymous terms. Broadly speaking, intercultural competence is defined as “the ability to interact effectively with people from other cultures that we recognize as being different from our own” (Guilhereme, 2000, p. 297). More specifically, Arasaratnam encapsulates many of the components of intercultural competence pertinent to this current study in her definition of an interculturally competent person as someone who:

is mindful, empathetic, motivated to interact with people of other cultures, open to new schemata, adaptable, flexible, able to cope with complexity and ambiguity. Language skills and culture-specific knowledge undoubtedly serve as assets to such an individual. Further, she or he is neither ethnocentric nor defined by cultural prejudices (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication, 2016).¹¹

¹¹ This quotation is taken from an online encyclopaedia that does not have page numbers.

1.7.2.1 Components of intercultural competence

Studies of intercultural competence have originated in many disciplines including but not limited to: Anthropology, Communication studies, Intercultural Studies, Education and Language Teaching, Sociology, Medicine and Engineering. Chiu, Lonner, Matsumoto and Ward (2013) maintain that there is much debate about the constituent components of intercultural competence. We will examine these components in the literature review chapter.

1.8 Outline of chapters

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature related to the concept of intercultural competence starting with an analysis of the culture-general models of intercultural competence, followed by an examination of models which originate from fields closely related to not-for-profit organisations that support vulnerable groups from the disciplines of social work/care and health.

Chapter 3 presents my methodologic approach to the research and analysis of the data generated from this research. First, there is a discussion of both my ontological and epistemological stance in relation to my decision to adopt a qualitative approach to this particular study. The next section examines the use of ethnography through participant observations and interviews to gather data. I will then discuss my choice of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2013), as the methodological approach to the analysis of findings.

Chapter 4 discusses FI staff member's navigation of space and explores the challenges that they encounter in their movement between public, semi-private and private spaces while supporting their customers. Staff remarked on the problems involved in accompanying customers who spoke English as a second or other language on school visits or doctor appointments. In the semi-public sphere, issues related to the interactions of staff members with customers in the coffee shop. In the private sphere, challenges arose in relation to how customers sought privacy and the different cultural practices that staff encounter in the home: greetings, food offerings and childrearing practices.

Chapter 5 explores the role of gender and how this impacts on FI staff members' ability to support their customers through an examination of the variety of family structures that staff members encounter and the different gendered roles that exist in these families, in terms of decision-making, power relationships and the nurture of children.

Chapter 6 focuses on the challenges that FI staff members encounter in relation to racism, discrimination and prejudice. Specifically, it focuses on: the racist behaviour directed towards staff, or between customers, in the coffee shop; the support of customers against the backdrop of societal racism directed towards newcomer ethnic minority groups who are newly accommodated in housing estates; and the discrimination that customers, especially Irish Travellers, encounter in their efforts to secure accommodation from private landlords.

Chapter 7 focuses on the language competence of staff, customers and all other actors involved in the provision of effective and appropriate service for people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. The biggest challenge for FI staff concerns the language barrier between them and customers who do not speak English as a first language, compounded by the necessity to explain the many detailed and complex documents related to homelessness to emerging L2 customers.¹²

Chapter 8 explores the design, delivery and analysis of an intercultural competence training programme for FI staff. Firstly, a model of intercultural competence for not for profit homeless service providers is posited, based on the main findings discussed in the previous four chapters as well as comments gathered during the training sessions and feedback comments from trainees about the effectiveness of the training programme. This chapter then examines the design and delivery of two intercultural competence training sessions for FI staff and examines the effectiveness of this training through the analysis of trainee satisfaction feedback forms.

¹² This is a more widely accepted and positive term for low-level second language ability.

Chapter 9 presents a review of the overall study. It also includes sections on the limitations of this current study and possible areas for future research in relation to intercultural competence in the not-for-profit homeless provision sector.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the literature related to the concept of intercultural competence. It begins by providing definitions of intercultural competence. Next, the concept is examined from the fields of language teaching, education and communication studies. This is followed by a discussion of some of the most influential culture-general models of intercultural competence and an exploration of models in contexts closely related to homeless service provision namely, social work, social care, nursing and healthcare.

2.1 Introduction: a definition of Intercultural competence

The concept of Intercultural competence has been discussed in a number of fields of study such as language teaching and language education, communication studies, intercultural studies, social work, sociology, medicine, healthcare practice, psychology and engineering. In recent years, there have been a number of reviews by researchers from these fields in relation to intercultural competence in: encyclopaedias of intercultural communication (Arasaratnam, 2016); book chapters (Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009); journal articles (Rathje, 2007; Deardorff, 2011); and special edition journal articles (Arasaratnam, 2007a, 2007b; Collier, 2015; Deardorff, 2015; Koester & Lustig, 2015; Martin, 2015). Many of these reviews call for a more concrete theoretical definition of intercultural competence. Meanwhile, world organisations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe have published conceptual and operational framework documents, specifically related to the development of intercultural competence (UNESCO, 2013; COE, 2016). In addition, in the field of education, lists of global competencies in the context of international student assessment have been prepared for utilisation by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), (OECD 2018); the Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR, 2017); the Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures (FREPA, 2012); and the Intercultural Competence Assessment (INCA) project (Precht & Lund, 2007).

Due in part to the existence of a large number of different definitions from various fields of study, the concept of intercultural competence remains unwieldy and difficult to define. This has led to a lack of agreement on precise definitions of the term (Deardorff, 2004; 2006). In addition, some researchers use multiple terms synonymous with the concept of intercultural competence in their research, even within the same paper, resulting in a “terminological inconsistency” (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009, p.51). A further problem is that the dominant paradigm of intercultural competence stems from a North American and Eurocentric viewpoint (Dai & Chen, 2014; Deardorff, 2015; Peng, Zhu and Wu, 2020). Consequently, recently there have been calls for definitions from “indigenous scholars” (Deardorff, 2015, p. 3) from around the world in an attempt to offset this North American/ European dominance (Spitzberg and Changnon 2009; Wang & Kulich, 2015).

Many researchers suggest a number of dimensions of intercultural competence, with significant crossovers, namely: attitudes, knowledge, comprehension and skills (Deardorff, 2006); attitudes, knowledge and skills (Byram, 1997; Byram, Nichols & Stevens, 2001); motivation, knowledge and skills (Gudykunst, 2004) or skills, knowledge, awareness and a (positive) attitude/affect, and language proficiency (Fantini 2000; 2012). Similarly, Lustig and Koester (2010) include the components of knowledge, motivation, appropriate and effective behaviours and skills in verbal and non-verbal communication. Hammer (2015, b) maintains that intercultural competence not only involves a self-awareness of one’s own culture in relation to norms, values behaviour, but also an understanding of the cultural other (p. 483).

The field of communication and modern language teaching and learning also examines the concept of intercultural communicative competence which involves interlocutors communicating in a second or other language in order to achieve a communication goal. Chen and Starosta’s (2006) definition of intercultural competence includes the component of respect. According to the authors, the interculturally competent actor possesses the knowledge to “elicit a desired response in interactions and to fulfil their own communication goals by respecting and affirming the worldview and cultural identities of the interactants” (p. 357).

This chapter will focus on current perspectives on intercultural competence. Firstly, a definition will be arrived at. Next, a number of intercultural competence models will be examined in detail. Then, the specific components of intercultural competence will be discussed. Finally, intercultural competence will be examined in specific contexts, focussing on the field of sociology, nursing and healthcare, and charities associated with homelessness.

2.2 Towards a definition of intercultural competence

As previously stated, a definition of intercultural competence remains problematic, as there is no clearly agreed term for the concept. Fantini (2012) cites Bennett (2008), who identified a range of terms synonymous with intercultural competence including: cross-cultural adaptation, cross cultural awareness, cross-cultural communication, cultural competence, cultural/intercultural sensitivity, effective intergroup communication, ethnorelativity, intercultural co-operation, global competitive intelligence, intercultural interaction, intercultural effectiveness, metaphoric competence, transcultural communication, global mindedness, global mind-set, and culture learning. The table below includes some of the terms from Bennett's paper as well as synonymous terms for intercultural competence found in my own review of the literature on this concept:

Term	Author
Biculturalism/ Bicultural competence	(Hong, 2010)
Cultural intelligence	(Earley & Ang, 2003)
Cross-cultural adaptation	(Kim, 2001)
Cross-cultural communication	(Matveev & Nelson, 2004)
Cross-cultural (communication) competence	(Ward & Ward, 2003); (Ruben, 1989)
Cultural competence	(Dudas, 2012); (Fantini, 2012) (Sue, Rasheed & Rasheed, 2015); (Seeleman, Suurmond, & Stronks, 2009); (Fong,

	2009); (Burchill & Pevalin, 2014); (Congress, 2005); (Cai, 2016)
Cultural sensitivity	(Foronda, 2008; Chang, Yang & Kuo, 2013)
Culture learning	(Paige, Cohen & Shively, 2004)
Effective inter-group communication	(Gudykunst, 2004)
Global competence	(Hunter, White & Godbey, 2006)
Global mindedness	(Hovlanad, McTighe Misil, Skilkon-Sylvester, Jamison, 2010)
Global mind-set	(Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002)
Host communication competence	(Kim, 2001)
Intercultural communication competence	(Collier, 2015); (Arasaratnam, 2007a); (Gibson & Zhong, 2005); (Wiseman, 2002); (Wiseman, Hammer & Nishida, 1989); (Chen, 2017)
Intercultural communicative competence	(Deardorff, 2006); (Byram, 1997); (Fantini, 2020)
Intercultural competence	(Arasaratnam, 2016); (Fantini, 2000; 2009) (Deardorff, 2004; 2006; 2009; 2015); (Hammer, 2015a; 2015b); (Martin, 2015); (Spitzberg, 1989); (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009); (Barrett, 2013); (Peng, Zhu and Wu, 2020)
Intercultural interaction competence	(Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009)
Intercultural effectiveness	(Cui & Awa, 1992)
Intercultural sensitivity	(Bennet, 1993); (Bennett & Bennett, 2004) (Chen, 1997) (Chen & Starosta, 2000) (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003)
Intercultural understanding	(Humphrey, 2007)
Multicultural competence	(Sue, Arredondo & McDavis, 1992)

Plurilingualism	(Zarate, 2003)
Transcultural Competence	(Kramsch, 2011); (Takkula, Kangaslahti & Banks, 2008)

Table 3 Synonyms/alternative terms for intercultural competence

For the purpose of this study, the term intercultural competence will be utilised in the main, rather than intercultural communicative competence as the study involves an examination of a host society member (in this case a FI staff member), whose first language is English and the visitor or customer whose English language proficiency may range from limited to proficient. As there may only be one interaction between staff member and customer, the onus to be interculturally competent falls on the staff member if the encounter is to be effective.

Despite this plethora of terms in relation to intercultural competence, it is possible to see certain dimensions repeated in the various definitions. The most frequent features of intercultural competence are appropriate and effective behaviour between interlocutors who are not from the same culture. In their comprehensive review, Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009, p.7) define intercultural competence as “the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioural orientations to the world”. Deardorff (2006) conducted a study in a North American and European context which utilised the Delphi technique¹³ to canvas both higher education administrators and scholars who specialise in intercultural communication, in order to develop an agreed definition of intercultural competence. The majority of scholars agreed that it is “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247-248).

Indeed, many scholars in separate studies identify behaviour that is appropriate and effective in a particular context as important dimensions of intercultural competence

¹³ This is a qualitative research method which elicits opinions from a panel of experts through a sequence of questionnaires to arrive at an aggregated and agreed upon viewpoint on an issue or definition of a certain concept.

(Spitzberg, 1989, 1997; Guilherme, 2000; Arasaratnam, 2006, Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Fantini, 2009, 2012, 2020; Jackson, 2012; Starosta 2014; Bennet, 2015). Effective behaviour refers to one's own view of her/his performance in the L2 or different culture, that is an etic or outsider view; whereas appropriate behaviour refers to the perception of one's performance by a host society member in an interaction, that is, an emic or insider view (Fantini, 2012). As such, appropriate behaviour is rule-governed (Wiseman, 2002).

As previously mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the notion of respect is another key component of intercultural competence (Barrett, 2013; Chen, 2017; Chen and Starosta, 1996; Deardorff, 2011). Barrett's (2013, pp. 152) definition of intercultural competence which includes appropriate and effective interactions, also incorporates respect as well as building good relationships:

[i]ntercultural competence is the set of values, attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and behaviours which are needed for: understanding and respecting people who are perceived to be culturally different from oneself; interacting and communicating effectively and appropriately with such people; establishing positive and constructive relationships with such people.

While Deardorff's (2006) definition of intercultural competence is widely cited, for the purpose of this study, I have chosen to adopt the above definition of intercultural competence as it better encapsulates the context specific nature of my study.

In the field of language teaching, Canale and Swain (1980) were influenced by the work of Hymes in the late 60s and 70s who coined the term communicative competence. This view of competence centred on both grammatical and sociolinguistic/sociocultural competence. For Hymes knowledge of how to communicate appropriately in social interactions was as equally important as possessing a knowledge of grammar. Following on from Hymes, Canale and Swain (1980) developed a conceptualisation of communicative competence that incorporated three competencies: grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic. Grammatical competency includes the knowledge of lexical items; morphology; semantics; syntax and phonology. Sociolinguistic competence includes sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. The former is crucial for interpreting utterances for social meaning and focuses on the extent to which

communicative interaction is appropriate within a sociocultural context. This depends on “contextual factors such as topic, role of participants, setting, and norms of interaction” (p. 30). Rules of discourse relate to an interlocutor’s appropriate use of language to fit the context of the interaction. Finally, strategic competence includes the use of both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to repair any failures in communication between speakers. This concept of competence is influential in research into the development of intercultural communicative competence in language learners conducted by Byram (1997) which will be examined later in the chapter in the discussion of intercultural competence models.

Fantini (2012), points out that there are five dimensions of intercultural competence: knowledge, positive attitude/affect, skills and awareness of the self, and host language proficiency. Significantly, in terms of language proficiency he appears to place the onus on the newcomer to develop this skill. He does not advocate that individuals or groups from the receiving culture need to develop proficiency in other languages, or suggest how the host society may aid a newcomer in developing proficiency in the main language. In addition to these five dimensions, Fantini posits a number of components of intercultural competence which he divides into individual characteristics: flexibility, humour, patience, openness, interest, curiosity, empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, suspension of judgements; and abilities: establishing and maintaining relationships, communicating with minimal loss of distortion, collaborating in order to accomplish something of mutual interest or need.

Intercultural competence has also been examined in the fields of communication studies, cross-cultural psychology and education. The genesis of the concept began to take hold after the Second World War and the onset of the Peace Corps in the U.S. (Wiseman, 2002; Spitzberg & Chagon, 2009). Matveev (2017, p. 10) points out that there are three broad dimensions of intercultural competence:

Three conceptual dimensions of intercultural competence are: *affective* or *intercultural sensitivity* or acknowledging and respecting cultural differences, *cognitive* or *intercultural awareness* or self-awareness of one’s own personal cultural identity and understanding how cultures vary, and *behavioral* [sic] or *intercultural adroitness* or message skills, knowledge of appropriate self-

disclosure, behavioral [sic] flexibility, interaction management, and social skills.

Scholars who have posited intercultural competence models, some of which will be examined in the next section, have identified an array of components which have been itemised in a number of reviews (Deardorff, 2006; Spitzberg, 1997, Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009). One of the most useful lists was developed in Deardorff's study (2006), which found that eighty percent or more of the scholars and administrators achieved agreement on twenty-two of the most important components of intercultural competence, listed below:

1. Understanding others' worldviews (100% agreement among scholars)
2. Cultural self-awareness and capacity for self-assessment
3. Adaptability and adjustment to new cultural environment
4. Skills to listen and observe
5. General openness toward intercultural learning and to people from other cultures
6. Ability to adapt to varying intercultural communication and learning styles
7. Flexibility
8. Skills to analyze, interpret, and relate
9. Tolerating and engaging ambiguity
10. Deep knowledge and understanding of culture (one's own and others')
11. Respect for other cultures
12. Cross-cultural empathy
13. Understanding the value of cultural diversity
14. Understanding of role and impact of culture and the impact of situational, social, and historical contexts involved
15. Cognitive flexibility-ability to switch frames from etic to emic and back again
16. Sociolinguistic competence (awareness of relation between language and meaning in societal context)
17. Mindfulness
18. Withholding judgment
19. Curiosity and discovery
20. Learning through interaction
21. Ethnorelative view
22. Culture-specific knowledge and understanding

Table 4 Components of Intercultural Competence Based on 80% to 100% Agreement among Intercultural Scholars (ranked by highest acceptance). Adapted from Deardorff, 2006, p. 249-250).

In possibly the most comprehensive examination of components identified in intercultural competency models, Spitzberg and Changon (2009) list three hundred and twenty-five variables. Such an enormous list, which stem from the Cognitive, Affective, Behavioural (CAB) paradigm in relation to intercultural competence, has generated criticism from

some scholars. Indeed, Hammer is critical of the copious number of components that exist, referring to them as a “laundry list” of variables related to intercultural competence (2015a, p.13).

2.3 Models of Intercultural Competence

Influential models of intercultural competence have been developed in various fields of study. Byram (2013) points out that their origins stem from three main fields. The first is psychology, whereby the focus is usually on a stranger’s psychological responses to a new environment. Thus, the stranger can experience emotions such as joy and excitement or homesickness when encountering difference. The second source is language teaching, which focuses on pedagogic models used by educators to train trainee teachers in the areas of teaching pedagogy, planning of lessons, and the assessment of learners. The last field is sociology. Here the emphasis is on the role of the stranger and the host society member and on their interactions (Byram, 2013). Meanwhile, Arasaratnam (2016) believes that there has been a major contribution to our understanding of intercultural competence from the field of communication studies. She also recognises the contribution made by the fields mentioned above as well as the field of anthropology.

Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) provide a comprehensive heuristic theoretical analysis of intercultural competence in which they identify five categories of intercultural competence models: compositional, co-orientational, developmental, adaptational and causal process. I will now examine each category of model in turn by discussing in detail one of the influential models that the authors examine from each of the five categories.

2.3.1 Compositional models of intercultural communicative competence

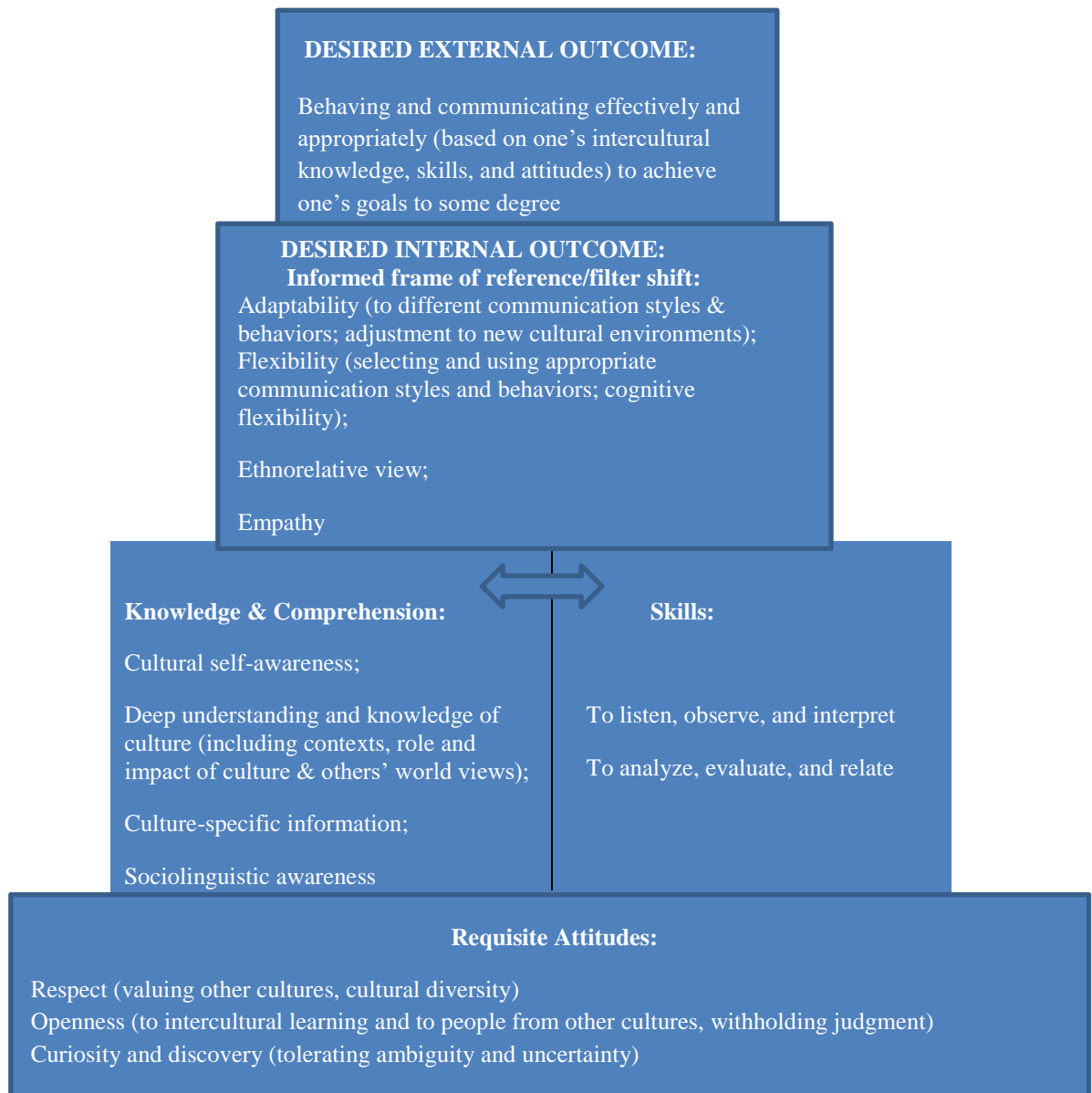
According to Spitzberg and Changnon (2009, p. 10) compositional models “identify the hypothesized components of competence without specifying the relations among those components.” In other words, the models contain relevant lists of components that an individual should develop in order to interact appropriately and effectively with an interlocutor/ interlocutors from another culture. As previously stated, these components

are typically divided under the general headings of knowledge components, skills components and attitude/ motivation components.

One of the models examined by the authors is Deardorff's (2006) pyramid model of intercultural competence which she maintains is unique because it focuses on internal and external outcomes. It is a bottom-up model in which possession of lower level components augments upper level components. It is process orientated, in that if an individual is conscious of the fact that learning occurs at each level and that each level is interrelated, then this cognisance will lead to the acquisition of intercultural competence. Significantly for Deardorff, whilst an individual can enter at any level, the foundation level of the requisite attitudes of respect, openness, curiosity and discovery are an essential starting point in the development of intercultural competence. The model moves from individual to group components. At the top of the pyramid, the components are all communicative in nature. At this level, by behaving in an effective and appropriate manner, an individual from different cultural backgrounds is able to achieve his/ her goal. In addition, she maintains that a focus on internal outcomes necessitates a "shift in frame of reference" (2006, p. 255) and aids in the external communicative interactions of individuals from differing cultural viewpoints.

However, Deardorff (2006) recognised the absence of interconnectedness between the different levels, more specifically how an individual moves between the personal level to the interpersonal level. For example, it may be possible for an individual to possess the appropriate attitudes to communicate successfully with someone from a different culture and achieve a desired external outcome in one instance, but, on another occasion, the outcome might be unsuccessful. The reflexive intercultural speaker may then recognise that their knowledge of an individual from that culture needs to be developed, and may move to this component in order to repeat the external outcome process effectively and appropriately on another occasion. In turn, it might also be possible for an individual to possess the requisite knowledge and comprehension of another's culture and complete a transaction successfully with this person without shifting their own negative cultural reference points in relation to the other culture. However, this is a short-term strategy and if an individual is to develop and continue acquiring intercultural competence, he or she

will need to attend to internal outcomes at some point for this to be achieved. Due to this problem, Deardorff (2006) proposes a Process Model of intercultural competence, which will be examined later in the chapter.



NOTES: Move from personal level (attitude) to interpersonal/interactive level (outcomes)
Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of underlying elements

Figure 2 Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006, p. 254)

2.3.2 Co-orientational models

Co-orientational models focus on competencies related to the maintenance of communication between interlocutors from different cultures and as such are relational (Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009). One of the most influential co-orientational models from the field of language education is that of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997). Byram developed a conceptual framework focusing on the attitudes, knowledge and skills required to become an effective intercultural communicative speaker. The framework consists of five *savoirs*: *Savoir être* and *savoir s'engager* are both concerned with attitudes. The first of these, *savoir être*, relates to the ability to “abandon ethnocentric attitudes and perceptions” (Sercu, 2005, p. 5). It is the ability therefore to “decentre” (Byram, 1997, p. 34) and to be open and curious towards otherness. However, there may be prejudiced or stereotypical beliefs that interlocutors need to contend with (ibid). According to Byram, the second *savoir*, *savoir s'engager* is delineated an individual being able to be critical of their own and another's culture.

The third *savoir* is called *savoirs* and relates to different kinds of cultural knowledge which Byram further divides into two broad types. First, there is the knowledge about social groups and their culture in both the listener's country and the hearer's. Byram argues that this knowledge could be gained through socialization and includes symbolic characteristics typical of that country - for example dress, greeting rituals and so forth. Another set of characteristics are those a group uses to set itself apart from other groups. For example, this could include typical in-group features such as religious practices/values or a sense of shared history. Second, there is the knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels. Examples here include an individual knowing how his/her social identity has been formed, or how their group perceive and/or is perceived by others, as well as how groups typically communicate both verbally and non-verbally. This is a complex area for an individual, particularly one who is trying to negotiate meaning in a second language. It also requires the individual to be reflective. The above knowledge variable is the basis for successful intercultural interactions (Byram, 1997).

The fourth and fifth *savoirs* are related to the skills needed to become interculturally competent. The fourth is the combination of *savoir-apprendre/ faire*. *Savoir-apprendre*

involves developing one's ability to understand different cultural practices. While *Savoir-faire* relates to the development of one's skills, attitudes and knowledge of different cultural behaviour. The fifth savoir is *Savoir – comprendre*, which is “the ability to interpret and relate to cultures” (Sercu, 2002, p. 63). Significantly, all the savoirs interconnect and do not exist in isolation as we can see in the following diagram:

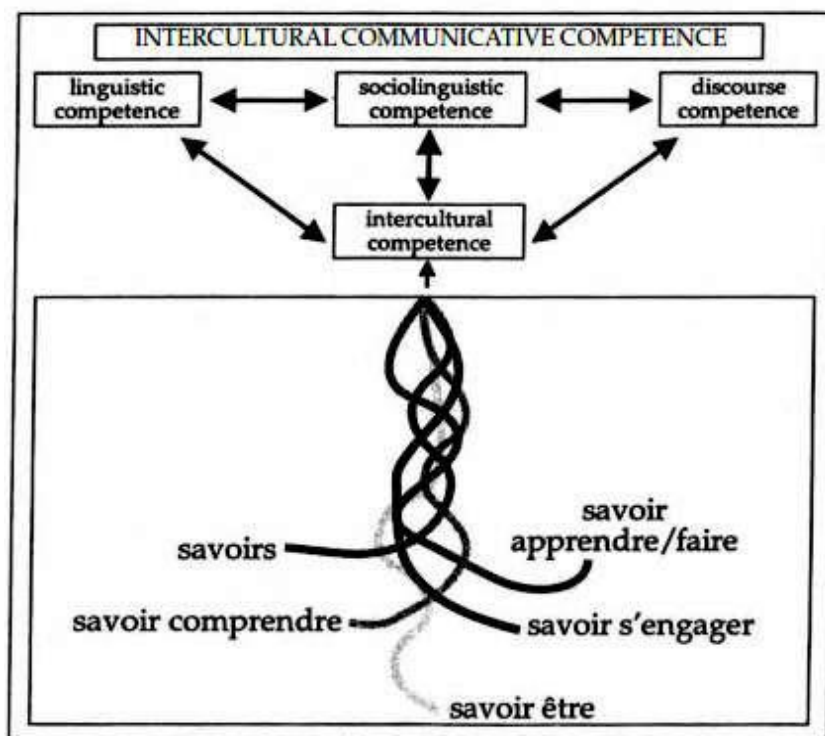


Figure 3 Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997, p. 73)

While the explanations of the savoirs are somewhat dense and complex, the model becomes clearer when Byram details how they might be formulated as objectives. In relation to attitudes, he includes: a desire to “engage with otherness”; an interest in learning about other perspectives; an enthusiasm to question one’s own cultural practices and a preparedness to engage with the specific verbal and non-verbal practices of the interlocutor. Knowledge objectives include examples such as: the history between both speakers’ countries; “type, cause and process of misunderstandings” between speakers from different cultures; institutions and how they encroach on everyday life. Finally, skills include: identifying misinterpretations and how to negotiate these while communicating; identifying similarities and dissimilarities in the communication process either verbal or non-verbal (1997, pp 57-64).

2.3.3 Developmental models of intercultural communicative competence

Essentially, developmental models of intercultural competence are concerned with describing the evolution of an individual's competence over time by going through various stages (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). The model that is perhaps most often applied in relation to research on intercultural competence is Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett, 1993; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003).

Bennett (1993) describes a phenomenological model which delineates how intercultural sensitivity is developed, based on cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of an individual and her/his subjective experience(s) in an intercultural encounter. The DMIS is a sequentially staged model containing three ethnocentric stages: denial, defence and minimisation and three ethnorelative stages which develop an individual's recognition and acceptance of cultural difference: acceptance, adaptation and integration (see figure 4). Bennett points out that the model was developed based on existing concepts in the field of intercultural communication at the time and on his own experiences with culturally diverse learners. He argues that with increased experience of intercultural encounters with other interlocutors who are culturally different, an individual can progress along the stages to greater intercultural sensitivity and as a result develop intercultural competence. Finally, he briefly recognises that we cannot assume that this progression is one-way or in fact permanent and therefore that "retreat" (p. 27) is a possibility. We will now examine the model in greater detail.

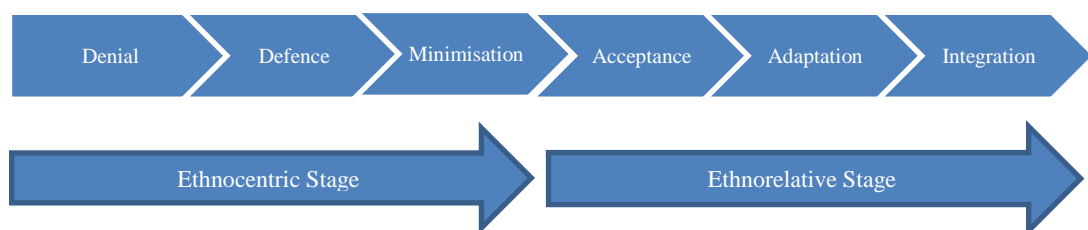


Figure 4 A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1993. p. 29)

Ethnocentric stages

According to Bennett (1993, p. 30) an individual who is situated in the ethnocentric stages “[assumes] that the world view of one’s own culture is central to all reality.” The first stage of the three ethnocentric stages in Bennett’s DMIS model, is denial. This is characterised by either isolation or separation which can take a number of forms. The first type of isolation is a physical isolation characterised by a “small town with a homogenous population” (ibid). Another form of isolation is cognitive, and is characterised by an individual essentialising cultural groups or not acknowledging that there are cultural differences between groups. Bennett maintains that in a globalised inter-connected world, isolation is a difficult state to achieve. More possible is separation which is “the intentional erection of physical or social barriers to create distance from cultural difference as a means of maintaining a state of denial” (Bennett, 1993, p. 32). Examples of these physical or social barriers that result in the separation of different groups are the creation of gated communities or social and religious clubs/ societies. A further example whereby isolation and separation are interactive at a group level, is the creation and maintenance of ghettos. Bennett argues that denial is usually experienced by the majority dominant or in-group and not by those out-groups who do not undergo this stage of intercultural sensitivity. Finally, he maintains that separation is progressive in terms of intercultural sensitivity as it requires recognition of difference.

The second stage in Bennett’s DMIS model is defence. In this stage, the primary perception is a sense of threat to an individual. In order to feel threatened, an individual must recognise cultural difference. Thus, Bennett maintains that this is a development in one’s intercultural sensitivity. There are three sub-stages in the defence stage: denigration, superiority and reversal.

Bennett believes that denigration is the most common strategy to counteract the threat of cultural difference. An individual at this stage utilises “negative stereotyping” of race, religion, age, gender and so forth (Bennett, 1993, p. 34) in order to avoid engagement with difference. Bennett maintains that this occurs at both an individual and group level. On the other hand, the use of positive stereotyping, that is continually seeing one’s in-group in a positive light, leads to a sense of superiority. Typical viewpoints in this form of defence are to see one’s group as being more educated than the other. The third phenomenon related to this stage is the possibility of an individual experiencing reversal.

This is evident in reverse culture shock whereby an individual returning to their country of origin maligns the majority cultural in-group of his country of birth.

The last stage within the ethnocentric stages of intercultural sensitivity development is Minimization (sic). At this juncture cultural difference is recognised by an individual but it is minimised. The two characteristics of minimisation are physical universalism and transcendent universalism. The former refers to the view that human beings express universal physical emotions. Bennett argues that this is an ethnocentric viewpoint, as an evaluation of these behaviours occurs unconsciously within one's own worldview. Transcendent universalism refers to the belief that people are essentially the same spiritually, economically or politically.

Ethnorelative stages

Broadly speaking, the core of the concept of ethnorelativism is that individual or group behaviour can only be understood within its cultural context. Bennett maintains that an individual in these stages of development does not perceive difference as threatening: rather it is seen as enjoyable. He posits three ethnorelative stages: acceptance, adaptation and integration.

In the acceptance stage, there is an recognition and acceptance of cultural difference by an individual. This comes in two forms: respect for behavioural difference and respect for difference in cultural values. Bennett refers to both linguistic differences and differences in non-verbal behaviour such as proxemics (distance), haptics (touch) and kinesics (body language). In terms of an acceptance of difference in values, essentially an individual recognises that there are different worldviews and that these views are worthwhile.

The next ethnorelative stage is adaptation, during which an individual acquires adaptive skills whereby he or she is able to communicate and mediate between cultures appropriately and effectively. Bennett (1993, p. 52), argues that these skills “are acquired in an additive process.” Not only will the individual continue to maintain their existing worldview, but they will also add to their cultural depository, based on their experiences and contact with people who are culturally different. The particular skills acquired in this stage are empathy and pluralism. The former refers to “an attempt [by an individual] to

understand by imagining or comprehending the other's *perspective*"¹⁴ (Bennett, 1993, p. 53). The latter relates to the acquisition by an individual of a syncretic worldview achieved through residence in a foreign country.

The final ethnorelative stage is integration, when an individual is typically described as a multicultural person. The emphasis is shifted to an individual's self-reflected identity which makes it possible to evaluate situations through multiple cultural lenses depending on the context in which they find themselves. At this point, Bennett believes an individual becomes a "constructive marginal person", because there is "no natural cultural identity for a marginal person" (Bennett 1993, p. 63). He sees this marginality in positive terms, arguing that a person in this final stage is no longer confined by reified views of culture, and as such can freely mediate between individuals or groups from different cultures.

The above model has been extremely influential in discussions of intercultural competence, training and research (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009) and has been successfully applied in conjunction with the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Bennett & Hammer, 1998) in the assessment of intercultural sensitivity amongst students and lecturers within second and third level education (Paige et al., 2003).

However, a number of criticisms have been levelled at Bennett's model. Firstly, the inherent linear staged development is questionable, as the model does not allow for regression in the stages of development of intercultural sensitivity (Perry & Southwell, 2011). Secondly, it might be argued that the initial conceptualisation of this model lacked a certain rigour in relation to the validity. Bennett himself states that "the sequencing of stages in this model are based on the theoretical considerations discussed above and on twenty years of teaching and training experience in intercultural communication with a wide range of learners" (1993, p. 27). This weakness in relation to validity has been somewhat addressed in other research, which has tested the validity of the DMIS model (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003).

¹⁴ Author's italics.

2.3.4 Adaptation Models

Adaptation may be defined as “the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to a new, unfamiliar, or changed sociocultural environment, establish (or re-establish) and maintain a relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationship with the environment” (Kim, 2001, p. 31). In relation to intercultural competence, adaptation models not only focus on the importance of both communication and identity formation/maintenance, but also on participation or non-participation strategies an individual or group can utilise in their adaptation process in a new host society. Consequently, the more effective a newcomer’s intercultural competence is, the easier the adaptation process becomes.

In her structural model of cross-cultural adaptation, Kim (2001) points to the centrality of (immigrant) communication skills in the adaptation process. This view is different to other cross-cultural adaptation theoretical models which focus on the psychological elements involved in the process (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Kim identifies a number of important components related to the successful adaptation to a new host environment and has visually represented these in her structural model of cross-cultural adaptation (see below). She believes that if a newcomer engages with the host community and successfully masters the components shown in the diagram, then they will be able to function effectively in the new host society and maintain the psychological equilibrium required to flourish in the new environment.

Kim (2001) describes the features the newcomer needs to develop in order to thrive in their new location which she has labelled as stranger (competences), and which include: host communication competence, host social communication, and ethnic social communication. In addition, there are a number of characteristics related to the newcomer’s personality which may aid in the adaptation process: preparedness for change; ethnicity factors and personality characteristics. Finally, Kim believes that there is some onus on the host society to aid a newcomer’s adaptation to the new environment. These features are termed the host environment and include: host receptivity, host conformity pressure and ethnic group strength. Kim argues that if these attributes are developed within an individual, then this will lead to intercultural transformation, resulting in the individual becoming ‘functionally fit’ in their new environment. That is, they will be able to understand the cultural behaviour of host society members and

communicate effectively with them. In addition, the individual is able to maintain psychological equilibrium in their new environment and develop an appropriate intercultural identity. This model is visually represented below. We will now examine each factor briefly.

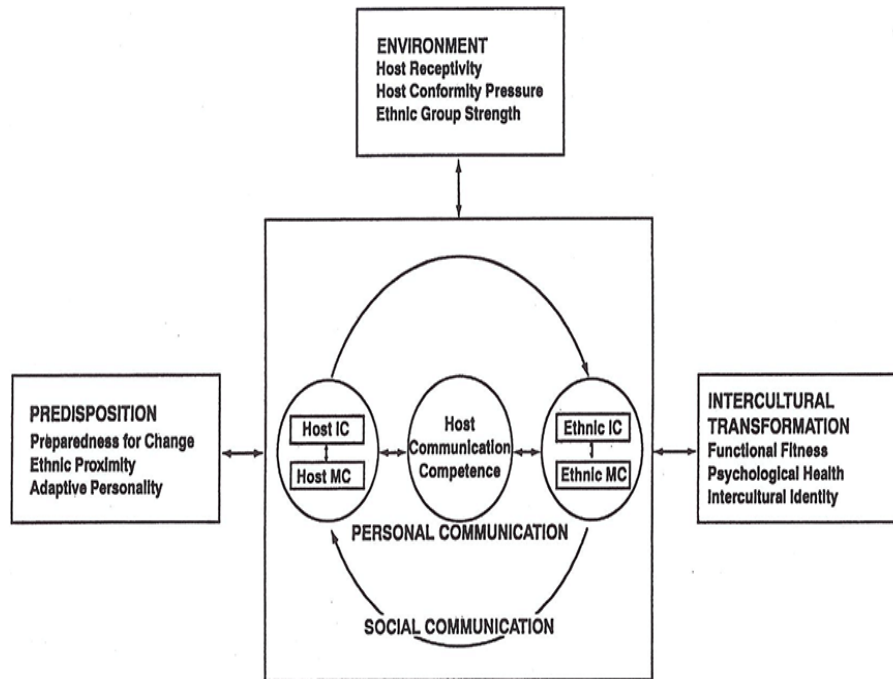


Figure 5 Interrelationships Among Communication Constructs (Kim YY. 2001. p. 143).

HOST COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

According to Kim (2001), there are two inextricably linked features which are related to host communication competence: personal communication and social communication. The former relates to an individual's own personal style of communication, including the "internal mental activities that occur in individuals" (p. 72), whilst the latter involves interaction between two or more interlocutors. Essentially, host communication competence is synonymous with intercultural competence, as it refers to the affective and appropriate reception and processing of information by a newcomer in their new host environment. She also maintains that the acquisition of this competence by the newcomer results in a successful adaptation to the new host society.

Social communication

Social communication is the involvement by a newcomer in the interpersonal and mass communication events which typically occur in the new host environment. Interpersonal activities include greetings, discussions or dialogue in the home neighbourhood or community locations. Meanwhile, mass communication relates to information received through media channels such as newspapers, radio or television. Kim (2001) maintains that participation at the interpersonal level allows a newcomer to become involved with members of the new host society and to feel part of that community; whereas participation at the mass communication level allows the newcomer to be involved at societal level by becoming aware of societal norms, values and behaviours.

Host social communication

Host social communication is concerned with the acquisition of social capital by the newcomer in his/her new host society. The first subcomponent is host interpersonal communication (Kim, 2001). Kim believes that the participation in host interpersonal communication activities by a newcomer with a host society member allows the newcomer to develop social connections, social support systems and build relationships, which are essential for the successful adaptation to a new environment. In addition, such encounters also lead to the development of language proficiency, which enables effective integration into the new host society. Meanwhile, the second subcomponent of host social communication, termed host mass communication, is related to access, consumption and use of mass media channels by newcomers to the host society. As a result, Kim argues the newcomer is able to adapt more easily to their new environment. Through access and consumption of media from the host society, a newcomer can develop an understanding of the norms, behaviours, beliefs and values of the members of the host society, which will subsequently aid integration into that society.

Ethnic Social Communication

Kim (2001) believes that not only is it important for a newcomer to develop connections with host society members, it is also important to maintain relationships with home on both an interpersonal and mass communication level. This is often achieved by affiliation to ethnic group organisations, such as social clubs or cultural networks. These

organisations can assist in the adaptation process and are a support for the newcomer in their initial period in the new environment. On a mass media level, radio stations and newspapers which are produced in the newcomer's first language can be beneficial as they can provide information, entertainment, and social services as well as emotional connection to their homeland, which might be valuable in the early months of adaptation. The experience of both ethnic interpersonal and mass communication processes may help to relieve the stress a newcomer experiences when learning to adapt to a new environment (Kim, 2001).

However, Kim argues that protracted participation in ethnic social communication activities can have a negative effect on a newcomer's adaptation to the host society. If a newcomer becomes over-reliant on maintaining ethnic social communication contacts, then he or she will not be able to develop the host communication competence necessary to flourish in a new environment (Kim, 2001). A further complication not pointed out by Kim, but nevertheless significant to a newcomer's adaptation, is the increasing role of technology within ethnic social communities. Ease of access to a newcomer's network of family and friends in their homeland may lead to a lack of desire to integrate possibly resulting in marginalisation from host society members.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment in which a newcomer lives plays a significant role in the adaptation process (Kim, 2001). A newcomer's contact with host society members and use of mass media helps to shape their opinions about host society members in terms of the values, beliefs and cultural practices that they display. Kim explores three environmental features which impact on a newcomer's experience of life in a new host society: host receptivity, host conformity pressure and ethnic group strength.

Host receptivity

Kim uses the term host receptivity to refer to the extent to which a newcomer is accepted by the host society. This acceptance is influenced by cultural distance (Babiker, Cox & Miller, 1980), that is, a newcomer's proximity to host society members in terms of geographical distance, phenotype and cultural practices.

Host conformity pressure

Essentially, host conformity pressure describes the degree of tolerance or intolerance host society/ society members show towards the newcomer. Kim (2001, p. 79) defines it as “...the extent to which the environment challenges strangers to adopt the normative patterns of the host culture and communication system,” which can have a significant influence on a newcomer’s adaptation experience. Host conformity pressure manifests itself in political policies that range from assimilation, marginalisation, separation or integration of newcomers into their new society. On a personal or institutional level, this results in positive acts towards the newcomer based on their ethnicity or cultural practices that are either welcoming and integrationist or negative, such as racism or discrimination.

Ethnic group strength

Kim argues that the “degree to which a given host environment exerts host receptivity and host conformity pressure on a stranger works interactively with the strength of the stranger’s ethnic group” (p.80). In other words, all three are interdependent and play a vital role in the adaptation of a newcomer to his/her new host society. Kim also points out the importance of “ethnolinguistic vitality” (2001, p. 80). This term relates to three aspects, the importance (or lack of importance) of a language in a society; the size of the ethnic group which uses this language and the governmental support in the promotion of this language use. In addition to these aspects, there are other factors involved in the relationship between the host society and the ethnic group, which include the economic power of the ethnic group, the efforts by the ethnic group at bridge-building between the two groups and the degree of self-assertion on the part of the ethnic group. If all these factors are in equilibrium with the norms, practices and values of the host society, then the ethnic group and newcomers from the ethnic group will successfully integrate into the new society. If not, conflict may arise.

PREDISPOSITION

The next criterion in Kim’s model that can aid in the adaptation of an individual to a new host society is their predisposition when they are experiencing adaptational change. Kim delineates this predisposition under three categories: preparedness for change; ethnic proximity and adaptive personality.

Preparedness for change

Preparedness not only refers to the capability of the newcomer to navigate the adaptation process, but also to whether the newcomer has willingly or unwillingly relocated (e.g. as refugees or asylum seekers) to the new environment. A further important factor in relation to how prepared the newcomer is to live in their new location is whether s/he has researched the values, norms and cultural practices of the new environment. Kim (2001) argues that a well-researched newcomer is more likely to adapt more effectively to their host environment.

Ethnic proximity

Ethnic proximity relates to “the degree of the stranger’s overall ethnic similarity and compatibility relative to the mainstream ethnicity of the natives” (Kim, 2001, p. 83). Ethnic similarity refers to an individual’s phenotype, while compatibility relates to values norms or behaviour. Kim maintains that the closer a newcomer is in these aspects to a host society member, then the easier it is for them to adapt. This aspect of Kim’s model is very similar to Babiker, Cox and Miller’s (1980) concept of cultural distance.

Adaptive personality

An individual’s personality can have a bearing on a person’s ability to adapt to the new host society. More specifically, this relates to an individual's willingness to adapt, to be open, prepared for change and positive about the adaptation process. It also pertains to possessing the strength to navigate the adaptation process.

INTERCULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Intercultural transformation relates to the changes that an individual goes through in the adaptation process. An individual therefore, over time, will become more “functionally fit,” they will experience increased psychological health and develop a new intercultural identity. *Functional fitness* pertains to how well an individual has adapted. *Psychological health*: refers to the person’s psychological wellbeing during the adaptation process. It refers to both positive mental health such as feelings of happiness at living in the new environment, but also can refer to a person experiencing less negative attributes

associated with not adapting psychologically to the new environment such as social isolation or having low morale. Finally, intercultural identity denotes the degree to which an individual is “better able to manage the dynamic and biological interaction between the original culture and the new culture” (p.192).

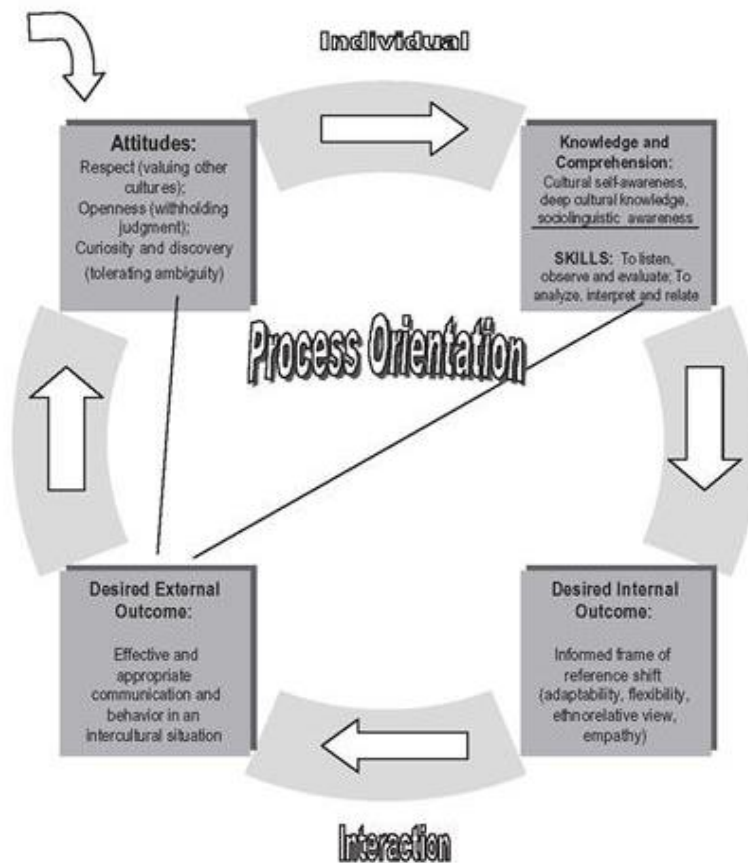
Kim’s model is very influential and has been applied by scholars in areas such as the cross-cultural adaptation process for study abroad students (Peng and Wu, 2019) and in refugee relocation (Cheah, Karamelic-Muratovic, Matsuo and Poljarevic, 2011). However, it is not without its limitations. Generally, there is an overemphasis on the newcomer having to adapt and change in order to fit in to the new host society. Furthermore, there is very little discussion about the role played by host society members in aiding a stranger’s adaptation to the new host society. Nor is there much discussion on the benefits for host society members in terms of learning about different cultures from newcomers. Thirdly, Kim does not address in detail changes that host society members might undergo as a result of intercultural contact with the other. Finally, it is somewhat surprising that Kim does not dedicate more space in her discussions of host conformity pressure and ethnic proximity to the issues of prejudice, discrimination and racism towards newcomers and how these factors might affect an individual’s attempts to adapt to the new host society. This final issue will be discussed in chapter five.

2.3.5 Causal path models

Causal path models focus on a set of specific interconnected components of intercultural competence. By passing through the components, desired outcomes are achieved, leading to the development of intercultural competence on the part of an individual (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Deardorff (2006) has posited a causal path model that she has termed the Process Model of Intercultural Competence. The significant difference between this and her structural pyramid model examined earlier in the chapter is that the process model shows that the acquisition of intercultural competence is multifaceted. The model delineates both the process of intercultural competence and the adjustments an individual attains when moving between the constituent parts of the model. Deardorff points out that the attitude component, containing the subcomponents of respect, openness and curiosity/discovery

is the most important and as such is the starting point of the cycle. Whilst she maintains that it is possible for an individual to move directly between attitudes and/or skills/knowledge to the external outcome component of the model, the level of appropriateness and effectiveness demonstrated by an individual will be greater if they pass through all the components and the cycle is fully completed. Importantly, this process model signifies the acquisition of intercultural competence as a continuum. Although the process might be repeated multiple times by an individual, he or she might never achieve complete intercultural competence. However, with each completion of the cycle an individual's intercultural competence is further developed.



Notes: Begin with attitudes; move from individual level (attitudes) to interaction level (outcomes). Degree of intercultural competence depends on acquired degree of attitudes, knowledge/comprehension and skills.

Figure 6 Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006, p 25)

Another significant causal path model is the integrative model of intercultural competence proposed by Spitzberg (1997). Significantly, this model is characterised by a “didactic interaction,” that is, a two-way communicative interaction between “co-actors” (1997, p. 380). Consequently, communication is at the centre of this model, which incorporates: motivation to communicate by both actors, knowledge of communication in specific contexts and the development of skills to conduct appropriate and effective interactions (see figure 7).

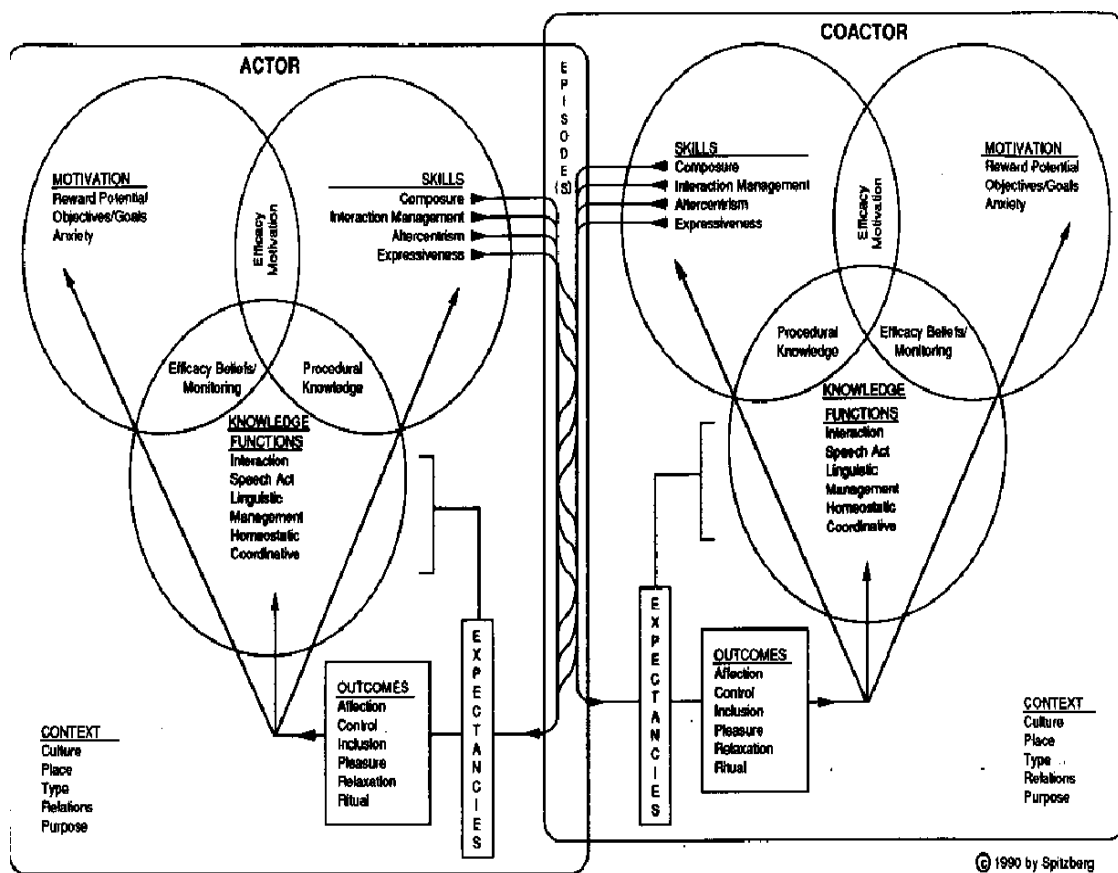


Figure 7 A Model of Intercultural Communication Competence (Spitzberg, 1997)

Such interactions, Spitzberg argues, are based on expectations that each interlocutor has of the other in a singular or multiple incidents. If the expectations are fulfilled, then each interactant is likely to see one another as intercultural competent. Incompetency is likely to be manifested if either of the interlocutors does not possess the skills, motivation and

knowledge required to conduct successful interactions, or if either interlocutor has an unrealistic expectation of the other. The model is also predicated on a number of “propositions” (ibid) on three levels: the individual system, which refers to the characteristics an individual will possess that allows for competency in interaction in a normal social setting; the episodic system which refers to the impression of competence the co-actor has of her/his counterpart in a particular episode of interaction; and finally the relational system which refers to competency of the actors across a number of episodes (see below for some examples of the propositions (for the full list, please refer to Appendix B).

Individual system
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As communicator motivation increases, communicative competence increases 1a. As communicator confidence increases, communicator motivation increases 1b. As reward-relevant efficacy beliefs increase, communicator motivation increases 2. Communicative knowledge increases, communicative competence increases. 2a. As task-relevant procedural knowledge increases, communicator knowledge increases. 2b. As mastery of knowledge-acquisition strategies increases, communicator knowledge increases. 3. As communicator skills increase, communicator competence increases. 3a. As conversational altercentrism increases, communicator skill increases.
Episodic system
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. As Actor's communicative status increases, Co-actor's impression of actor's competence increases. 4a. As Actor's motivation, knowledge, and skills increase, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases. 4b. As contextual obstruction of Actor's performance increases, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases. 5. Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence is a function of Actor's fulfilment of Co-actor's expectancies. 5a. As Actor's fulfilment of positive Co-actor expectancies increases, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases. 5b. As Actor's normative violation of Co-actor's negative expectancies increases, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases.
Relational system

- | |
|--|
| 6. As mutual fulfilment of autonomy and intimacy needs increases, relational competence increases.
7. As mutual attraction increases, relational competence increases.
8. As mutual trust increases, relational competence increases.
9. As access to social support increases, relational competence increases.
10. As relational network integration increases, relational competence increases. |
|--|

Table 5 Examples of propositions in relation to interpersonal competence in intercultural contexts (Spitzberg, 1997, pp. 381- 390)

2.4 Criticisms of intercultural competence models

One criticism of many of the intercultural competence models discussed in this chapter is that they are North American-centric or Eurocentric (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Dai & Chen, 2014; Wang & Kulich, 2015). Indeed, in their bibliometric analysis on research in intercultural competence Peng, Zhu and Wu (2020) found that currently, apart from China, Japan and Chinese Taiwan, the top fifteen highly cited countries are all from North America, Europe and Australasia. However, research exists from other parts of the globe which aid our understanding of intercultural competence, such as in national or regional contexts in Africa (Nwosu, 2009); the Arabic context (Zaharna, 2009); Latin America (Medina-Lopez-Portillo & Sinnigen, 2009); and India (Manian & Naidu, 2009). Some scholars have developed culture-specific models for these regions. For example, Wang, Deardorff and Kulich, (2017) argue that in the Chinese educational context there is a need to situate intercultural competence in terms of Chinese views of the intercultural communicative process. In addition, also within Chinese education, Wang and Kulich (2015) have identified two affective cultural competencies specific to Chinese culture, namely (cultural) humility and *xintai* (intuitive emotions/attitudes), which they have merged with other common competencies found across various westernised competency models (see table below). They point out that the component of (cultural) humility in a Chinese context relates to both the characteristic of humbleness and respect displayed by an interactant in an intercultural encounter, and a preparedness on the part of the individual to critically assess one's limitations in the communication process. Meanwhile, the

psychological and emotional trait *xintai* which literally translates as “heart attitude” (Wang and Kulich, 2015, p. 48) refers to the intuition that an individual relies on, when interacting with someone from another culture.

Cultural level/mode	Emerging intercultural competence categories
Cognitive (patterns, knowledge, awareness)	1. Interacting with a diversity of cultural people and patterns 2. Understanding the complexity of culture 3. Relearning own culture with new awareness
Affective (psychological, attitudinal, sensitivity, motivation)	4. Generating positive attitudes toward other cultures 5. Overcoming stereotypes and prejudice (negative attitudes) 6. Seeing from other perspectives/world views (empathy and ethnorelativism) 7. Cultural humility (overcoming cultural superiority, power, privilege, pride) 8. Transformation of <i>xintai</i> (intuitive emotion/attitudes) 9. Obtaining confidence and motivation in intercultural communication
Behavioral (skills, responses, action)	10. Obtaining communicative skills

Table 6 Intercultural Competencies (Wang, & Kulich, 2015)

2.5 Intercultural competence in context

Another criticism of many intercultural competence models is that they are culture-general (etic) models in their conceptualisation, and may not be easily applied to specific contexts. However, there is a growing literature on context-specific intercultural competence models. The concept has been examined in many fields such as: business and multinational organisations (Matveev, 2017), engineering (Grandin & Hedderich, 2009),

psychology/ counselling (Sue, Arredondo and McDavis 1992; Sue, 2001), language teaching (Byram, 1997; Byram & Zarate, 1997; Sercu 2002, 2005) (intercultural) education higher education (Perry & Southwell, 2011), study abroad students (Byram, M. & Feng, 2006; Deardorff, 2006; Jackson, 2009, 2010, 2015) sociology (Fong, 2009); social work (Congress, 2002; 2005; Sue, Rasheed & Rasheed, 2015) diversity practitioners for U.S.-based organisations (Rabo, 2011), healthcare (Gibson & Zhong, 2005; Ahmed, 2015); medicine (education) (Seeleman, Suurmond, & Stronks, 2009) and social work practice within healthcare (Allen, 2015).

The last decade has also seen the emergence of research in intercultural competence in community-based not-for-profit organisations such as the Red Cross in Australia (Howitt, et al., 2014). A new organisational strategy was implemented in 2008, which committed the Australian Red Cross to work with indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in “culturally appropriate and respectful ways” (ibid, p. 252). In order to achieve this aim, a group of scholars from the field of interculturalism from Macquarie University were tasked with conducting “a robust assessment of intercultural competence” (ibid, p. 253) of the Red Cross leadership team in Australia, through the utilisation of the Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI®), (Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman, 2003) and interviews. The study found that the leadership within the Australian Red Cross significantly overestimated their level of intercultural competence. However, this finding is based solely on perceptions by the staff of their own intercultural competence; perhaps a combination of questionnaires and interviews along with observations of interaction between staff and the two indigenous populations would have provided a richer, more nuanced and in-depth appraisal of the intercultural competence of the staff.

There appears to be little research on the importance of intercultural competence in relation to charities involved in homelessness. To date, the focus on this sector is mainly concerned with sociolinguistic competence. For example, in the context of migration and language, Dalmau et al. (2017) studied three language-mediated services for migrants in Catalonia: a state immigration office; an NGO residential project for homeless migrants in Barcelona; and mobile-phone service providers in Catalonia. This qualitative ethnographic study was conducted over a two-year period, and involved the utilisation of observations and interviews of staff in a religious not-for-profit residence for the homeless

and a local NGO migrant support organisation. A significant finding from the study involved the use of several languages by clients who availed of the service, within an encounter with staff. In particular, the researchers found that the homeless clients were discouraged by the support workers from codeswitching, which is the mixing of two or more languages in an interaction. In addition, whilst support workers recognised the important role of multilingual practices by the homeless clients in terms of achieving positive outcomes in transactional interactions, in reality only English and French were recognised as appropriate languages of interaction in transactions between residents and workers. Significantly, the use of African languages was discouraged. Finally, in terms of indigenous language use, Spanish was prioritised over Catalan.

There is a growing literature on intercultural competence (often referred to as cultural competence) within social work (Fong & Furuto, 2001; Fong 2009; Sue, Rasheed & Rasheed, 2015), which may prove fruitful in terms of possible application in the not-for-profit homeless sector. Fong (2009, p. 351) states that in the field of social work,

[c]ulturally competent practice is the process by which the social worker, engaged with persons from a specific race or ethnic background, gathers knowledge about his or her ethnic clients' values and traditions and is able to assess, provide and evaluate interventions that are culturally appropriate for the ethnically diverse client caseload. Consequently, the social worker requires knowledge of the client's culture as well as culturally appropriate responses and actions in relation to the clients' needs.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in the United States of America state that intercultural competence is the:

process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, spiritual traditions, immigration status, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each (2015, p. 13).

In another definition of intercultural competence, Armour, Bain & Rubio, (2006, p. 2) cite Van Soest who states that cultural competence: "refers to the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that

recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.”

Significantly, such definitions originating from social work are similar to some key characteristics in definitions explored earlier in the chapter (e.g. Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). However, the central tenets of respect, proclamations of ‘the worth of the individual’ and the importance of social workers treating individuals, family and community members in a dignified manner tend to be emphasised more frequently in definitions from the field of social work.

In addition, research in social work practice has led to definitions of cultural competence. Sue, Rasheed & Rasheed’s (2015) research is related to multicultural social work practice in the United States. They define cultural competence as:

the ability to engage in actions or create conditions that maximize the optimal development of clients and client systems. Culturally competent social work practice involves the service provider’s acquisition of awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic, democratic society (the ability to communicate, interact, negotiate, and intervene on behalf of clients from diverse backgrounds). On an organizational and societal level, cultural competence means advocating effectively to develop new theories, practices, policies, and organisational structures that are more responsive to all groups (p. 67).

In their study, they identified four main components of cultural competence: (1) becoming aware of one’s own values, biases, and assumptions about human behaviour; (2) understanding the worldviews of culturally diverse clients; (3) developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques; and (4) understanding organizational and institutional forces that enhance or diminish components of cultural competence (Sue, Rasheed & Rasheed, 2015, p. 60).

The authors point out that this definition is focused on two levels of cultural competence: the individual and the societal/systemic levels. They argue that in the main, the cultural competency development of social workers in the US system is predominantly orientated towards the individual, while that of social work agencies at the systemic level is largely ignored, thus making it difficult for individuals within the system to affect change at the organisational level. Furthermore, they maintain that training social workers to become

more culturally competent becomes redundant if the organisation itself is monocultural in focus and lacks an understanding of the importance of a diverse culturally competent workforce.

2.5.1 Models of Cultural competence in social work

Sue, Rasheed and Rasheed (2015) examine a multi-dimensional model of cultural competence first posited by Sue (2001). The model is designed for the successful provision of a multi-level, multicultural social work service to people in need. It incorporates three important dimensions: group-specific worldviews, pointing to the need to consider specific cultural worldviews associated with age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious or spiritual preference and disability; components of cultural competence (awareness, knowledge, and skills); and foci of cultural competence (Sue, Rasheed and Rasheed, 2015 p. 69).

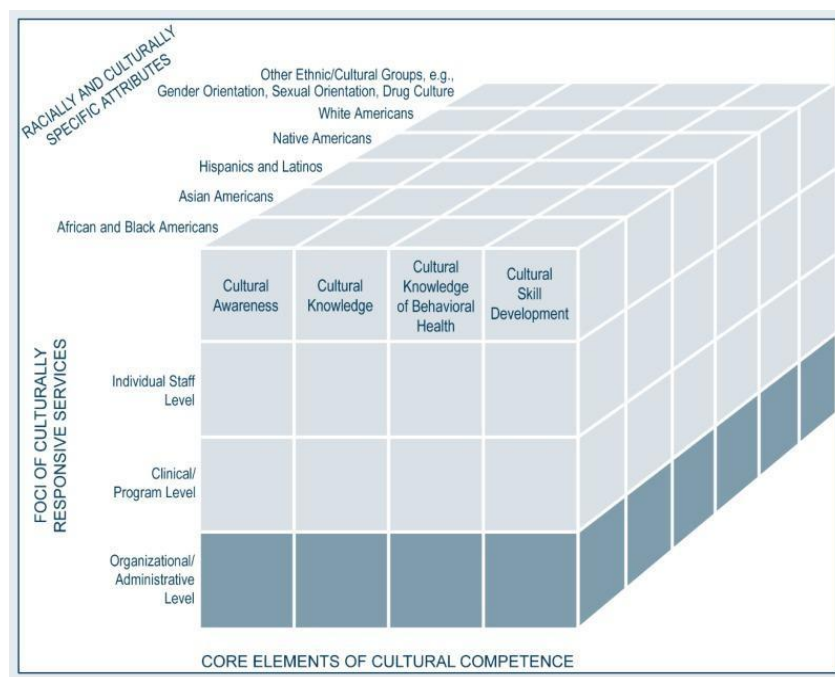


Figure 8 Multidimensional Model for Developing Cultural Competence (Sue, 2001. p. 792)

The first dimension, group-specific worldviews, recognises difference in individuals based on their ethnicity, culture, religion, gender and sexual orientation, which in turn affects their view of the world in the acceptance or rejection of certain cultural and religious practices, behaviours, and attitudes. It is important, therefore, for social workers

to consider these differences and the fact that a client may have a different worldview to theirs.

The second dimension, components of cultural competence, is concerned with the awareness, knowledge and skills a social worker needs to develop in order to be culturally competent. In other words, social workers need to be aware of their own biases and beliefs about appropriate behaviour. They should have knowledge of their own culture as well as their clients' culture and use culturally appropriate skills referred to by Sue, Rasheed and Rasheed (2015) as intervention strategies with the clients they are attempting to help. These components are summarised by Sue, Rasheed & Rasheed (2015) and are based on the competencies set out by the NASW in 2007 (pp. 20-27). The competences are delineated in the form of can do/ ability statements and tabulated below.

Knowledge	Skills	Awareness
<p>1. expand their cultural knowledge and expertise by studying diverse client groups.</p> <p>2. possess specific knowledge about traditional and non-traditional providers and client groups that they serve.</p> <p>3. demonstrate knowledge of the power relationships in the community and in institutions, and how these affect diverse groups.</p> <p>4. possess specific knowledge about U.S., global, social, cultural, and political systems— how they operate and how they serve or fail to serve client groups; include knowledge about institutional, class, cultural, and language barriers to service.</p> <p>5. identify the limitations and strengths of contemporary theories and practice models and identify those that have applicability and</p>	<p>1. interact with persons from a wide range of cultures.</p> <p>2. display proficiency leagues and clients. in discussing cultural difference with colleagues and clients</p> <p>3. develop and implement a comprehensive assessment of clients in which culturally normative behavior is differentiated from problem or symptomatic behavior.</p> <p>4. assess cultural strengths and limitations/challenges and their impact on individual and group functioning, and integrate this understanding into intervention plans.</p> <p>5. select and develop appropriate methods, skills, and techniques that are attuned to their clients' cultural, multicultural, or marginal experiences in their environments.</p>	<p>1. examine and describe their cultural background, social identities, and cultural heritage to increase awareness of assumptions, values, beliefs, and biases and recognize how these affect services and influence relationships and interactions with clients.</p> <p>2. identify how absence of knowledge, fears, and “isms” (racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, ageism, classism) have influenced their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings.</p> <p>3. develop and apply strategies to inform and change their detrimental attitudes, beliefs, and feelings.</p> <p>4. demonstrate an awareness of personal or professional limitations that may warrant the referral of a client or organization to another resource that can better</p>

<p>relevance to their specific client population.</p> <p>6. recognize the heterogeneity within cultural groups and similarity across cultural groups.</p> <p>7. describe how privilege is manifested by people within different groups.</p> <p>8. describe the effects that dominant and non-dominant status has on interpersonal relations and group dynamics in the workplace.</p> <p>9. distinguish between intentional and unintentional assertion of race and class privilege.</p> <p>10. recognize the intersection of “isms” (for example, racism with classism) and the institutionalization of “isms.”</p> <p>11. acknowledge the ways in which their membership in various social groups influences their worldview and contributes to their own patterns of privileged behavior or internalized oppression.</p> <p>12. understand the interaction of the cultural systems of the social worker, client, the particular service setting, and the broader immediate community.</p>	<p>6. adapt and use a variety of culturally proficient models.</p> <p>7. communicate effectively with culturally and linguistically different clients through language acquisition, proper use of interpreters, verbal and nonverbal skills, and culturally appropriate protocols.</p> <p>8. advocate for the use of interpreters who are both linguistically and culturally competent and prepared to work in the social services environment.</p> <p>9. effectively employ the clients’ natural support system in resolving problems.</p> <p>10. advocate, negotiate, and employ empowerment skills in their work with clients</p> <p>11. consult with supervisors and colleagues for feedback and monitoring of performance and identify features of their own professional style that impede or enhance their culturally competent practice.</p>	<p>meet their needs and the skills to do this effectively.</p> <p>5. demonstrate increased comfort with self and other-awareness about different cultural customs and views of the world.</p> <p>6. use relationships with supervisors, enrich self-awareness. mentors, and colleagues to enrich self-awareness.</p>
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Table 7 Components of Cross-Cultural Competence (Sue, Rasheed and Rasheed, 2015, pp. 71-76)

The final dimension in Sue’s model (2001) is the various foci of cultural competence. Sue, Rasheed and Rasheed (2015) point out that social workers must engage in all levels of interaction: clinical, professional, organisational and societal. At the individual clinical level, social workers must be conscious at all times of their biases, prejudices and possibly misinformed beliefs about certain cultural groups when dealing with clients who are culturally different from them. The authors also maintain that at a professional level, social

workers in the US are heavily influenced in their beliefs about appropriate interventions by Western European views. From an organisational perspective, social workers should acknowledge that certain professional policies or practices might be viewed as unjust by some clients who hold a different worldview to that of a dominant host society member. Social workers must also be aware of the possible damaging outcomes to a culturally diverse client's mental and physical health that may occur from racial profiling practised by authorities. Finally, it is incumbent on social workers to be aware that societal misinformation may originate from educational resources, the media or politicians (Sue, Rasheed and Rasheed, 2015).

Researchers in social work practice have also generated practical (cultural/intercultural) toolkits, which social work practitioners can utilise in order to better understand their client's values, beliefs and behaviours from a cultural perspective. One of the most influential assessment tools designed to help social workers/ practitioners understand culturally diverse families is the culturagram (Congress, 2002; 2005). This framework focuses on ten areas: reasons for relocation; legal or undocumented status; length of time in the community; language spoken at home and in the community; contact with cultural and religious institutions; health beliefs; holidays and special events; the impact of crisis events; values about the family structure; and values about education and work.

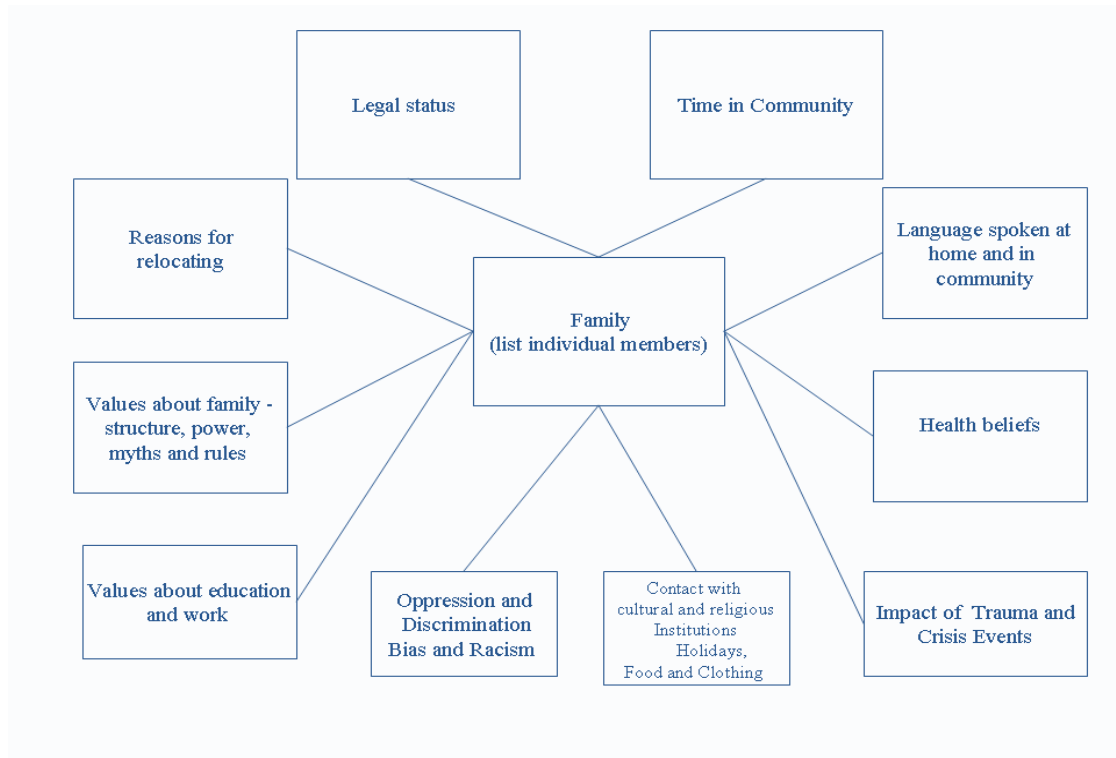


Figure 9 The Culturagram (Congress, 2005)

Reasons for relocation

There are a variety of push/pull factors relating to immigrant families' reasons for relocation to a new host society. The option of return for the families to their country of birth may or may not be possible. If it is not possible, a family may suffer from a sense of loss. Families may also experience anxiety and stress during the adaptation process. In order to provide an appropriate and effective service for their clients, a social worker needs to understand these push/pull factors and the psychological and physical effect they may have on family members.

Legal status

The legal status of a family might have an effect on a social worker's ability to provide an effective service for those families in need. If a family is undocumented, they may not only be unentitled to a service, but also extremely reluctant to divulge their status to care provision staff. Congress (2005) points out the need for social workers to establish trust between themselves and the family. However, some families may misunderstand the role of social workers, perhaps seeing their role as related to immigration officials. As a result,

the family may be extremely reluctant to reveal personal information about themselves for fear of deportation. Therefore, it is important for the social worker to establish a relationship based on confidentiality. However, Congress argues that some families may originate from cultures where confidentiality is not that important in the context of provision of care. Consequently, even though trust may have been established, some clients may remain reticent about revealing personal details to their social worker due to prior social conditioning in their country of origin.

Length of time in the community

Family members may relocate to a new society at different times, resulting in some adapting to the new host society more quickly than others. Other factors in relation to adaptation include the age of the family members and opportunities for contact with host society members, which have a bearing on a family member's capacity to adapt to a new host environment.

Language spoken at home and in the community

Family members who have relocated to a new host society often place different values on the importance of the maintenance of the heritage language in the family setting. These differing views may result in conflict between the family members who wish to retain their heritage language and those who wish to use the language of the new host society. Sometimes, this is a generational feature within the immigrant family structure.

Another related issue in terms of language use within the family is the role of children acting as language brokers for older parents who are not proficient in the new host society language. This may cause problems for social workers, who are often dealing with very sensitive information which may not be suitable for young children. Consequently, Congress argues (2005) for the need of more bi-lingual staff members within the social care system. This issue will be discussed in detail in chapter seven.

Health beliefs

Beliefs around certain illnesses, death and health care methods vary across cultures. Examples include how health care is sought, how chronic illness is viewed in the community, and the variety of beliefs and customs groups from different cultures may have around death. In addition, some individuals may have traditional folk beliefs around the treatment of illness as well as having very different views to those of host society members on mental health and depression in particular. Culturally diverse families may experience problems adapting to hospital policies and procedures and for instance may wish to bring certain food to sick members of the family that might be prohibited by the hospital. Congress points out that a social worker or health care worker must familiarise themselves with the health beliefs of a patient and her/his family (Congress, 2005).

Crisis events

Crisis events include but are not limited to: conflict between the generations in relation to expectations about familial roles; differing attitudes towards sexuality and its expression; and expectations of family members in relation to gender and socialising. Upon relocation to a new society, hidden fissures within the family structure regarding these potential crisis events might emerge and cause conflict. Although not suggested by Congress, the social worker should not only attempt to identify these differing values and attitudes that exist within some families, but they should also include all family members in efforts to find a solution to these issues.

Holidays and special events

Congress points out the importance of a social worker identifying the important events or milestones within a culture as these often mark the stages of an individual's life that he or she goes through in family life. For example, beliefs about the age at which an individual enters adulthood and the responsibilities this brings vary across cultures.

Contact with cultural and religious institutions

Cultural community organisations may provide support to families, especially on initial relocation to a new society. Knowledge by a social worker of a family member's religious

beliefs and attitudes towards health practices is particularly important when decisions are being made in conjunction with the family and in some cases a community or religious leader/elder, as to the provision of the most appropriate health care.

Values of education and work

Some cultures place a higher value on education than others. Those who place less value on it may wish their children to leave education earlier than is the norm in the new host society in order to procure work and provide financial aid to the family. In addition, certain cultures place high status on teachers, and as a result, may not question them about their approach to their children's education. If a social worker is aware of this, then he/she can advocate more effectively for the family.

A further problem relates to family members who may have had high status jobs themselves in their own country, but who on relocation may have had to accept a lower status job, or indeed not be able to work at all. This fact may result in psychological issues for the family member and may explain high depression rates in older immigrants within a family. An added problem in relation to this is that such mental health issues may be culturally frowned upon within certain communities.

Values about the family

Finally, social workers must understand how the family structure is viewed in different cultures. Issues such as gendered roles within the family, in terms of decision-making and the nurture of children, may cause conflict between family members upon relocation to the new society. In addition, the role of older family members such as grandparents may differ from one cultural setting to another. Therefore, a social worker needs to understand the patriarchal family structures that are common in some cultures when attempting to arrive at solutions for an issue within the family as a whole.

Congress's culturagram (2005) has been applied successfully to a number of areas in social work such as: elder abuse (Brownell, 1998); immigrant women affected by domestic violence (Congress & Brownell, 2007); and social worker education (Jani, & Okundaye, 2014). In all these cases, it has been argued that the use of the culturagram not

only aids a social worker's understanding of the role of intercultural competence in interventions, but also leads to a more effective provision of a service by the social worker.

2.5.2 Intercultural competence models in nursing and healthcare

Nursing and Healthcare is another field in which extensive research has been conducted in relation to intercultural competence (Campinha-Bacote, 2002; Gibson & Zhong, 2005; Anand & Lahiri 2009; Munoz, DoBroka, & Mohammad 2009; Dudas, 2012; Burchill & Pevalin, 2014; Ahmed, 2015). Intercultural competence in relation to nursing or healthcare is the ability to deliver “effective, understandable, and respectful care that is provided in a manner compatible with [patients’] cultural health beliefs and practices and preferred language” (Office of Minority Services, 2000, p. 80865, cited in Anand & Lahiri 2009, p. 388). Dudas (2012) posits three dimensions of cultural competence: awareness, attitudes and behaviours.

Meanwhile, another study cites five dimensions of cultural competence related to healthcare work: awareness, knowledge, skills, encounters and desire (Campinha-Bacote, 2002). Generally, these dimensions are similar to models discussed above. The final two dimensions which relate to the caregiver patient dynamic - cultural encounters and cultural desire are worth noting. The former relates to the fact that the greater the contact with someone who is culturally diverse, the more an individual's cultural competence may develop. However, limited contact may lead to the caregiver making inaccurate assumptions about an ethnic group because of stereotyping. In addition, increased contact alone will not lead to the development of intercultural competence unless the other dimensions are cultivated in conjunction with these interactions. One key element of the cultural encounter dimension is that it affords the caregiver an opportunity to assess the patient's linguistic abilities. This will determine whether a professional interpreter is required in order to conduct effective medical assessments. Furthermore, caregivers should be cognisant of the shortcomings of using friends or family members who are not professionally trained in interpreting, as misunderstandings between caregiver and patient are more likely to occur when there is a lack of knowledge of medical terminology on the part of the interpreter. The issue of the use of language brokers (Tse, 1996) will be

discussed in detail in chapter 7. The latter refers to the wish on the part of the caregiver to develop their cultural awareness, knowledge and skills, as well as enjoying their face- to-face interactions with culturally diverse patients as well as demonstrating the pleasure in caring for these patients. In other words, it is the “motivation of the health care provider to want to, rather than have to” do these tasks (2002, p.182).

Anand & Lahiri (2009) identify two barriers in relation to the provision of healthcare to minority cultures, namely “medical ethnocentrism” (p. 391), in which a medical practitioner views their own beliefs and practices about medical treatments to be superior to their patients’ views, and prejudice, which may lead to a disparity in power between patient and practitioner. Consequently, they maintain that the development of intercultural competence amongst medical practitioners has the potential to reduce the effect of these two barriers and lead to more effective health provision for minority patients whose culture may differ from the majority culture of the healthcare providers.

One influential intercultural competence model from the field of healthcare in a Scottish context is posited by Quickfall (2010; 2014). She produced a five-step developmental model which includes the dimensions of: institutional regard, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural knowledge and cultural competence (see figure below). Institutional regard relates to the desire on the part of an organisation to respond to the healthcare needs of a minority ethnic group, by providing services that are non-discriminatory and easily accessible. Cultural awareness concerns the knowledge and respect a service provider staff member possesses in relation to an individual or group in terms of their religion, diet, family and social structure and beliefs regarding health, illness and treatment. Quickfall (2010; 2014) argues that if these cultural awareness factors are taken into account by the healthcare practitioner, this will allow for the provision of an effective service. Cultural sensitivity relates to the need for healthcare workers to possess effective communication strategies in order to be able to conduct accurate health assessments of clients including the provision of language support structures for clients and access to translation services which can provide translated documentation. Cultural knowledge concerns a healthcare worker being aware of the impact that low socio-economic status and social exclusion has on an individual’s health.

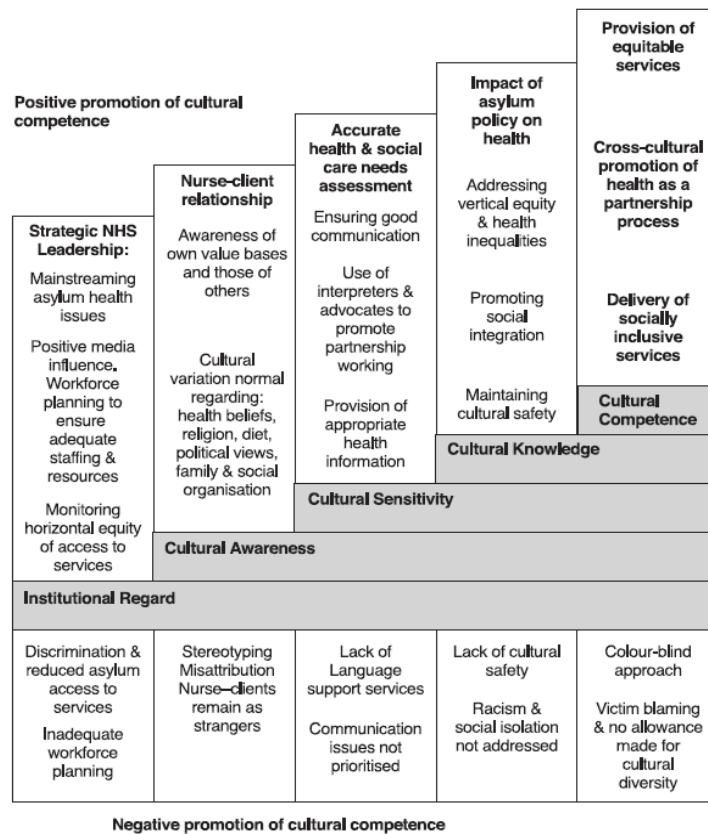


Figure 10 A Five Step Model for Culturally Competent Community Nursing Care of Asylum Seekers (Quickfall, 2010)

However, Quickfall (2010) acknowledges the limitations of this model as it cannot measure a practitioner's cultural competence, nor can it describe how cultural competence is conducted in practice. Despite these limitations, the model has been successfully implemented in a qualitative study of UK health visitors working with refugees and asylum seekers to assess their cultural competency (Burchill & Pevalin, 2014). The study found that the majority of social workers interviewed showed signs of intercultural competence, to varying degrees, in four of the five steps of Quickfall's model, in the form of the provision of an inclusive and unbiased delivery of service towards refugees and asylum seekers. However, the study also showed that social workers demonstrated some inadequacies in relation to institutional regard which manifested themselves in relation to a denial of access to GP services, mental health care services, making it difficult for the social workers to advocate on behalf of their clients. Likewise, when resources were limited, some social workers displayed a level of antipathy and a judgemental attitude towards their clients when they expressed a high level of need.

Cultural sensitivity is the term which is often used in nursing and is synonymous with intercultural competence. It is defined as the employment of "...one's knowledge, consideration, understanding, respect, and tailoring after realizing awareness of self and others and encountering a diverse group or individual. Cultural sensitivity results in effective communications, effective interventions, and satisfaction" (Foronda, 2008, p.210). Foronda devised a model of intercultural sensitivity, which includes a number of features that host society nurses or caregivers need to develop. The first is knowledge of cultural difference and an awareness that individuals who come from another country may hold different values from the host society nurse or caregiver. The second is the importance of a nurse or caregiver demonstrating concern for his/her patient, which Foronda terms 'consideration' This includes, but is not limited to, the patient's cultural practices, their diet and their religion, as well as their experience of the acculturation process. The next important feature posited by Foronda is understanding, which a social worker can develop by not employing ethnocentric views towards a patient in terms of their cultural attitudes, behaviours and practices. The fourth feature is respect. Not only should a nurse respect a patient's needs, but also their expectations of what good service provision entails. In addition, the caregiver must demonstrate respect by listening patiently to the client. The final feature is the act of tailoring a service to a patient's needs. Foronda believes that this ability involves a nurse acquiring empathy (2008, pp. 208-209).

However, in order for the above to be accomplished by a nurse or caregiver, three precursors are required: diversity, awareness and encounter. Diversity denotes cultural difference between people in terms of practices, beliefs, language, attitudes and norms. Awareness refers to being cognisant not only of one's own but of others' cultures. Finally, encounters with others who are culturally different from oneself, may lead to an individual developing cultural sensitivity.

Foronda believes that if a caregiver possesses the above components of cultural sensitivity, then she/he will achieve certain results. First, they will be able to engage in effective communication, which also results in an effective interaction between caregiver and client. This will lead to levels of satisfaction on the part of both client and caregiver (Foronda, 2008).

2.6 Models of intercultural competence that have been tested

Arasaratnam, Banerjee and Dembek (2010, p. 104) maintain that “[d]espite the proliferation of various theoretical models that attempt to explain ICC, only a few have been empirically tested and fewer still have been tested in multiple cultural contexts.” Her research on intercultural competence has produced the Integrated Model of Intercultural Competence (IMICC) (Arasaratnam, 2006; 2009; Arasaratnam, Banerjee and Dembek, 2010). The model was developed from earlier research, which found that interculturally competent individuals acquire five principle variables of intercultural competence: empathy, motivation, experience/training, an ability to listen and a global perspective (Arasaratnam and Doerfel, 2005). Based on these findings, a causal path model was posited that was first tested using regression analyses (Arasaratnam, 2006; 2009) and empirically tested using structural equation modelling (Arasaratnam 2010). The results show three links. The first connects empathy and motivation resulting in intercultural competence. The second link is from empathy to motivation, leading to interaction involvement (i.e. the ability to actively listen to others). This pathway also leads to an individual becoming interculturally competent. The final link is between global attitude and intercultural competence, starting from empathy, moving on to global attitude and then to intercultural competence. According to Arasaratnam, Banerjee and Dembek (2010), the main limitation of this model is in relation to the measurement of the experience component. However, they believe that, in the main, the results of testing were positive.

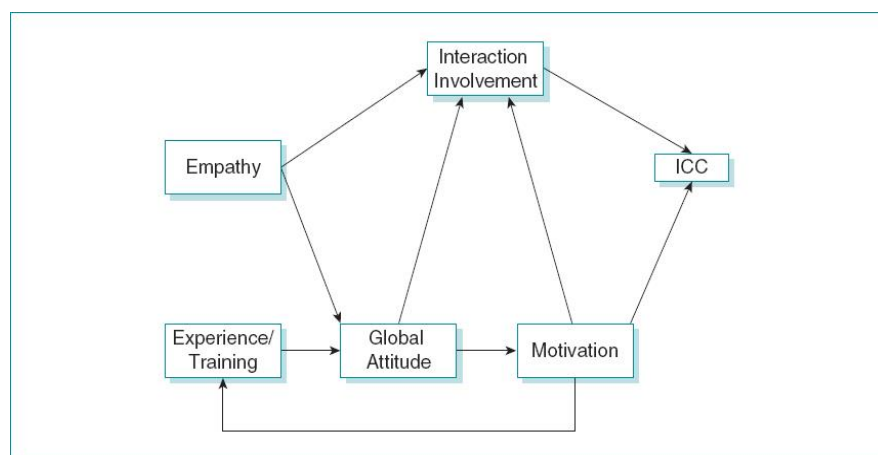


Figure 11 The integrated model of intercultural communication competence

The model has proven to be robust in testing. However, it has not been applied to my study, because the findings (discussed in chapters four, five six and seven) highlight the importance of other variables, such as language competence, knowledge of racism, prejudice and discrimination and the need to build relationships, in the context of service provision for culturally vulnerable groups. To this end, a model has been designed which prioritises these variable. This is discussed in greater detail in chapter 8.

2.7 Measurement of intercultural competence

Perry & Southwell (2011), in their discussion of models and approaches which develop intercultural understanding point out that the measurement of intercultural competence is useful in three ways: in the assessment of an individual's competence; to ascertain the effectiveness of intercultural training; and as a means of honing theory of intercultural competence and positing ways to improve it.

There are numerous instruments that have been designed to measure intercultural competence. In a comprehensive review, Fantini (2009) found 44 such instruments emanating from both the academic and commercial sectors, while Paige (2004) listed thirty-five used at both organisational and individual level. Meanwhile, Deardorff (2015) maintains that there are over one hundred existing tools. For the purpose of this study, three of the applied tools of measurement will be explained: The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI, Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman 2003; The Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992); The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Chen & Starosta, 2000).

In terms of a theoretical framework, the IDI (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman 2003) is an intercultural sensitivity assessment tool that was based upon the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1993), which was discussed earlier in the chapter. A fifty item self-test was produced “to measure the orientations towards cultural difference” of an individual (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman 2003, p. 422).

In the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992), the authors developed a 46-item scale to measure an individual's intercultural sensitivity based on the concepts of individualism and collectivism.

In relation to the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen & Starosta, 2000), the authors developed a 44 item scale to measure intercultural sensitivity based on a review of the literature. After a period of testing, the scale was reduced to 24 items. They found that the validity of the ISS was concurrent with similar scales that measured five factors of intercultural sensitivity: interaction engagement, interaction confidence, respect for cultural differences, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness.

However, some researchers are cautious with regard to the sole use of intercultural competence self-assessment forms to measure competency. Indeed, many of the experts in Deardorff's Delphi study (2006) questioned their use, preferring instead a mix of qualitative and quantitative assessment tools. She found that the most popular forms of assessment of intercultural competence in order of preference are: case studies, interviews, mix of quantitative and qualitative measures, analysis of narrative diaries, self-report instruments, observation of others/host culture, judgment by self and others, developing specific indicators for each component and dimension of intercultural competence, and evidence of each indicator, and finally, triangulation (the use of multiple data collection efforts as corroborative evidence for validity of qualitative research findings). Added to this caution, in relation to the sole use of self-assessment reports, is the view (particularly where the self-assessment is a pre-test) that not only should the participants be unaware of their own intercultural competence, but also that they may not possess knowledge of the vocabulary related to aspects of intercultural competence which are typically used in the self- assessment reports.

2.8 Intercultural competence and technology

There is burgeoning literature in relation to the role of technology in cultivating intercultural competence in individuals. Shuter (2012) argues that in the early part of the twenty-first century, telecollaboration (in the field of language teaching, for example) and virtual gaming programmes such as Second Life were effective in increasing intercultural competence.

In addition, there has been an increase in literature which focuses on social media and intercultural competence development. In a higher education context, a number of studies demonstrate that the use of social media can improve a student's intercultural competence. This has been shown with Japanese students' use of social media platforms (Nagi,

Yoshimura and Doi, 2020) and South African and Taiwanese students' use of Facebook (Wu and Marek, 2018).

Other technology that can play a role in the development of intercultural competence includes Personal Learning Environments (PLE), which refers to “the use of both traditional and virtual spaces, and is determined by the tools, sources of information, and links between information and activities that each student uses for his or her training” (Tomé, Herrera and Lozano, 2019, p. 1). Examples of PLE elements include social networking sites, the use of Google Docs for collaborative purposes, search engines and blogs (ibid).

Finally, the impact of new media and technology as a whole may change the way intercultural competence is conceptualised. Indeed, Chen (2017, p. 363) argues that “the potential influence of new media on intercultural communication may lead to the need for reconceptualization of ICC in future research.”

2.9 Intercultural training

As part of the current study involves the design and delivery of an intercultural competence programme, this section will briefly examine intercultural training. In their introduction Bennett, Bennett & Landis (2004, p. 1) point out that intercultural training is multidisciplinary including disciplines such as “cultural anthropology, cross-cultural psychology, sociolinguistics, multicultural education, intercultural education, intercultural communication and international business management”. In addition, it is conducted within specific institutions (universities, NGOs); governmental agencies (the Peace Corp, the civil service) (Pusch 2004); International Human Resource Management (Mendenhall, et al. 2004) and Nursing education (Munoz, DoBroka and Mohammad, 2009).

Finally, in their review of intercultural training programmes (Mendenhall, et al., 2004) highlight three types of training: culture general, culture specific and a combination of both. This study found the latter model to be less frequently utilised by intercultural competence trainers. These models of training will be analysed in detail in the training chapter later in the thesis.

2.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has examined the existing literature relating to the variety of conceptualisations of intercultural competence. Firstly, a concrete definition was arrived at. Next, the specific components of intercultural competence were discussed. Then a number of intercultural competence culture-general models were examined in detail. Finally, intercultural competence was examined in specific contexts, such as social work, nursing and healthcare, and NGOs who support homeless migrants, as these fields are closely related to the not-for-profit homeless sector.

Deardorff (2009) argues that it is vital to set discussions of intercultural competence in context. As we have seen in this chapter, the setting plays a significant role in determining whether to use a culture-general or culture-specific model in a particular training setting. Some of the culture-general models may not be applicable for staff working in the not-for-profit homeless sector. For example, knowledge of cross-cultural adaptation models (Kim, 2005) might only be useful for staff working in TSS who support customers on a long-term basis. In this case, issues related to cross-cultural adaptation are likely to be relevant to FI staff members who wish to support them in areas such as finding schools for their children, securing employment, or dealing with cultural fatigue or stressors. For those FI staff who interact and engage with customers on a limited basis (coffee shop, A&I and caterers) an understanding of this model is perhaps less useful.

Furthermore, context will also determine the appropriate model(s) that can be utilised in a training programme to develop an individual's intercultural competence. In terms of not-for-profit service providers, culture-general models developed in the fields of sociology and healthcare are more closely related to the day-to-day responsibilities of homeless service providers than models originating from language teaching, for example. However, some models from the field of language teaching may be appropriate for service providers if language competence is one of the central challenges for the staff in their provision of an appropriate and effective service. In other words, the selection of appropriate intercultural competence models is context-driven and depends on the training needs of the participants.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Questions

As previously stated in chapter one, there appears to be no research to date on issues relating to intercultural competence in Irish non-profit homeless organisations. This study aims to bridge this gap in our knowledge by investigating the challenges that FI staff members face in supporting customers who are culturally diverse in an appropriate and effective manner and whether those challenges can be met by intercultural competence training. The specific research questions are:

1. What are the cultural challenges to successful intercultural encounters between Focus Ireland staff and their culturally diverse customers?
2. What are the key elements which can be used in the design and delivery of intercultural competence training sessions for staff in Focus Ireland?
3. To what extent has this training been successful?

Answering these questions involves an exploration of the opinions and experiences of the FI staff in relation to intercultural communicative encounters. Hence, the adoption of a qualitative, as opposed to quantitative research approach, is most appropriate.

3.2 Qualitative research

Broadly speaking, qualitative research stems from a humanist approach to research (Mason, 2018), which places the emphasis on the perspective of the person being studied and is commonly utilised in the social sciences such as the fields of anthropology, in particular ethnography, and sociology. Within the field of sociology, the 20th Century Chicago school developed an 'interpretive methodology' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) which examined cultural groups/ sub groups, primarily in urban settings.

Qualitative research does not focus on facts and statistics, but rather on what can be understood and interpreted. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994), the data most often collected consists of people's words and actions. Several strategies are useful in this regard, including: participant observation; the use of films; photographs and video; case studies; and interviews, both individual and group. On the other hand, quantitative

research stems from a positivist paradigm and is concerned with facts and statistics. An individual's feelings or the process by which outcomes are achieved are not the focus in quantitative research, but rather the measurement of quantities, amounts and frequencies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

The research onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009) provides an interesting overview of the different philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices, time horizons and techniques/procedures available to a researcher and how these factors relate to the research in question (see figure 11). For example, the diagram illustrates very effectively that if a researcher has a positivist philosophy regarding how research should be conducted then typically her/his approach is deductive and utilises strategies such as surveys and experiments. However, if a researcher's philosophy is broadly interpretive then their approach is inductive utilising strategies such as ethnography. Finally, if a researcher values both an interpretive and positivist approach, then (s)he may incorporate mixed methods in her/his research. Often a researcher's choice of philosophy, approach and strategy may be more nuanced than the diagram below implies. Nevertheless, it is useful in representing the broad decisions a researcher undertakes both before and during in the research process.

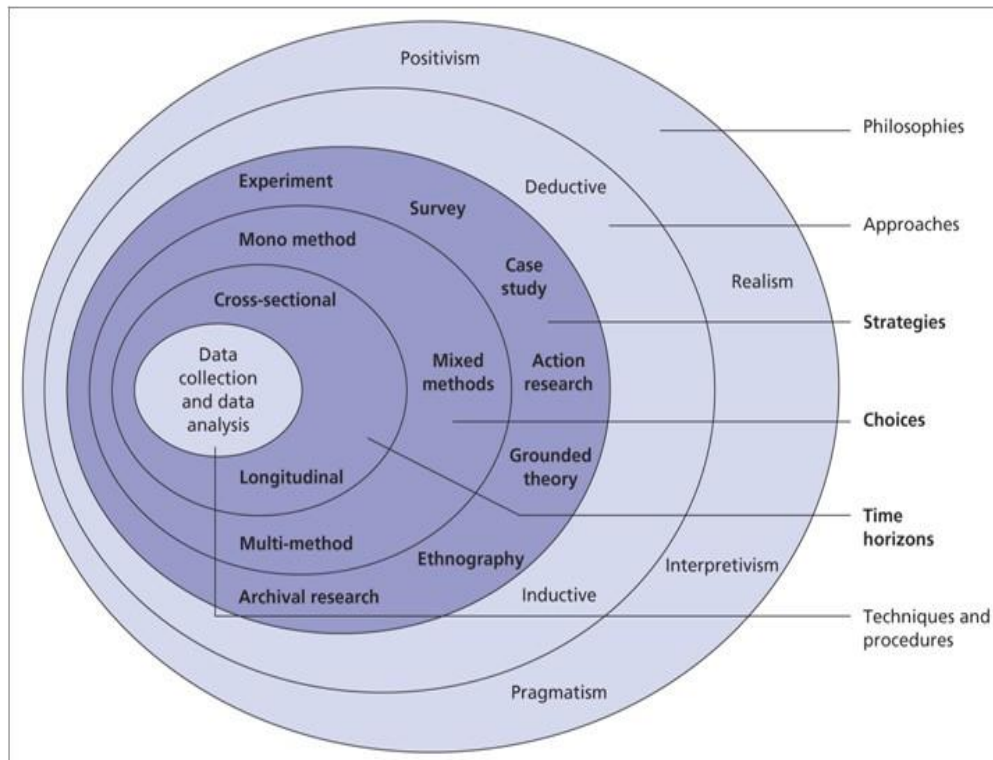


Figure 12 The research onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 108)

It is necessary as a researcher to identify one's own ontological and epistemological stance in order to decide which approach suits a particular piece of research best in terms of choice of methodology and data collection strategies. Mayan (2009) in her discussion of theory and method in relation to qualitative research states that ontology is concerned with inquiries about the description of reality while epistemology relates to the relationship between the researcher and participants in any given study. Qualitative research from an ontological perspective, therefore, focuses on an individual's feelings and beliefs with regard to the research topic under investigation. Mason (2018) has provided a comprehensive list of different ontological properties which could be the focus of investigation for researchers, such as social practices, events, behaviours, cultural groups, social actors and so forth. See table eight below:

people, social actors, humans bodies, subjects, objects minds, psyches rationality, emotion, thought feeling, memory, senses consciousness, sub- consciousness, instincts understandings, interpretations motivations, ideas, perceptions attitudes, beliefs, views identities, essence, being selves, individuals, subject positions others, collectives representations, cultural or social constructions	experiences, accounts stories, narratives, biographies evolution, development, progress texts, discourses words, codes, communications languages actions, reactions, behaviours, events, interactions, situations, social relations social or cultural practices social processes rules, morality, belief systems material cultures, objects, things time	institutions, structures, the ‘material’, markets cultures, societies, groups producers, consumers nature, genes, humans, animals, empirical patterns, regularities, order, organization, connectedness empirical haphazardness spontaneity, disorder, disorganization, chaos and disconnectedness underlying mechanisms one’s objective reality, multiple realities or versions
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Table 8 Different Ontological Properties (Mason, 2018, p.5)

Mason (2018) also points out, that some of these ontological properties such as social processes, interpretations, social relations, social practices, experiences and understandings are more suited to qualitative research methodology than others.

It is for this reason that I have chosen to utilise qualitative research methods in this particular study, as I am seeking to learn from FI staff members about how they interact with culturally diverse customers who are not originally from Ireland.

An ethnographic approach to research allows for the use of research methods such as participant observation and interviews which are used to assess the social realities and settings of a particular cultural or organisational group. The findings from this study will provide me with information that can be translated into the design and delivery of training material based on the specific needs of FI in relation to intercultural communication. This material will be discussed and assessed, in chapter 8, for its effectiveness in providing FI staff with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes and language competence required to develop intercultural competence.

3.3 Ethnography

Ethnography has its roots in both anthropology and sociology, but has been burgeoning in a number of disciplines such as nursing, education, psychology and cultural/intercultural studies (Atkinson, et al., 2002). However, Hammersley and Atkinson (2019) point out that ethnography is difficult to define as it has an assortment of meanings, but at its core is the notion of written descriptive accounts of groups in ‘cultural settings’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019; Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995, 2002;). Broadly speaking, ethnography is:

the study of people in naturally occurring settings or “fields” by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting (if not always in the activities) in order to collect data in a systematic manner, but without meaning being imposed on them externally (Brewer, 2003, p. 99).

More specifically, Whitehead (2005, p.4), posits a number of characteristics related to ethnographic research:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethnography is a holistic approach to the study of cultural systems.• Ethnography is the study of the socio-cultural contexts, processes, and meanings within cultural systems.• Ethnography is the study of cultural systems from both emic and etic perspectives.• Ethnography is a process of discovery, making inferences, and continuing inquiries in an attempt to achieve emic validity.• Ethnography is an iterative process of learning episodes.• Ethnography is an open-ended emergent learning process, and not a rigid investigator controlled experiment.• Ethnography is a highly flexible and creative process.• Ethnography is an interpretive, reflexive, and constructivist process.• Ethnography requires the daily and continuous recording of fieldnotes.• Ethnography presents the world of its host population in human contexts of thickly described case studies. |
|--|

Table 9 Characteristics Related to Ethnographic Research Whitehead, 2005, pp. 4-5)

As we can see from the table above, the use of an ethnographic approach for this particular study is very relevant, as it will allow the researcher to present “thickly described case studies” of FI staff member’s roles and duties related to their daily encounters with the

cultural ‘other’. In addition, it will enable me to study “the socio-cultural contexts, processes, and meanings within cultural systems,” currently in place in FI.

There are a number of data collection methods which can be utilised in an ethnographic approach including interviews, both in-depth and informal, analysis of personal documents, discourse analysis of natural language and participant observation (Brewer, 2000). Most scholars argue that in relation to data collection strategies, at the core of any ethnographic research is participant observation which involves fieldwork, observing a cultural group and making notes. This approach not only involves the collection of data in fieldnotes and journal entries but also preparing a more systematic “thick description”, which entails “our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to...” (Geertz, 1993, p.9). As such, ethnography is interpretive, dialogical and reflexive (Denzin, 1997).

My research is broadly ethnographic in its approach as it meets most of the criteria posited in Whitehead’s list (2005), although it does not adhere to the requirement of “‘daily and continuous’” time spent observing and recording in the field. Although a period of approximately one year is recommended by many ethnographers, Wolcott states that time is not critical for good ethnographic fieldwork:

[t]ime is one of several “necessary but not sufficient” ingredients of ethnography: no sufficient ethnography without it, but no necessary ethnography with it. Based on any one researcher’s skill, sensitivity, problem, and setting, optimum periods of fieldwork may vary as much as the circumstances for pursuing it (Wolcott, 1987, p .2).

In recent years, constraints relating to particular financial and time restrictions under which researchers often have to work have led to a reinterpretation as to what ethnography entails in relation to time spent in the field. In terms of my own research, there is the (self-imposed) constraint of my visiting and observing participants working with vulnerable people where space is at a premium. Thus, one of my priorities was to ensure that my presence did not cause disruption to the normal interaction between customer and staff member, as might be the case in the coffee shop. Consequently, after discussion with management in FI, I decided that I would observe participants in the coffee shop for one hour once a week at different times of the day and interview coffee shop staff on

Wednesday mornings for one hour. Therefore, this current research is best described as “borrowing ethnographic techniques” rather than “doing ethnography” (Wolcott, 1999, pp. 41-42). Similarly, the emergence of different forms of ethnographic research such as micro or mini-ethnography has provided avenues for researchers who wish to utilise methods within a broadly ethnographic approach yet who are under certain constraints. For example, in the field of medicine, Weinstein & Ventres (2000) conducted a study with student doctors who were attempting to examine attitudes and communication about breastfeeding, in a short-term six-week study, which included a series of one-hour participant observations and interviews in the field.

Finally, ethnographic studies may occur in multi-sites or multi-locations (Hannerz, 2003). Such studies are mostly concerned with the global economy and tend to be conducted transnationally (Hannerz, 2003; Marcus, 1995). However, they have also been used in relation to other topics in multiple locations and in national contexts such as Wulff’s cultural study of Irish traditional dance in what she terms yo-yo sites around Ireland (Wulff, 2002). This is significant for my study, as I conducted observations and interviews in a number of locations, namely: the FI coffee shop in the centre of Dublin; and FI locations in Cork, Kilkenny, Sligo and Waterford.

3.3.1 Observations

Mason (2018, p. 85), states that if one conducts research through observation, then (s)he does so from an ontological perspective which “sees interactions, actions and behaviour and the way people interpret these, act on them, and so on, as central.” Furthermore, she points out that from an epistemological position, the researcher believes that “knowledge or evidence of the social world can be generated by observing, or participating in or experiencing ‘natural’ or ‘real-life’ settings, interactive situations and so on.” Thus, through the method of participant observation, the observer becomes a “quasi-insider” (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2002, p. 352) or has access to “insider accounts”, which help to inform them about the particular phenomenon under investigation (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007 p, 124). Participant observation therefore, whilst not the only method used in ethnography, is central to an examination of these cultural settings (Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Atkinson et al., 2002).

There are a range of types of observation open to a researcher conducting qualitative research in the interpretivist tradition. In his monograph on participant observation, Spradley (1980, p. 58-62) identifies five types of observation based on the amount of involvement by the researcher in the observational setting, ranging from no involvement to high involvement: non-participation, passive participation, moderate participation, active participation and complete participation. Meanwhile, Flick (2009) identifies four types of participant observer: the complete participant, the participant as observer, the observer as participant, and the complete observer.

3.3.2 Fieldnotes

Emerson, Fretz & Shaw (2002) cite Lofland and Lofland (1995) who maintain that, broadly speaking, there are three main types of notes: mental notes, jotted notes and full field notes. Sanjek (1990), in his chapter on the development of a fieldwork lexicon, distinguishes between three types of field-notes: scratch notes, field-notes proper and field-note records. Meanwhile, Spradley's (1980) categories of field-notes include a condensed account, an expanded account of events in the field, a journal and, finally, analysis and interpretation of all the notes taken. The condensed account is written during the observation in the field. Spradley maintains that it is not possible to record everything one observes or hears. Consequently, the observer should take condensed notes which include "phrases, single phrases and unconnected sentences" (1980, p.75) which will aid in the writing of the more detailed expanded account later on. Spradley believes that it is important to write up the expanded account as soon as possible after the observation takes place. He also advises researchers to keep a journal in conjunction with condensed and expanded fieldnotes, as in this way she/he can develop reflexivity in regards to what s/he observes. By doing so, s/he can also note his/her experience, attitudes, fears, problems, advances and so forth. These dated journal entries are key forms of data. Most significantly, the journal can provide a conduit to record and subsequently identify any preconceptions that the researcher may have. Finally, Spradley suggests an analysis and interpretation section within a researcher's fieldnotes, which represents the first step in terms of analysis of findings and is a link between the ethnographic description and the final written ethnography of the cultural setting under observation.

When the observer is in the field, it is important that s/he remains focused and has a clear idea of what specifically to observe. Spradley (1980) pinpoints nine dimensions to which attention should be paid in the setting:

1. Space: the physical place or places
2. Actor: the people involved
3. Activity: a set of related acts people do
4. Object: the physical things that are present
5. Act: single actions that people do
6. Event: a set of related activities that people carry out
7. Time: the sequencing that takes place over time
8. Goal: the things that people are trying to accomplish
9. Feeling: emotions felt and expressed

Table 10 Dimensions of an Observation (Spradley, 1980, p. 78)

Spradley sees the above dimensions as a guide for the participant observer. He suggests an approach whereby not only is the focus on the language used by the participants in the field, but also, importantly, on the observer's surroundings, noting for example significant artefacts which are present in the setting. This is often referred to as material presence (Aagaard and Matthiesen, 2016).

Similarly, Chiseri-Strater and Sustain (1997) propose the following categories that an observer should include in fieldnotes:

1. Date, time, and place of observation
2. Specific facts, numbers, details of what happens at the site
3. Sensory impressions: sights, sounds, textures, smells, taste
4. Personal responses to the fact of recording field-notes
5. Specific words, phrases, summaries of conversations, and insider language
6. Questions about people or behaviors at the site for future investigation
7. Page numbers to help keep observations in order

Table 11 Categories to Include in Fieldnotes (Chiseri-Strater, & Sunstein, 1997)

In addition, some ethnographers argue for the need to categorise entries in more detail, than what the two tables above suggest, in order to aid in the detailed or expanded written notes once the observer has left the field. Williams proposes the following categorisation:

DP- Description of a person in the situation
DV- Descriptive reconstruction of verbal dialogue (quotation if person's name is followed by a colon, otherwise it is a paraphrase)
DN- Description of non-verbal communication
DS- Description of the physical or historical setting in which the action is taking place
DE- Description of events and actions
DO- Description of the observer (me) and my relationship to what was going on, including audit trail notes on methods of doing the study
RA- Reflective analysis or synthesis note, searching for patterns and relationships
RF- Reflective notes on my feelings and frame of mind as the inquirer

Table 12 Categories to be Included in Fieldnotes (Williams, 2011)

Meanwhile, Whitehead (2005) proposes a prescriptive detailed worksheet which can be utilised in the field by the observer:

Contact Summary Form (Modification of Miles and Huberman, 1994: 51-54).	
Contact Type (Check with X):	Contact Date: _____
Visit: _____	
Phone: _____	Today's Date _____
Meeting _____	
Other (Specify) _____	Written by _____
Sites: _____	
In answering each of the following questions, enumerate as needed, and write on back of sheet if not enough space.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there specific things that you would like to learn at this contact? 2. Who were the actors present at the contact? (Provide real names or pseudonyms if necessary, affiliation, and title) 3. What were the main issues or themes that struck you in this contact? 4. Were there specific issues that you picked up from your observations that you might want to explore further at next contact? 5. What new or (or remaining) questions that you have in considering the next contact with this site? 	

Table 13 Fieldnote Worksheet (Whitehead, 2005, pp 26-27)

3.3.3 Content of fieldnotes

Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) point out that an ethnographer's fieldnotes should contain four different types of content. Firstly, the observer must include the speech of the participants as well as the accompanying non-verbal behaviour. One particularly important item of speech is the specific vocabulary used by the cultural group under observation. These speech acts are referred to as "situated vocabularies" or "folk taxonomies" (2007, p. 145). Hammersley & Atkinson also argue that there must be a clear distinction between direct quotations of the participants and any summary or paraphrase noted by the ethnographer. They stress that it is essential for the ethnographer to clearly indicate the different 'voices' in the field, and that s/he should include a description of the events taking place in fieldnotes, such as notes on who participates, where, "what time and under what circumstances" the event is taking place (2019, p. 158). Finally, the context ought to be stated for each event as the setting may influence an individual's behaviour or how an event unfolds. The authors also maintain that "head notes"--+ are

useful in this regard, that is, short lexical phrases that will prompt the researcher when s/he write up a more detailed account later in the day (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019, p.158).

The language used by the observer in the initial fieldnotes needs to be carefully considered. For example, Spradley (1980) cites an earlier ethnographic study of his, on tramps¹⁵ in the United States of America, in which he identified five different genres in his fieldnotes: the investigator's native language; the language of social science; the language of tramps; courtroom/legal language; and the language of alcohol treatment centres. It is important, therefore, for an observer to become familiar with the different communities of practice (Wenger, 2006) that s/he will encounter and with the different genres of language, meta-language, colloquialisms and idioms used by each individual or group member. This can be problematic in the early stages of the observation process as much of the language is unfamiliar to the observer. Consequently, key phrases may be missed initially, and might only become important later in the process.

In order to address this potential problem, Spradley (1980) identifies three principles for recording in the field. Firstly, the observer should use 'language identification.' Essentially, this refers to the development of recording techniques (by the observer) which aid in the identification of the different speakers or actors in each entry. For example, in his study, Spradley deemed it important to identify the specific language used by the tramps themselves, and distinguish this from the language used by other speakers in the study such as lawyers, bailiffs or judges. Significantly, in the beginning of his study, he did not clearly identify and distinguish between the different interlocutors, leading to his use of what he termed "amalgamated language" (1980, p. 66), making the subsequent analysis of his records in terms of the language used by different speakers difficult. Secondly, Spradley posits the 'verbatim' principle, which entails the exact words of the people being observed. Importantly, this means avoiding the temptation on the part of the observer to translate or simplify what is being said, otherwise, the community of practice members' culture, language idioms, and terminology use may not be captured accurately. Finally, Spradley posits the 'concrete' principle. He maintains that an ethnographer who is attempting to capture nuanced feelings and experiences needs to use highly descriptive

¹⁵ This is the term that Spradley uses in 1980.

language in the fieldnotes in order to “reverse [the] deeply ingrained habit of generalisation” and instead “expand, fill out and enlarge, and give as much specific detail as possible” (Spradley, 1980, p. 68). Spradley therefore suggests using words and phrases which are highly descriptive such as ‘scathing’, ‘glaring’, ‘raising eyebrows’ (ibid).

Consequently, the language that is used by the observer in the initial fieldnotes written in situ does not necessarily need to be grammatically correct (Spradley, 1980). These are “fieldnotes as writer’s prose” and as such “the wording, sentence structure and organisation of this style may be incomprehensible to a reader other than the author” (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2002, p. 358).

A further issue that is generally accepted by scholars in the area of ethnographic research, and in particular in relation to participation observation, is that the physical recording of condensed accounts in the field can be problematic in terms of where and when observations are recorded (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019; Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 2002; Spradley, 1980). Observers have been known to take notes in stairwells, hallways, cupboards, even toilets (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). Crang and Cook (2007, p. 57) describe this as an ‘ethnographer’s bladder’, which is a reference to the frequent visits to a toilet to take notes.

In addition, there are obstacles associated with the use of audio recorders in the field. Despite the availability of audio equipment for a number of decades, most researchers from the disciplines of anthropology and sociology guard against their usage (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019; Sanjek, 1990). Indeed, Sanjek (1990) points out that for some groups or sub-groups, the maintenance of a written and audio record of their actions and behaviours could be culturally problematic. Furthermore, the use of audio recording of vulnerable groups such as the homeless may raise issues as they may have an existing mistrust of authority or outsiders.

3.3.4 Proposed shorthand for fieldnotes

While the description, analysis and reflections need to be distinguished, the observer must avoid resorting to too many complicated shorthand codes or symbols to indicate these different processes. It could be argued however that as a novice ethnographer, both Whitehead’s (2005) contact summary form and William’s (2011) categorisations for

fieldnotes discussed previously are too complex. To this end, I have used the following symbols in my field note textbook which are more simplified:

“ ”	to indicate the direct words of participants
[]	to indicate my reflections or analysis
□	to indicate description
[[]]	to indicate my reflections whilst writing up fieldnotes, these parenthesised comments work like a reflexive journal

Table 14 Personal Coding Symbols for Fieldnotes during an Observation in Focus Ireland

3.3.5 Barriers and limitations to Participant Observation

There are a number of barriers associated with the use of participant observation in qualitative research. Firstly, a researcher may encounter so-called gatekeepers who have influence in terms of access to participants and other data. These may have been assigned to the researcher, if observing in an organisation, or may be self-appointed, if the researcher is observing in a community setting. The role of gatekeepers can be crucial to the success of a study as the approval and support of either formal gatekeepers (such as government officials) or informal gatekeepers (such as elders of a tribe) may dictate how much access to a desired cohort of informants a researcher may gain (Angrosino, 2007). In addition, Flick (2009) argues that a gatekeeper may steer researchers towards certain areas of the field, whilst not allowing, or limiting access to other areas. Secondly, once access has been granted, a researcher may encounter reticence or resistance on the part of the participants to their presence in the field. Apart from an understandable dislike of being observed, there are other possible reasons for this, such as what is often termed research fatigue, of which Clark (2008) found a number of indicators. He argues that this phenomenon can occur when research participants cannot discern any change that could be attributed to previous research in the area, or when the aims of the research are perceived to diverge from the aims and interests of the group or organisation involved in the research. A further factor might be that the group or organisation is very open to research and, consequently, the number of researchers studying that cohort is excessive,

resulting in a degree of resistance on the part of the participants. In order to avoid research fatigue, the training session One was designed and delivered during the ethnography stage of the study and not at the end, in order to ensure that FI staff were able to see that the process of observing had a purpose.

In addition, there are also limitations associated with the researcher him/herself. Observer bias may occur due to a researcher's own ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, socio-cultural status and theoretical viewpoint (Kawulich, 2005). However, this may be reduced through reflexivity, which involves challenging assumptions and critically analysing thoughts and decisions throughout the entire research process (Mason, 2018).

Finally, it could be argued that participant observation is limited by factors which affect the reliability of the study. It may be that on the particular day on which the observation(s) took place the researcher did not actually observe meaningful behaviour whilst he or she was present in the setting, particularly as certain important events or behaviour might occur only very rarely (Flick 2009). However, Flick (2009) points out that this may be counteracted through the use of triangulation, whereby additional research techniques such as interviews which, if used to complement the observations, may help in providing a more complete picture of typical behaviours, practices, attitudes and opinions that might occur in the cultural setting being researched.

3.3.6 Interviews

Hammersley & Atkinson (2019) believe that the combination of observations and interviews in qualitative research is advantageous. They maintain that observations aid the researcher in the collection of information and give him/her an insight into participants' cultural practices and events in the field. These can then be explored in greater detail in interviews in order to analyse participants' perspectives as to why they may or may not behave in certain ways in specific situations.

According to Mason (2002, p. 63) the choice of a researcher to use interviews indicates that s/he has an ontological position which "suggests that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality." Mason also maintains that the epistemological view of the purpose

of qualitative interviews is to gain rich, complex, and nuanced data about the social setting under investigation and that the ideal format to achieve this is through interaction

In the main, qualitative interviews are conducted on a face-to-face basis or by telephone. Technological advancements have led to the emergence of ‘face-to-face’ interviews being conducted online, principally through the use of skype (Oates, 2015; Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014) and Zoom (Archibald et al., 2019)¹⁶

Marshall and Rossman (2011) identify five types of interviews: ethnographic interviewing; phenomenological interviewing; focus group interviewing; life histories; narrative inquiry and digital storytelling. Meanwhile, DiCicco-Bloom, & Crabtree, (2006) list four broad categories of interview: structured interviews; unstructured interviews; semi-structured interviews; and individual in-depth interviews. Fontana and Frey (2003) pinpoint three broad categories: the structured interview; the unstructured interview; and the group interview which straddles both formal and informal interviews. Patton (2002) notes three types of interview: the informal, conversational interview; the interview guide or topical approach; and the standardised, open-ended interview. Morgan conflates focus group interviews and group interviews when he states that “as a form of qualitative research, focus groups are basically group interviews” (1997, p. 2). Both forms of interview are characterized by interaction within the group, with topics supplied by the researcher who typically takes the role of moderator (ibid, p.2). Finally, Nunan (1992, p. 149) refers to the focus group as a semi-structured interview (an interview without a list of pre-determined questions).

Broadly speaking, the common feature amongst these categories of interview, appears to be the degree of formality and structure associated with the particular approach utilised by the researcher ranging from loose, with no questions set beforehand to highly structured interview formats, with a set of questions that must be covered in each interview.

¹⁶ All of my observations and interviews occurred before the pandemic which meant that they took place in situ.

Another important feature of an interview is the number of participants involved in the process. There are a number of advantages associated with the use of group interviews which involve between three to five participants. Firstly, they lead to insights and opinions that could not be assessed by one-to-one interviews, as an experience cited by one member of the group may spark similar or connected experiences in the other participants in that particular group. Secondly, group interviews can provide ‘rich data’ about participants’ experiences, the social settings in which they operate, the typical practices in which they engage within these settings, and their understandings and interpretations of these behaviours. Such data is good for interpretive research (Nunan, 1992). A final advantage of the group interview is that it allows for a large amount of interaction on a topic in a limited period of time (Morgan, 1997). However, there are some limitations to the use of group interviews which will be examined later in the chapter.

3.3.7 Types of interview question

Mason (2002) points out that whatever form of interview is utilised there is still a need for a systematic approach to the interview process. She suggests a seven-stage plan:

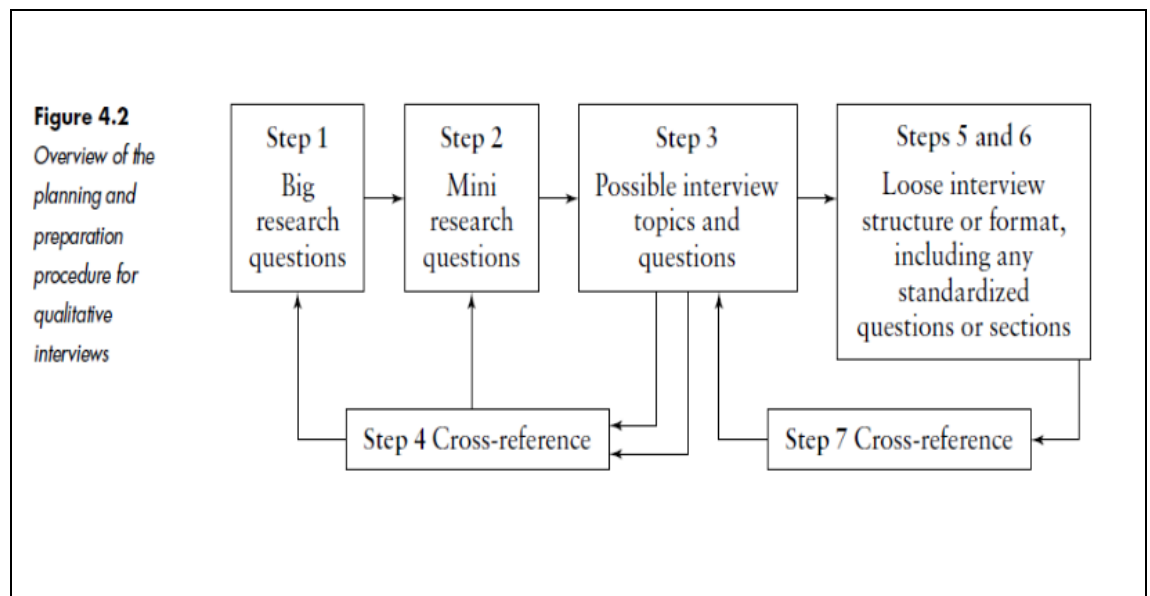


Figure 13 The Planning and Preparation Procedure for Qualitative Interviews (Mason, 2002, p. 72)

From the above figure, we can see that the questions that might be asked to participants in semi-structured interviews are devised from the constituent parts of the overall research questions. The role of the researcher therefore in the planning of the interview questions is to conduct a componential analysis of the ‘bigger’ overall research questions. These component questions can be used as a guide in the interviews themselves. In his monograph on qualitative interviewing, Kvale (1996) believes that the design of an interview guide aids the researcher in identifying the main topics that flow naturally from analysing the main research questions, which in turn aids the researcher in deciding the order in which these questions should be asked. However, he also points out that this guide need not necessarily be strictly adhered to during the actual interview itself, as the interviewer may wish to pursue an interviewee’s answer in more detail with follow-up questions which may not be contained in the interview guide. In other words, the conduct of an interview is emergent and not prescriptive and the interviewer must be prepared to be very flexible in her/his choice of interview question.

Spradley’s monograph on ethnographic interviews provides a great deal of insight into the formulation of interview questions. Broadly speaking, he suggests three main types of questions: descriptive, structural and contrast (Spradley, 1979, p. 223). Descriptive questions allow the interviewer to collect information from the interviewee about their social setting. Structural questions are used to discover how an interviewee organises their knowledge. Finally, contrast questions enable the interviewer to elicit the meaning of terms used by the interviewee.

Spradley (1979) identified five main descriptive questions (see table 14), the first category of which is the grand tour question, which elicits information from an informant concerning space, time, events, people, activities, and objects. The interviewees are thus providing the interviewer with important facts about the cultural setting under investigation. Spradley lists a number of subcategories in relation to grand tour questions. These are: typical grand tour questions such as ‘Could you describe a typical day at...?’; specific grand tour questions such as ‘Could you describe what happened yesterday when...?’; guided grand tour questions such as ‘Could you show me around....?’; and task-related grand tour questions such as ‘Could you draw a map of....?’. These types of

questions enable the interviewee to provide “rich descriptions” (1979, p. 88) of events, people, space and so forth.

The ‘mini-tour’ question is used by an interviewer in an attempt to elicit more detailed information about a more specific or smaller event. For example, ‘What is the procedure for taking a break in your company?’ Or, ‘How do you go about taking a break in your company?’ As with ‘grand-tour’ questions, mini-tour questions can be sub-divided into typical, specific, guided and task-related questions.

The ‘example’ question is even more specific in its usage in that it is an attempt to elicit specific examples of descriptions previously mentioned in ‘guided’ or ‘mini-tour’ questions. For instance, ‘You mentioned that customers might give you a difficult time, could you give me an example of a customer giving you a hard time?’

The ‘experience’ questions are used by the interviewer in an attempt to elicit narratives of experiences from the participants. For instance, ‘Could you tell me about some of the difficult experiences you have had working for...?’ Typically, this type of question follows on from ‘grand’ or ‘mini-tour’ questions. However, one disadvantage of such a question is that the participant may find it difficult to answer due to its open-ended nature.

The final type of descriptive question is the ‘native-language’ question. This involves the researcher learning about the typical language used by participants in the cultural setting s/he is researching, and attempting to use this terminology in the formation of questions. By using appropriate terminology, the interviewer is attempting to avoid the participant translating language habitually used by them in the cultural setting into layman’s terms, which might mean the loss of nuanced and rich descriptions by informants. Spradley (1979) points out that this should be done directly, ‘How do you refer to it?’ or through hypothetical- interaction questions-‘If you were talking to a colleague, how would you say...? Or, by using typical sentence questions, ‘Can you give me some utterances that use the term....?’

Spradley (1979) also identified the ‘structural’ question, utilised to elicit more detailed information about something that has been previously alluded to by the interviewee and

to which the interviewer would like to return for elucidation. The author deems them useful in eliciting ‘folk terms’, that is, terms or expressions typically used within a specific cultural group in relation to the different areas (of work in the case of this study) in which the participants are involved, which may aid in obtaining a greater understanding of the cultural setting being examined. Often, structural questions require preface utterances such as ‘We have been talking about... I am interested in how you might achieve this?’ ‘Could you talk about this in some more detail?’ Therefore, they require explanation on the part of the interviewee about how a cultural setting is organised. Spradley (1979) points out that structural questions are often asked contemporarily with descriptive questions so that interviewees do not become bored.

Finally, Spradley identified ‘contrast’ questions, which are utilised so that the interviewer may begin to understand “the dimensions of meaning which informants employ to distinguish the objects and events in their world” (1979, p. 60). He maintains that through the analysis of fieldnotes and the formulation of contrast questions, the ethnographer can achieve a richer, more nuanced understanding of the cultural setting under examination. Spradley believes that all three types of question, descriptive, structural and contrast questions, should be employed in an interview session.

1.0 DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

1.1 Grand Tour Questions

- 1.11 Typical Grand Tour questions
- 1.12 Specific Grand Tour Questions
- 1.13 Guided Grand Tour Questions
- 1.14 Task-Related Grand Tour Questions

1.2 Mini Tour Questions

- 1.21 Typical Mini Tour Questions
- 1.22 Specific Mini Tour Questions
- 1.23 Guided Mini Tour Questions
- 1.24 Task-Related Mini Tour Questions

1.3 Example Questions

1.4 Experience Questions
1.5 Native- Language Questions
1.51 Direct Language Questions
1.52 Hypothetical- Interaction Questions
1.6 Typical-Sentence Questions
2.0 STRUCTURAL QUESTIONS
2.1 Verification Questions
2.11 Domain Verification Questions
2.12 Included Term Verification Questions
2.13 Semantic Relationship Verification Questions
2.14 Native-Language Verification Questions
2.2 Cover Term Questions
2.3 Included Term Questions
2.4 Substitution Frame questions
2.5 Card Sorting Structural Questions
3.0 CONTRAST QUESTIONS
3.1 Contrast Verification Questions
3.2 Directed Contrast Questions
3.3 Dyadic Contrast Questions
3.4 Triadic Contrast Questions
3.5 Contrast Set Sorting Questions
3.6 Twenty Questions Game
3.7 Rating Questions

Table 15 A Taxonomy of Ethnographic Questions (Spradley, 1979, p. 223)

Thus, the advantage of conducting ethnographic interviews is that the researcher can focus on culture through interactions with informants who are able to give their viewpoint in relation to the cultural setting under examination. Indeed, according to Marshall and Rossman (2011, p. 148):

[t]his approach is especially useful for eliciting participants' meanings for events and behaviours and for generating a typology of categories of meaning, highlighting the nuances of culture. The method is flexible in formulating working hypotheses and avoids over-simplification in description and analysis because of its rich narrative descriptions.

However, conducting such interviews can be problematic, given that the interviewer who leads a group or semi-structured interview using an ethnographic approach is not necessarily working from a complete list of pre-designed questions. The choice of questions is dictated by what has already been stated. Thus, selecting the appropriate question necessitates an ability on the part of the interviewer to think quickly on his or her feet. Interviewers, therefore, need to be well-practised in this skill along with a number of other skills.

3.3.8 Interview skills

According to Fontana & Frey (2003), an interviewer should be adaptable, unbiased, empathetic, and a good listener as well as able to develop rapport with the participants. Mason (2002) argues that the interviewer needs to practise and develop interview skills such as: the ability to be an effective listener; knowing when to listen and when to talk; having a good memory for what has been said and what has already been elicited from the interviewee; the ability to observe non-verbal signals; and mastery of the mechanics of interviewing such as recording, note-taking and so forth. Meanwhile, further skills are required by the researcher in order to conduct group interviews. The interviewer must be able to ensure a balance in input amongst participants by encouraging reluctant participants to speak. The management of group interviews may become problematic if these skills are not developed (Fontana & Frey, 2003).

Finally, there are some limitations to semi-structured or group interviews. They require that the moderator has to focus a great deal as they become an active participant in the interview process, making sure that every participant has an equal voice. This type of interview also provides less in-depth and detailed data about the experiences and opinions of each participant (Morgan, 1997, p. 15). Problems associated with this relate to the potential emergence of a 'group culture', or the fact that some individuals might be more outspoken than others, which can interfere with some participants' willingness to say

what he or she wants to say. In other words, one or two individuals may dominate the group process (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

3.4 Pilot study

In essence, a pilot study is a “small-scale study designed to inform a main study” (Kim, 2011, p. 2) and has many advantages. It can:

be used to refine research instruments such as questionnaires and interview schedules, they have greater use still in ethnographic approaches to data collection in foreshadowing research problems and questions, in highlighting gaps and wastage in data collection, and in considering broader and highly significant issues such as research validity, ethics, representation and researcher health and safety (Sampson 2004, p. 383).

In spite of this, pilot studies appear to be under-utilised as a technique in qualitative research. This could be due to the tendency to link them with more positivist approaches in social science (Sampson, 2004).

Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) identify sixteen broad reasons for conducting a pilot study:

- Developing and testing adequacy of research instruments
- Assessing the feasibility of a (full-scale) study/survey
- Designing a research protocol
- Assessing whether the research protocol is realistic and workable
- Establishing whether the sampling frame and technique are effective
- Assessing the likely success of proposed recruitment approaches
- Identifying logistical problems which might occur using proposed methods
- Estimating variability in outcomes to help determining sample size
- Collecting preliminary data
- Determining what resources (finance, staff) are needed for a planned study
- Assessing the proposed data analysis techniques to uncover potential problems
- Developing a research question and research plan
- Training a researcher in as many elements of the research process as possible
- Convincing funding bodies that the research team is competent and knowledgeable
- Convincing funding bodies that the main study is feasible and worth funding

- Convincing other stakeholders that the main study is worth supporting

Table 16 Reasons for Conducting Pilot Studies (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001)

My purpose in conducting a pilot study with some members of FI staff is based on Van Teijlingen, and Hundley's (2001) rationale. The authors believe that conducting a pilot study enables a researcher to: test the observation protocol; test the interview protocol; discover if group interviews are the best vehicle in terms of delivery of answers to research questions; iron out practical and logistical problems in both observations and interviews; develop observational and interview skills; test research validity of the observation and interview process; and finally, modify interview questions.

3.4.1 Questions in the pilot study

The following interview guide relates to the first two research questions in this study. Question three (To what extent has this training been successful?) has not been included as it is dealt with through the training programme that was designed and delivered in the second stage of research, once findings had been analysed. Mason's (2002) procedure for the planning of interview questions was utilised in the formation of questions. In addition, the questions themselves were based on Spradley's (1979) typography.

Research question 1: What are the cultural challenges to successful intercultural encounters between Focus Ireland staff and their culturally diverse customers?

- 1) How long have you worked for Focus Ireland? (grand-tour question)
- 2) Can you tell me about your background? (grand-tour question)
- 3) Why did you choose to work for Focus Ireland? (grand-tour question)
- 4) Do you find it difficult to communicate with customers who are not originally from Ireland? (mini-tour question)
- 5) How do you deal with communication problems with customers who are not originally from Ireland? (experience question)
- 6) What cultural group do you find most difficult to communicate with in your job? (example question)
- 7) In my observations, I noticed that staff...why do staff deal with this situation in this way? (grand-tour question)

Research question 2: What are the key elements which can be used in the design and delivery of intercultural competence training sessions for staff in Focus Ireland?

- | |
|--|
| 8) How do you think difficulties in communication could be improved upon? (structural question)
9) Have you ever received any intercultural training? (experience question)
10) Did you find this training to be effective? (experience question)
11) What would you like to see in an intercultural training programme? (example question) |
|--|

Table 17 Pilot Study Interview Questions

Apart from question eight, all the questions are descriptive questions, as in the main, ‘structural’ and ‘contrast’ questions are typically used as a response to what a participant has said and are not generally scripted in advance of the interview. Indeed, in practice, some ‘structural’ and ‘contrast’ questions were used in the pilot study and subsequent interviews, as follow-up questions to descriptive questions.

3.4.2 Findings from the pilot observation and interview

I decided to conduct one pilot group interview consisting of three participants and two pilot observations. The two observations were conducted on the 9th and 10th March, 2017 and the pilot interview took place on 15th March, 2017¹⁷.

Practical observation protocol

The protocol designed for the observation worked very well, and as a result, no changes were made to it.

Interview protocol

The interview protocol proved very useful. In particular, I made it very clear to the three participants that there was no obligation to take part in the interviews and that they were free to leave either at the beginning, or at any point during the interview. However, all three participants appeared to be very enthusiastic and wished to take part. Indeed, I learnt later during one of my observations that one of them was interested not only from an occupational standpoint, but also professionally as she was going to begin a Masters in social studies and was keen to experience the mechanics of the interview process.

¹⁷ Please see Appendix C for complete fieldnotes.

The choice of group interviews

The choice of group interview proved to be appropriate, as there were one or two examples when a comment from one participant generated interactions from the others. Whilst it is true that participant one spoke more than the other two, I do not feel that she dominated proceedings.

Practical and logistical problems in both observation and interview

The pilot study proved very useful in testing the practicalities of writing fieldnotes and the contact summary form proposed by Whitehead (2005). The coffee shop in FI is a very small space and it was not possible to write scratch notes / headnotes in my notebook while I was observing. Writing them would have brought a great deal of attention to myself and might have affected the normal interactions between customers and staff. The same applied to the use of the audio recorder on my mobile phone. In addition, I found Whitehead's form (2005) to be problematic, being too detailed for my purposes. I therefore decided to leave any notetaking until the hour had elapsed, at which point I went first to the staff room and then to a quiet coffee shop to write up my notes. This process took half an hour to forty minutes on both occasions. I then went to a local university library, which was ten minutes away on foot, to write up my full fieldnotes, which took approximately two hours on each occasion. This process worked very well and I adopted it for the rest of the observations in the coffee shop.

Development of observation and interview skills

My past experience meant that my interview skills were already well developed. The interview was successful and I was able to elicit some interesting information from the participants by ensuring that the speaking times were equally distributed. I noticed that participant two was responsive but said very little. On reflection when I had the opportunity to analyse the transcript of the pilot study, I concluded that she had engaged well with the other two participants and shared some very interesting experiences and thoughts around the issues raised during the discussion.

On the other hand, my observation skills needed to be refined as the following observation entry on the mechanics of participant observation suggests. In the pilot observations, I

had difficulty remembering the exact wording of comments made by participants and participants' names¹⁸:

XXX said that he¹⁹ was a little annoyed that C.S hadn't opened up yet hence the banging. Then he said 'he's a nice guy usually good'. Or 'he's alright usually,' words to that affect. [I must get better at remembering verbatim words that might be important]. ...' it depends on the night he has had last night, it's tough out there'

There was XXX²⁰ [I think, I am terrible at remembering names- I must improve].

A further problem I encountered in terms of the observations was in regard to the role I should adopt. I was particularly concerned with how much I should engage and interact with participants while in the field. This issue was evident in my second pilot observation, when a man approached me for some money on the coffee shop floor:

At this point a man who had been sorting out his credit with XXX came over to ask for 20 cents, [[I didn't know what to do. I am a participant observer, but does that mean that I get involved by giving money, my instinct was not to as I thought it might affect my role. Was I right? I don't know I will have to read up on this some more]].

On reflection and completion of full fieldnotes from the scratch notes, I decided that I would follow FI policy for staff members and not give money if asked, whilst observing staff and customers of FI.

Testing the Validity of the observation an interview process

The concept of validity emanated from the positivist tradition (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). The authors also argue that it is a contested notion within the field of qualitative research. Given its subjective nature, concerns such as reliability and validity

¹⁸ The names are not used in transcripts or observation records but are used by me during observations and interviews in order to talk to participants and be clear about who the group is referring to in interviews.

¹⁹ This refers to a man who was banging on the window moments before the coffee shop was due to open.

²⁰ I eventually remembered the Focus Ireland Staff member's name but this has been removed for the purpose of anonymity.

to ensure the consistency and accuracy of findings are not as relevant in this paradigm (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Other terms such as credibility (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982; Lincoln and Gubba, 1985) and trustworthiness (Lincoln and Gubba, 1985) are often seen as more applicable to qualitative research.

LeCompte and Goetz (1982) address issues relating to validity in relation to ethnographic studies. An ethnographer must address both internal and external validity if their research is to be considered rigorous. “Internal validity refers to the extent to which scientific observations and measurements are authentic representations of some reality. External validity addresses the degree to which such representations may be compared legitimately across groups” (p. 32).

Throughout the entire process, I utilised a number of strategies in order to ensure internal and external validity. Firstly, a pilot study was conducted which enabled me to test the trustworthiness of the research instruments. Secondly, there was “prolonged engagement” with participants in the field through the use of participant observation and interviews. This generated “thick or rich data” which was demonstrated in the form of extensive fieldnotes and “verbatim transcription” (Whittemore, Chase and Mandle, 2001, p. 533). During the data analysis stage, I also used “memoing” (Braun and Clarke, 2013) as a tool which provided me with a means by which I could demonstrate reflexivity in the research process. It is important for the researcher to provide a clear audit trail for all stages of the research process. In this regard, I have included in my appendices my fieldnotes (Appendix C), examples of transcripts which have been coded (Appendix G) and a list of the codes generated through Nvivo (Appendix H). In chapters four to seven I have provided rich descriptions of the themes by incorporating extracts from the verbatim transcripts of FI staff in order to enhance the authenticity of the findings, so that their words are captured and their voices are represented in the analysis. Thus, these sections of transcript provide “evidence that supports my interpretations of the data” (Whittemore, Chase and Mandle, 2001, p. 533).

Modification of interview questions

After discussion with team leaders in the coffee shop, it was agreed that I interview staff for one hour on Wednesday mornings between 9:00 am and 10:00 am. The coffee shop

does not open until 11:30 am on that day to facilitate staff meetings and hand-overs. Even with this arrangement, it would mean three members of staff missing an hour of their staff meetings. This was a big sacrifice for staff to make and I was very grateful for this commitment by all the coffee shop staff.

The first ten minutes of the pilot interview involved reading and signing the plain language statement and consent forms and answering a number of background questions, leaving only fifty minutes for the actual interview. I therefore decided not to ask questions about the participants' identity, and professional and academic background (questions 1, 2 and 3) verbally in future interviews. Instead, I designed a short questionnaire that the participants could fill in and return to me during my next visit to the coffee shop. This gave me an extra five to ten minutes to ask the questions from my interview guide.

In addition, given that the design of an interview guide is emergent in nature, I also added some questions that emerged during the interview to my interview guide. For example, I decided to start the interview with a 'grand-tour' question asking participants to describe their typical day in the coffee shop in FI and to ask them about the roles they have there. Furthermore, I decided to add a question about any difficulties that they might have in their interactions with the different groupings that they support in the service. Indeed, Puchta and Potter (2004), point out that it is customary to ask elaborate questions particularly at the beginning of an interview, while the follow-up questions within a topic or a theme are often simple. These questions were added to my interview guide questions for the rest of the interviews.

3.5 Ethics

Silverman (2010, pp. 153-154) highlights five key principles in relation to conducting both qualitative and quantitative research in an ethical manner: voluntary participation and the right to withdraw; the protection of participants; an assessment by the researcher of the potential risks and benefits to participants; taking part in research; the importance of obtaining informed consent from participants; and not doing harm to any of the participants involved in a study.

In recent years, there has been a growth in literature which focuses on ethics in qualitative research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). This is reflected in monographs (Silverman,

2010; Flick, 2009; Cohen & Manion & Morrison, 2018; Mason, 2002) and chapters in edited handbooks on qualitative research (Murphy & Dingwall, 2002) There is also a burgeoning critical literature, particularly in journal articles, on the subject of ethics in qualitative research in the humanities (Hammersley, 2009).

3.5.1 The Ethical Approval Process

In accordance with University policy, approval was sought and granted through expedited review by Dublin City University Research and Ethics Committee. In addition, permission to observe and interview FI staff was granted through the Director of Human Resources in FI, who in turn sought advice from the charity's research officer, and their own ethics board. I also spoke directly to each line manager in the various units of FI in order to address any particular concerns they had about my research and my presence as an observer.

Furthermore, before each interview with FI staff members, I verbally summarised the purpose of my research and of the observations and interviews. The informants were also given a Plain Language Statement and then an Informed Consent Form to sign, in which they were assured of their anonymity and the security of the data collected by me throughout the process (See Appendix D). In addition, the participants were assured that should they wish to retract any information elicited by me in their interview, I would remove this from my analysis. I informed them that this could be done either verbally at the end of the interview or by email at any point up to the inclusion of the written analysis within the dissertation. This is known as "process consent" (Silverman, 2010, p. 158) and adds another layer of protection to participants involved in research.

A final layer of protection for the participants was the removal of any identifiers in relation to their experiences, thoughts and knowledge in both the interviews and the informal chats which occurred during the observations. Initially, I had intended to give each participant a pseudonym. However, as FI has such a large workforce, I could not possibly know everyone's name and, therefore, might inadvertently have provided a pseudonym for an existing member of staff that I might not have interviewed. I therefore decided to use the title: participant 1, participant 2 and so forth in the transcriptions of the interviews.

3.6 The Participants

As previously stated, I interviewed staff in various FI locations in Ireland: Cork, Dublin, Kilkenny (including the staff member from Carlow), Sligo and Waterford. All the participants worked on a full-time basis and all volunteered to participate in the study through their project managers, who were my initial point of contact in each location. No one withdrew her/his consent in the process. I conducted eighteen group interviews in the various locations, typically consisting of groups of three participants. However, for logistical reasons, these groups consisted of two people on four occasions and of four people on two occasions. In total fifty-three participants took part in the interview process.

An example of details of three of the participants is included below (Please refer to the full table in Appendix E):

No.	Nationality	Gender	Age	Qualification	Length of Time in FI	Sections of FI that participants have worked in /Previous jobs in homeless sector
1	Irish	F	30	BA Social Science	2 yrs.	Coffee shop
2	Canadian	F	35	-	8mths.	Stanhope Green voluntary work, coffee shop
3	UK	F	25	BA Social Care	3yrs.	University placements Sligo FI coffee shop

Table 18 Sample of participant details

More women were interviewed than men (eighty-three per-cent against seventeen per-cent), reflecting the male-female ratio in the FI organisation as a whole.

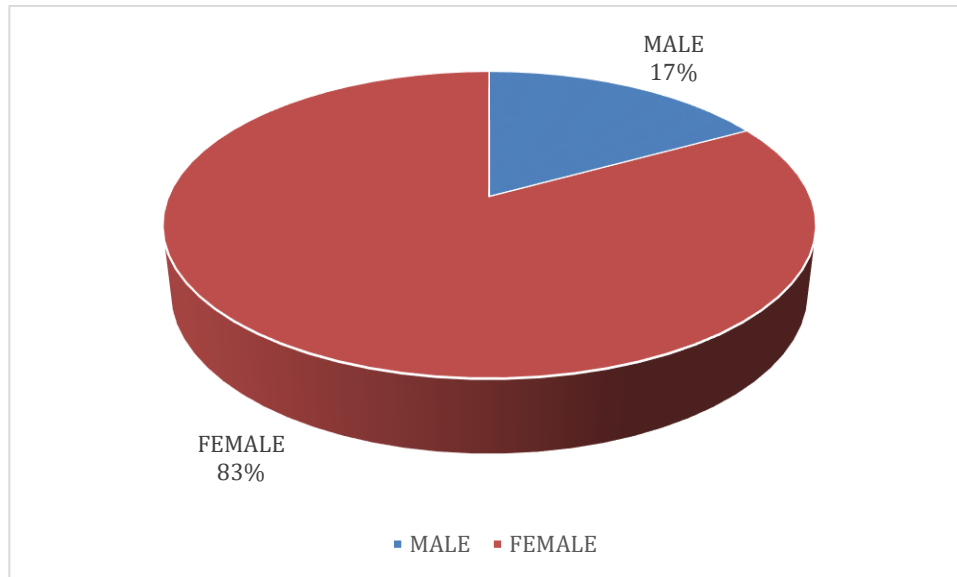


Figure 14 Gender Percentage of Staff Interviewed for This Study

In terms of nationality, the majority of participants were Irish. However, I also interviewed staff who identified as originating from Australia, Canada, Poland, the UK, the U.S. and Vietnam.

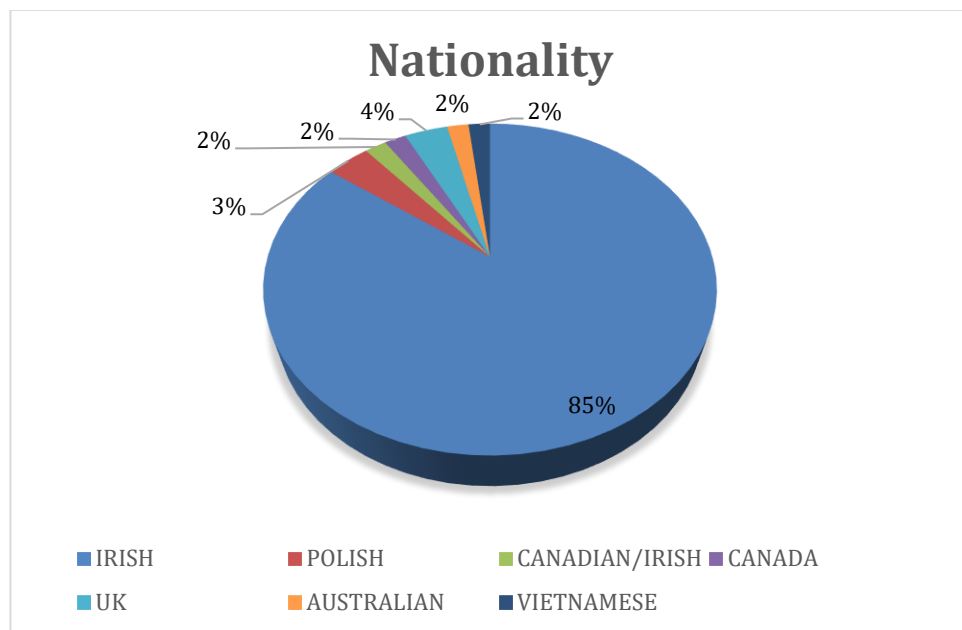


Figure 15 Different Nationalities of Staff Interviewed for this Study

There is also a variation in relation to length of time working for FI, ranging from six months to seventeen years. As evidenced in the full table in the appendices, over a third of the staff interviewed have been working in FI for more than a decade. We can also see

from this table that staff have experience in multiple sections within the organisation. This movement between sections appears to be encouraged and certainly means that staff have good experience of working with different categories of homeless people, as evidenced from the interviews which will be discussed in later chapters.

Finally, as we can see from the full table in Appendix E, the majority of staff are third-level educated with degrees in social science, social work, social care, sociology, psychology and youth work. In terms of masters studies, these include social policy, social care specialising in equality, promotion of health and well-being. These qualifications are to be expected given the nature of the work involved in service provision to the homeless.

3.7 The data

As previously stated, the data collection consisted of six one-hour observations of staff in the coffee shop space and one three-hour observation of FI Sligo staff supporting customers, both over the phone and face to face. In conjunction with observations eighteen group interviews, ranging from one hour to one and a half hours in duration were conducted by me. In addition, post training feedback was collected in the form of questionnaires, which were analysed and discussed in chapter eight.

Another important consideration of data collection and analysis is saturation. This concept developed from grounded theory (Braun and Clarke, 2021) and is now widely used in qualitative research (Low, 2019). Fusch and Ness (2015, p. 1408) point out that data saturation is reached “when there is enough information to replicate the study, when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further coding is no longer feasible”. Braun and Clarke (2021, p. 201) define the term as “information redundancy” or “the point at which no new themes or codes ‘emerge’ from data.” In relation to analysis, Braun and Clarke suggest that questions of saturation can be addressed by applying a rigorous six-stage procedure for coding and developing themes (these stages will be discussed in detail in section 3.8.2). I adopted this procedure in order to generate the four themes discussed in chapters four, five, six and seven. I stopped conducting interviews after the eighteenth interview, at which stage I believe saturation had been reached.

3.8 Methodology in data analysis

For the purpose of this study, I have chosen to use Thematic Analysis (TA) for the data collected in the interviews and participant observations. Braun, et al. (www.psych.auckland.ac.nz) argue that unlike Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), TA is a method, not a methodology. Consequently, as a researcher involved in analysing data it is important to state one's methodology or the orientation adhered to in the analysis of data. As my philosophy with regards to research is interpretivist, that is, a belief that the definition of meaning is a social construction, this will impact the manner in which I conduct my data analysis. Indeed, Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 81) point out the importance of a researcher stating her/his theoretical positioning in relation to the analysis of data: "[a]ny theoretical framework carries with it a number of assumptions about the nature of the data, what they represent in terms of the 'the world', 'reality', and so forth. A good thematic analysis will make this transparent." Specifically, Braun, et al. (www.psych.auckland.ac.nz) identify six orientations (methodologies) in relation to the coding process in data analysis. Based on these descriptions I am taking an inductive approach to the analysis of my data, whereby "coding and theme development are directed by the content of the data."

3.8.1 *Thematic Analysis*

TA is a qualitative method used to analyse data and is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79) as:

a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic

These researchers maintain that the key advantage to TA is its flexibility. TA is also systematic in terms of how data is transcribed and analysed. Braun and Clarke (2006) have developed a number of stages within the method that they advise researchers to follow. Broadly speaking, a researcher should transcribe, identify codes, develop these into broad themes and write a rich description of these themes in some form of report (ibid).

However, there are criticisms of TA, which mainly centre on the act of coding (Joffe and Yardley 2004; St. Pierre and Jackson 2014). St. Pierre and Jackson (2014, p.716) argue that the very act of coding necessitates the researcher decontextualizing utterances to fit categories:

[t]o code data, then, one must assume that words textualized in interview transcripts and field notes are not only data but also brute data that can be broken apart and decontextualized by coding.

While this criticism is valid, it is the researcher's role to avoid this decontextualisation of the data collected in interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest a six-stage process of TA discussed below. A common feature of this process is that the researcher should return to the original data set, that is, the transcriptions of the full interviews, to check that themes are not being developed which are based on decontextualized data. They state that in stage 4 of the process the researcher involves him/herself in "[c]hecking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2)" (p. 87, see table 16 below). In addition, in the writing up of the analysis of data the researcher's role is to contextualise selected extracts for the reader, so that the speaker's voice is represented as accurately as possible.

3.8.2 *Stages of Data Analysis*

There are various stages involved in data analysis. For example, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), list a number of elements involved in data analysis: preparing and organizing the data; describing and presenting the data; analysing the data; interpreting the data; drawing conclusions; reporting the findings; ensuring accuracy, reliability, coherence, corroboration, validity and reliability. They point out that data analysis may not include all of these steps and that "the process of data analysis is recursive, non-linear, messy, reflexive, moving backwards and forwards between data, analysis and interpretation" (ibid, p.644). For the purpose of my own research, I have adopted the six-stage thematic analysis process suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) (see table 19).

Phase	Description of the process
-------	----------------------------

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 19 Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87)

In addition to these broad stages, Braun and Clarke (2006) also posit a fifteen-point checklist of the procedures involved in thematic analysis, in order to ensure the six stages have been adhered to. Thus, I have adopted both the six stages and checklist in order to ensure that I have a rigorous data analysis (See Appendix F, for the fifteen-point checklist).

3.8.3 Phases of thematic analysis in praxis

This section explores my application of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stage data analysis process and criteria for good TA, in the analysis of my data from the eighteen group interviews (with fifty-three FI staff members).

3.8.3.1 Phase one: Familiarising oneself with the data through Transcription

My first task was to transcribe the eighteen interviews conducted in this study. Whilst this is a very time-consuming task, the process enabled me to become familiar with the totality of the data set (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). In addition, personally transcribing interviews meant that the anonymity of the participants I interviewed was guaranteed.

In the transcription I adopted a number of symbols to indicate common features of discourse such as interruptions and fillers (um, er etc.). Firstly, any comment or question from the interviewer that is included in the extracts in the findings and analysis chapters are in blue typeface. Next, I was very keen to be faithful to the words of the participants including their use of fillers and repetition of words. However, some fillers have been omitted in the extracts used in the findings and analysis chapters as their incorporation meant that the reader might have difficulty understanding the complete utterance. In addition, I have mostly left repeated words in extracts especially if they indicate a hesitancy on the part of the respondent in terms of what they are attempting to articulate. Respondents' pauses are indicated in square brackets either: [pause] or [long pause]. In the transcripts (Appendix G), interruptions were marked with two vertical lines – however, I thought that it might be confused with the pronoun I. For this reason, I have indicated any interruption in the extracts below with a square bracket containing the words of the participant who interrupted – [yeah, yeah]. Finally, some parts of an utterance have been removed for reasons of clarity this is indicated by three dots- [...].

3.8.3.2 Phase two: Generating initial codes by hand coding and Coding with Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS).

The next stage, which aided in my familiarisation with the data and the first step in my analysis of the data was to generate initial codes. A code is a unit of meaning attached to

an item of data that the researcher is analysing. They can either be data derived, that is, semantic codes which “mirror participant’s language and concepts”; or they can be researcher derived, that is latent codes which are the product of the researcher’s implied meaning of the data s/he is researching (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 207).

In this first stage, I chose to code each interview by hand in order to identify the main topics relevant to the design and delivery of training for the FI staff. As previously stated, the transcription of data and stage one analysis were conducted concurrently as we can see from figure 15 below. I adopted this process so that information for stage one training could be collected from the interviews in a timely fashion. There were two specific reasons for adopting this process. Firstly, I discussed the timescale of my research with the staff I interviewed, as well as with Director of Human Resources and the Research Officer in FI. Secondly, I revisited and reflected on the timescale for research on a regular basis. Based on these two factors, I believed that to wait for approximately three to four years before delivery of training, was too long for the staff to wait, as their immediate need for intercultural competence training was evident from these discussions and reflections.

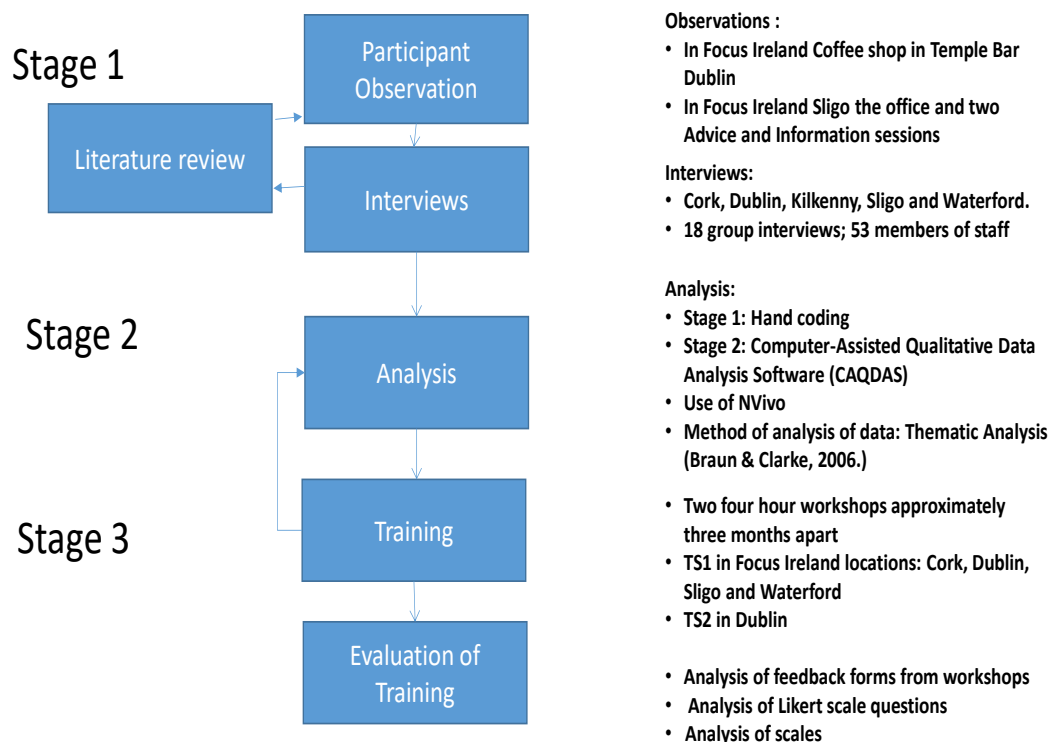


Figure 16 Stages of the Research Cycle in this Study

The second stage of coding was completed using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). Essentially, this software is “a database that holds source data, such as transcripts (including ethnographic notes), video, audio, memos and any other documents that are available in electronic form, and then supports the annotation, coding, sorting and other manipulations of them and keeps a record of all this activity” (Gibbs, 2013, Chp 19). In this case, I used the NVivo 12 software package which I became conversant with after a two-day workshop conducted by an NVivo specialist, who was also available to provide support on-line. In addition, there are monographs and journal articles on using NVivo that provide further support to the researcher (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019; Gibbs, 2013), which I found to be very useful. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) point out the versatility of CAQDAS in the following list:

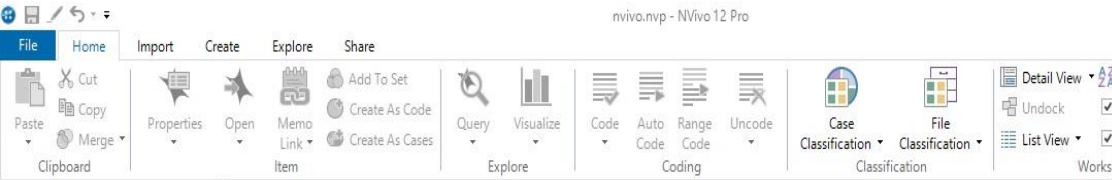
- To make notes.
- To transcribe field notes and audio data.
- To manage and store data in an ordered and organized way. For search and retrieval of text, data and categories.
- To edit, extend or revise field notes.
- To code and arrange codes into hierarchies (trees) and nodes (key codes).
- To conduct content analysis.
- To store and check data.
- To collate, segment and copy data.
- To enable memoing, with details of the circumstances in which the memos were written.
- To attach identification labels to units of text.
- To annotate and append text.
- To partition data into units.
- To sort, re-sort, collate, classify and reclassify pieces of data to facilitate constant comparison and to refine schemas of classification.
- To assemble, re-assemble, recall data into categories.
- To display data in different ways.
- To undertake frequency counts.
- To crosscheck data to see if they can be coded into more than one category, enabling linkages between categories and data to be found.
- To establish the incidence of data that are contained in more than one category.
- To search for pieces of data which appear in a certain sequence.
- To filter, assemble and relate data according to preferred criteria.
- To establish linkages between coding categories.
- To display relationships of categories.
- To draw and verify conclusions and hypotheses.
- To quote data in the final report.
- To generate and test theory.
- To communicate with other researchers or participants.

*Factors in blue denote my uses of NVivo in this study

Table 20 The Diversity of CAQDAS (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018)

In this second stage, I analysed the handwritten codes that I had generated in phase one and categorised the data into broader codes (NVivo uses the term nodes) which could then be more easily examined for broader themes. For example, in the handwritten codes, I highlighted certain non-verbal codes as individual codes: handshakes, kissing, eye contact, avoiding eye contact and so forth. When I coded these for the second time using NVivo, these specific examples were all coded under *Non-verbal behaviour*. Similarly, in the hand written coding phase, I identified forty-three separate codes of different nationality groups that were mentioned by the participants (Somalia, Lithuanian Polish etc.). These individual codes were merged into the code *Customers not originally from*

Ireland. Consequently, the final number of codes (nodes) totalled 224 (please refer to Appendix H). These codes were not *a priori* but open codes, that is, they were not established before coding, but rather they were created as the coding progressed (Castleberry& Nolen, 2018. p.809). An example of some of the codes that I generated in NVivo is included below:



Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By
customers not originally from Ireland	12	61	10/03/2020 11:33	MA
church and or community	1	4	14/03/2020 22:07	MA
males have higher status	1	2	15/03/2020 16:20	MA
networking in community for childminding	1	1	16/03/2020 14:07	MA
parenting	4	6	14/03/2020 20:14	MA
transition into community	1	2	14/03/2020 19:33	MA
different groups in one space	1	3	10/03/2020 11:38	MA
Direct Provision	6	12	12/03/2020 20:33	MA
Drug users	2	6	10/03/2020 11:41	MA
families	5	18	10/03/2020 11:33	MA
in recovery	1	1	13/03/2020 17:17	MA
Irish	4	10	13/03/2020 11:33	MA
Irish travellers	10	53	08/03/2020 20:53	MA
children	2	7	14/03/2020 13:08	MA
distinction between travellers and settled travellers	1	2	16/03/2020 16:07	MA
domestic violence	1	2	14/03/2020 22:21	MA
education	1	2	15/03/2020 12:41	MA
entitlement	2	3	14/03/2020 12:54	MA
fueds & anti social behaviou	3	5	14/03/2020 12:48	MA
local authorities	1	2	14/03/2020 12:50	MA

Figure 17 A Screenshot of some of the Codes and how they were organised in this study using NVivo (12)

3.8.3.3. Phase three: Searching for themes

In this phase, my focus was on the development of themes which related to the research question. Themes are “patterned meanings across a dataset that captures something important about the data in relation to the research question organised around a central

organising concept” (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 337). I began to group the codes into broad themes that were linked and which helped answer the first research question. I also cross-referenced the themes with the participant observation data set which I made reference to in memos.

One function of NVivo, which I found very useful in relation to highlighting relevant themes was the use of memos. This resource enables the researcher to add thoughts and ideas during the coding process. NVivo also allows the researcher to link memos together, which was important in the initial stage of establishing the main themes in the data. These memos aided me in consolidating my thoughts in relation to identifying the main themes of this study. Many of the comments I entered in the memos were then edited, refined, and subsequently used in the description and discussion of my findings.

3.8.3.4 Phase four: Reviewing themes

At this point, I had identified themes relevant to the first research question. This stage now involved my returning to the transcriptions and comparing the data and extracts for each node to check that the data matched the themes. Braun and Clarke suggest that the researcher should at this juncture check themes against the original data set and produce “a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.” (2006, p. 87). I followed this advice and devised an overall mind map summarising the themes including the subcategories within a theme (see figure 17).

3.8.3.5 Phase five: defining and naming themes

Four themes were identified during the analysis of data, in relation to the challenges staff experience in their provision of an appropriate and effective service to their culturally diverse customers: the navigation of different spaces by FI staff; gender; racism; and language competence. This last theme was changed from the language barrier when this was checked against all the data set, as this revised theme best captured this data set.

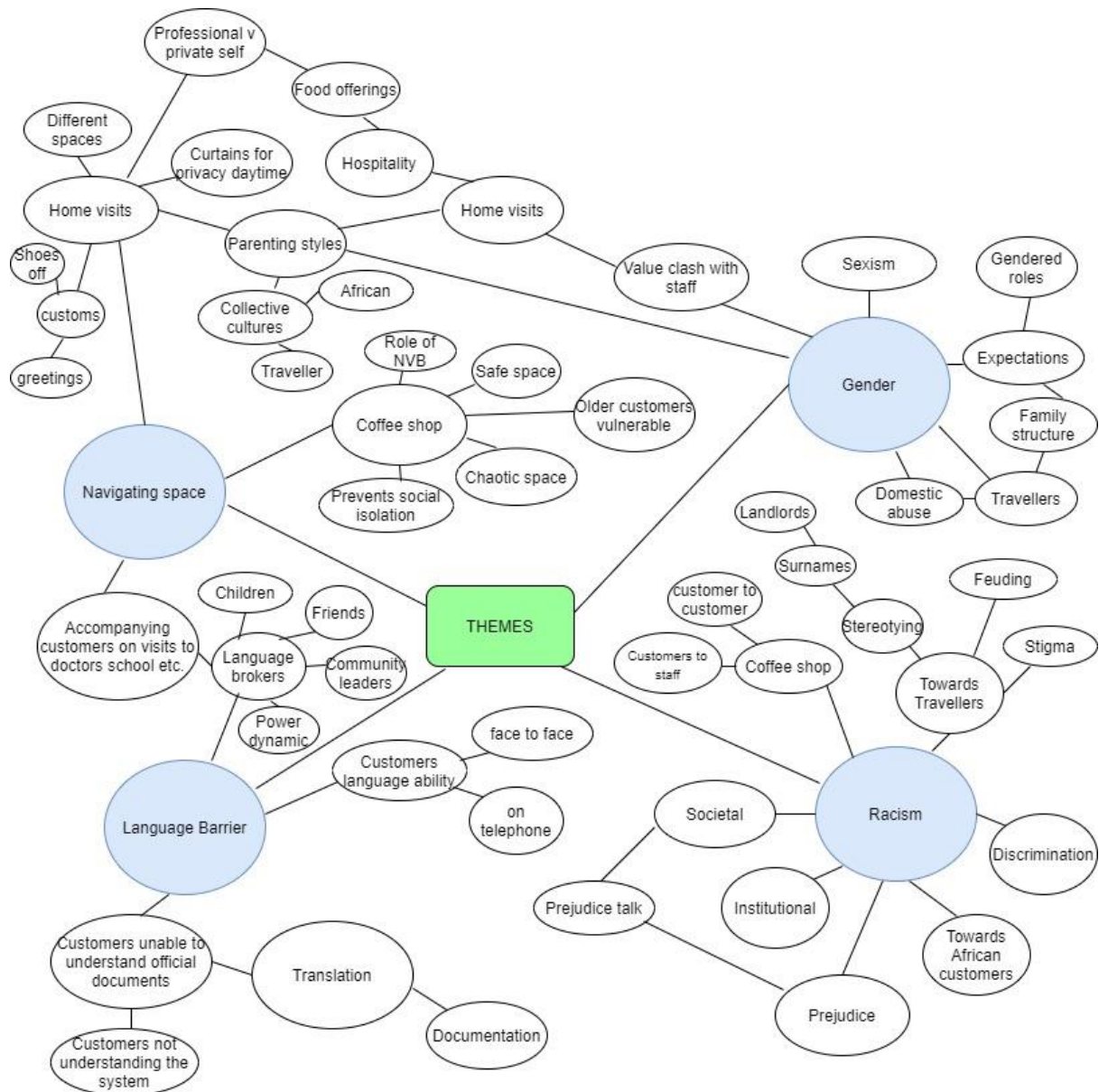


Figure 18 A Mind Map of the Themes that were identified in the Study

3.8.3.6 Phase six: producing the written report

In terms of the structure of the next four chapters, I am adopting an analytic approach to my findings (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This approach involves a simultaneous interrogation and discussion of the findings. My analysis chapters therefore, will include an integrated discussion of both findings and analysis alongside the incorporation of literature into the analysis of findings, as opposed to writing up findings and then a

discussion of them. Braun and Clarke term this approach “the treating extracts analytically approach” (2013, p. 252-253).

3.9 Reflexivity

In the discussion on ethnography earlier in this chapter, Whitehead (2005, p.5) posits a number of characteristics related to ethnographic research. He states that “[e]thnography is an interpretive, reflexive, and constructivist process.” Berger (2015, p.220) describes reflexivity as:

a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher’s [sic] positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome.

Meanwhile, Creswell and Creswell (2018) also argue that reflexivity requires the researcher to move beyond stating their biases and values by also acknowledging the significance of their own background in the overall formulation of the research project. In addition, Braun and Clarke (2013) maintain that researchers need to be reflexive during the analysis of their data and acknowledge that their multiple positions will have an influence on this process.

Taking the above points into consideration, it is important to acknowledge my own personal background, beliefs and values and the role they might play in decision making during the research process. My research is informed by the fact that I am a lecturer in DCU. This position has afforded me the social capital to be able to access key gatekeepers within FI, such as the head of HR. Moreover, it has provided me with a certain expertise in intercultural communication training. Before undertaking this research, I had some knowledge of the homeless crisis in Ireland through media and political discourse, but I had not engaged with homeless not-for-profit support workers in any way. For a large part of my professional life, I have been involved in English Language Teaching (ELT) as an English as a second or other language (ESOL) instructor. In addition, I am a lecturer in intercultural studies. I have lived in the UK, Ireland, Australia and Portugal. This international contact has generated an interest in and desire to learn about different aspects of intercultural communication. This has meant that I now see myself as very experienced

in intercultural contact and alive to different values and worldviews. Professionally, I take the position that academics and academic institutions should be involved in community engagement whenever possible and I value praxis in educational research. I also believe in social justice and the important role played by not-for-profit organisations at local, national and international levels. I also agree with O’Sullivan (2020) that currently in the Republic of Ireland, homelessness should be characterised as a crisis. Finally, my previous work with FI on a voluntary basis designing and delivering a culture-general intercultural competence training programme, before the commencement of this current research project, afforded me access to FI and its staff for this current study. While I cannot claim that this provided me with ‘insider status,’ it did allow me to become familiar not only with some of the staff members but also with their responsibilities and duties within the organisation.

3.10 Summary of chapter

This chapter discussed the methodology involved in gathering the data and analysis of these findings generated from this data. The first half of this chapter presented the rationale for using ethnography as the most suitable approach to examine the challenges that FI staff face in the provision of a service to customers who are culturally diverse. The chapter explained the procedures that were adopted for the utilisation of participant observations and group interviews. Next, the rationale for the use of a pilot study was explained.

The second half of this chapter explained how my data is analysed through the use of the six-stage process of TA suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). Four themes were identified during the analysis of data, in relation to the challenges staff experience in their provision of appropriate and effective service to their customers: the navigation of different spaces by FI staff; gender; racism; and the language competency of staff, customers and other actors. In each of the following four chapters, the findings and discussion sections will be combined.

Finally, as part of my own reflexive process, it is worth noting some of my experiences regarding the use of participant observations, to gather data, as well as the use of TA to analyse this data. The use of participant observations was new to me, but using them

allowed me to understand the organisational culture of FI, as well as the tasks and duties carried out by the staff on a daily basis. Furthermore, by observing the staff, I was able to better understand the different genres of language, meta-language, colloquialisms and idioms used by the workforce. This meant that the interviews were more productive as I could understand what the participants were telling me more easily and I could use this language appropriately. Secondly, as we shall see later in the dissertation, the use of observations and interviews enabled me to use a bottom-up approach to the design and delivery of a tailor-made context-specific training programme for the staff.

CHAPTER 4: NAVIGATION OF SPACE BY FOCUS IRELAND STAFF MEMBERS

4.1 Introduction

FI staff members encounter a number of challenges in their day-to-day navigation of space during the provision of services to their customers, particularly in the public, semi-private and private spheres in their support of customers. The first part of this chapter section will examine the semi-public sphere, in particular the FI coffee shop and explore FI staff members' attempts to communicate both verbally and non-verbally in an appropriate manner with customers who are culturally diverse within this space. In the next part will focus on FI staff member's visits to customers' homes, as part of the ongoing support that customers can avail of once they have been housed. Issues examined in this section include customer behaviour in the semi-private space of the front garden; the way in which customers seek privacy; the cultural practices and behaviour of customers in their private space; and childrearing practices.

4.2 The semi-public sphere

The coffee shop is a semi-public space. Indeed, in addition to the downstairs space which provides food for homeless customers at a subsidised rate, A & I staff can also talk to customers about any issues of a private or sensitive nature in meeting rooms above the coffee shop. As with any other coffee shop in Dublin, customers may be refused service if they behave in a disrespectful manner to either FI staff members or fellow customers. They may also be banned for certain types of misbehaviour for varying lengths of time, depending on the severity of this inappropriate behaviour.

The coffee shop is a small space that is used by as many as one hundred and fifty customers on a given day. The majority of staff who were interviewed and work in this space refer to it as "busy" "crazy," "mental," "very busy," "chaotic" and "loud," and increasingly multicultural. This means that conflict may sometimes arise in terms of intercultural interactions occurring in the space. Therefore, when dealing with customers who have different worldviews, staff need to develop greater intercultural competence in order to provide a respectful, appropriate and effective service in the coffee shop.

At times, FI staff referred to the violence they sometimes witness between customers or violence that is occasionally directed towards them. In addition, staff often refer to “an atmosphere” which is sometimes present in the coffee shop space that could lead to acts of verbal or physical violence which, according to many, typically occur is at the kitchen pass, where customers queue to buy their meals:

P12 there has to be a line, so it can be very very chaotic

And is that one of the things not respecting the line does that cause problems?

P12 [absolutely]

P11 yeah

P13 [yeah] yeah

P11 [yeah] murder

P12 [because] they're all talking...the staff and

Some customers dislike waiting in line and can become verbally aggressive towards other customers or staff. It is against this chaotic backdrop that staff are expected to be supportive and provide an appropriate service to their customers. However, this means that at times staff are operating in a stressful environment and thus may not be cognisant of their communication styles. Despite their desire to interact with customers in a culturally sensitive manner, some may potentially engage in “well-meaning clashes” (Brislin, 2000, p. 11; 2002), whereby they will encounter communication barriers because of a lack of knowledge and skills related to intercultural competence (see chapter one).

4.2.1 Non-verbal communication: Oculistics

One method that staff use in their management of the coffee shop space is their use of oculistics. This term relates to the use of eyes in the communication process such as engaging in eye contact, lack of eye contact and rolling of the eyes (Andersen et al., 2002). The staff also engage in eye contact in order to communicate with their customers. This was apparent in one of my observations:

The Focus Ireland staff member(s) (FISM) engaged in more eye contact than the customer, who broke eye contact with the FISM quite often. I think he was from Poland. I could hear the customer's accent, but not the details of the conversation between the staff member and customer. The customer seemed very annoyed. The FISM went away, came back after a quick phone call and chatted briefly. The Polish customer seemed ok with what was said if not entirely happy. [I thought about eye contact and posture but again, wondered if the staff used the same non-verbal communication (NVC) with international customers, especially older men. I am going to ask this in some way in the interview].

(Observation 5. Monday, 3rd April 2017. Time: 11:15- 12:15. Location: Coffee Shop)

...another Advice & Information staff member who had come onto the floor moments ago is greeting an African couple at the info desk. I had noticed them through the window waiting outside about five minutes ago and I wondered why they had not come in. Initially, the African woman speaks and then the African man offers his hand and the FISM shakes it and then the woman's. The importance of haptics²¹ within African culture. I notice the use of eye contact by the FISM and lack of it by the woman more so by the man. The woman does appear to acquiesce a little to what I assume is her partner

(Observation 6. Thursday 13th April 2017. Time: 10:30- 11:30. Location: Coffee Shop)

The above extract shows how some international customers use eye contact to communicate differently to the Irish norms of NVC. In the case of the African couple²²,

²¹ Touch communication.

²² The term African, which is used here, and in discussions about childrearing practices later in the chapter, is problematic. As, Creese (2011) explains in her study of African migrants in Toronto, there are fifty-four countries in the continent of Africa. Moreover, more than two thousand languages are spoken there, and there is a diversity of cultural practices. She states that "to refer to participants [in her study] as *African* rather than, for example *Ugandan*, *Sudanese*, or *Zambian*-or specific ethnic groups within each country-can be an intellectual process of homogenization that reaffirms the general ignorance about differences between African countries" (p. 15). Yet, she also rationalises the use of the term African in her study by arguing that if research is focussed on experiences of migrants, then this can justify descriptions of individuals or groups as African. Furthermore, Creese states that many of the participants in her study adopted this term to describe themselves. Many of the participants in my study used this ethnic identity label to describe their customers, and so, in line with Creese, I use the term 'African' throughout this dissertation unless staff members identified individuals by nationality. At the same time, I acknowledge the problems that are associated with the use of this term.

while the woman started the conversation with the FI staff member, she then appeared to accede to her male partner. In addition, they both disengaged eye contact with the staff member and lowered their eyes quite often during the interaction. Nwosu, (2009) argues that this method of communication is common amongst some ethnic groups in Africa and is utilised in formal settings as a demonstration of respect towards those who are perceived to have more power or expertise.

However, one of the challenges in the use of eye contact by FI staff to communicate with customers is to understand its precise meaning and purpose during interactions. While some NVC is universal, much of it is not, and is in fact culturally bound (Andersen, 2012; Matsumoto and Hwang, 2013). This might explain the Polish customer's regular disengagement in eye contact with the younger female staff member who might have engaged in eye contact too frequently and for a longer than expected duration. In terms of NVC, staff are greatly influenced by their Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training. It provides them with skills that they can use when customers are verbally or physically aggressive towards them. Many of them spoke very positively about its effectiveness in "bringing customers down" from heightened states. Training staff in NVC styles in different cultures as an additive to their existing TCI training will help staff communicate non-verbally in a culturally appropriate manner.

As previously stated, in order to support customers in the coffee shop, staff must sometimes navigate a chaotic, busy and increasingly multicultural space. Working in this space under these conditions leads to a number of challenges. It is clear from my observations and interviews that staff are proficient in dealing with incidents of violence and overdosing, due to their background in social care or social work and their acquisition of the requisite knowledge and skills for dealing with conflict developed during their TCI training. However, it is less clear if all the staff can deal respectfully, appropriately and effectively with intercultural encounters, especially physical or verbal aggression in this space if customer behaviour is culturally different from their own. Consequently, they will benefit from training which focuses on intercultural competence as it will help them to

understand the culturally bound nature of some NVC and in turn enable them to adapt their NVC to suit the intercultural encounter in which they are engaged.

4.3 Semi-private and private spaces

Approximately fifty percent of the staff who were interviewed visited customers' homes. These home visits are part of the ongoing support FI provides to many families once they have been successfully housed. In so doing, staff move from public space in their journeys to and from the house, to the semi-private space of the front garden and into the private space of a customer's home. This navigation entails encountering different cultural practices. In descriptions of home visits, some staff referred to challenges around the manner in which some customers used spaces such as their front garden, and front window. Upon entrance to the house, staff described customs such as the removal of shoes, or the role of hospitality in the form of offers of tea, coffee or food as also being problematic. Once the meetings in the family home began, challenges for staff included the culturally different child rearing practices they encountered. At times, these discussions centred on child protection issues, due to parents giving childcare responsibilities to older siblings in their absence²³.

4.3.1 Semi-private space: the front garden

Some of the staff who visit customers' homes deem a number of the practices that they witness or hear about anecdotally as 'inappropriate' uses of domestic space. One example cited related to a Traveller family's use of their front garden as a space for socialisation with other Travellers. As P30 and P28 remark:

P30...we'd one family who are housed in a housing estate in Waterford, a council house, and it was reported back to me that like every night at 5 o'clock, it was sunny, where there could be 20 men rock up and take their shirts off and they're out throwing up coins is it? Or, [pause] playing games, or having a few cans, or whatever and that wasn't appropriate and that was considered by the other neighbours to be anti-social behaviour, and then we'd have to go in and address that with them

And how did you address it?

²³ Some of these siblings were as young as 10 years old.

P30 well straight up “it's not appropriate” it's you know the “you have big groups of people congregating and it's not acceptable. I understand it's part of your culture, but it's not appropriate there are complaints going into the council about it, your neighbours are complaining about you. Em, so how are we going to deal with this?”

P28 [it's] intimidating as well like

P30 [it] is intimidating

[yeah] and you were saying it was happening to you in in XXXX²⁴

P28...it was actually more personal. It was em, my parents live in an avenue of 8, and um Travellers moved in directly across the road...it was the exact same thing, huge gang, it was a gang of men like. And there'll be all kinds of, on the front lawn, drinking cups of tea...it wasn't as if they were, they weren't being anti-social but it was just extremely intimidating. So I could see...in an estate, how that would be very intimidating for people like, you know, and it isn't. It wouldn't be acceptable, even if they came into us now: “do it out the back garden” even

P30 [yes]

P28 [just not] in the front, but it always seemed to be in the front of the house like

As we can see from the extract, some of the FI staff refer to what they consider to be both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in the front garden of a house from an ethnocentric settled lens. Their description of Traveller behaviour is framed in language such as ‘huge gangs’, a phrase often associated in discourse with non-normative or illegal male youth behaviour (Fraser, 2013) which may be used as a way of ‘othering’ this group. Moreover, the word gang is often associated with Traveller groups and is a word that is frequently used by the Irish press to describe Irish Travellers. Indeed, Koca-Helvaci (2016) found that it was part of a lexical set related to ‘crime’ as well as ‘feud’ and ‘anti-social behaviour’ in the Republic of Ireland. The fact that Travellers use their front gardens to socialise with other families is deemed to be unacceptable by some FI staff members, and is framed in the interviews by words such as ‘anti-social’ and ‘intimidating’. It is unclear whether the staff would disapprove of socialising in the front

²⁴ Name of town omitted

garden if the inhabitants were from the majority settled community, or whether they would also describe such behaviour as illegal or ‘anti-social.’ P30’s description of how she dealt with the issue appears to be somewhat culturally insensitive due to the very direct communication style that she employed when telling the family to stop having relatives and friends in their front garden. It may have been clear to the family that she disapproved of this behaviour because of the direct language used by her when dealing with this issue.

In order for staff to support customers in a culturally sensitive manner, training in the management of conflict in an intercultural setting would be useful. One approach that may prove effective in this regard, which staff could then incorporate in their mediations between Irish Travellers and the neighbours, is the study of Conflict Face-Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005; Ting-Toomey and Takai, 2006). This focuses on the different ways collectivist and individualist cultures deal with conflict as well as providing an insight into how individuals can develop knowledge, attitudes and communication skills which aid in the management of “vulnerable identity-based conflict situations” in an appropriate, effective and adaptive manner (Ting-Toomey, 2007, p. 257). However, in any discussion of collectivist and individualist value dimensions (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005), it is necessary for facilitators to point out to participants the danger of generalising all Irish Travellers as collectivists and all settled Irish as individualists.²⁵ Nevertheless, if facilitators point out this danger, then value dimensions can be a good starting point in discussions of values, especially when time is limited.

4.3.2 Semi-private space: windows, drawn curtains and seeking privacy

The next challenge for some FI staff members arose upon entering the private space of some customers’ houses. The windows and doors of a house are a buffer zone between the semi-private and private space. In half of the interviews, the staff pointed to the practice of drawn curtains in a house during the day, typically by African and especially Nigerian families:

P33 um, one thing I would always have noticed with, I suppose clients with different cultures. A lot of the time they leave their curtains closed, and I still

²⁵ Facilitators would also need to highlight other criticisms of Hofstede’s value dimensions, for example, the method of data gathering (McSweeney, 2002), and “equating nation with culture” (Baskerville, 2003, p.1).

don't know why that is...So, there was three different, that's the reason I noticed it, because um there was one young girl, I don't know where she was from, I could say Nigeria again, but I don't know for sure...The other two [pause], I think they were actually, all around like African, um, and they would just leave their curtains closed

[and you] find that strange or?

P33 [yeah] yeah...initially maybe, especially cos they had children. I think and I just thought, I don't know why I thought, they should open the curtains if they had children. But in general, I just felt that maybe it would be nice, I always find a house fresher...if you open curtains

P26 and P27 also comment on this practice:

P26 [one] thing I have noticed with some of the African families is [pause] they always like to have the curtains closed

[ok]

P27 [yeah] I've noticed that as well

P26 [you] know have you noticed that like?

P27 [windows] open but curtains closed

P26 [yeah] yeah, I've noticed that a lot like, and you're always kind of saying "it's very dark in here, do you want to open it up, you know for the children?" I suppose I'd be thinking maybe from a mental health point of view, is not very good to be in the dark all the time or whatever. But...you don't feel like you should or you could ask these questions. But like, really if you want to know more about the culture we should be saying "is there a reason the curtains are always closed?"

Interestingly, most of the staff concerns expressed above were not related to inappropriate expressions of the need for privacy (especially in the daytime); rather those that highlighted this practice questioned it in terms of its effect on customers' mental health, especially the children, or health in general. This is based on the Irish cultural practice of opening windows and curtains on a warm day to let in the light and fresh air, which is considered good for our health. The extracts above typify the view of staff about this practice. The second extract is also interesting because it epitomises many of the FI staff members' curiosity and openness to learning about other cultures. Yet, because of their

overriding desire to demonstrate respect for customers, they felt uncomfortable asking them why their curtains were drawn during the day, as we can see by P26's comment: "you don't feel like you should or you could ask these questions."

FI staff who were interviewed do not associate the practice of drawing curtains in the daytime with a desire for privacy on the part of their customers. There is limited research in the field of intercultural studies or sociology on the manner in which immigrants who have relocated to a new host environment manifest their search for privacy. In the field of anthropology, Larsen (2011, p. 144) maintains that manifestations of privacy or "symbolic fencing" are culturally construed and vary depending on locality. In addition, symbols of privacy within a neighbourhood setting are often non-verbal, including the use of space. In an ethnographic study of refugees' experiences of resettlement in Denmark, Larsen focused on symbols of accessibility or privacy in the domestic sphere, including the garden, windows, curtains and the use of the kitchen. Her study centred on the extent to which a refugee family from the Congo understood the unwritten codes used by local members of the community to demonstrate accessibility or privacy in the domestic sphere. She pointed out that Danish cultural attitudes to privacy differed greatly from Congolese notions of privacy in relation to the domestic sphere. She found that one of the principal reasons for drawing the curtains for this refugee family was their desire for privacy. However, because curtains were drawn in the day as well as at night, local neighbours viewed this as a rejection and thought that the family did not wish to be part of the community. The local community also viewed this act with suspicion, as demonstrated in a neighbour alerting the police about the possibility of the existence of terrorists behind the drawn curtains.

Based on this Danish research, the behaviour of some African families in drawing the curtains during the daytime could be seen as an attempt to achieve privacy. Indeed, this rationale is cited by P52 when she remarks on drawn curtains in the daytime: "and you don't know whether that's around privacy or what it is, but I've definitely had that in the past." However, it could also be argued, just as Larsen found, that some neighbours may treat newcomer families suspiciously if their curtains are drawn in the daytime. By conducting this practice, newcomers are not following the unwritten code of practice of

opening curtains in the daytime, and may be treated with suspicion by Irish neighbours as a result. In Ireland, curtains tend to be drawn at night for privacy, not in the daytime. The cultural practices highlighted by the staff in relation to drawn curtains in the daytime and socialising in the garden concern the semi-private buffer zone between the public and domestic sphere. In a domestic space, the windows and front doors are the physical markers that denote the beginning of the domestic/private sphere, as we can see from the visual depiction in figure 18:²⁶

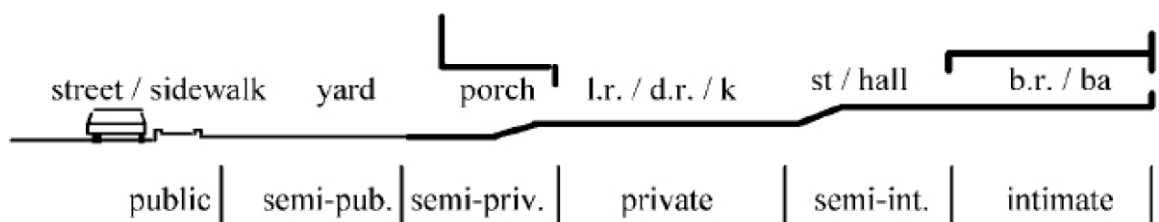


Figure 19 Zones of Privacy (Robinson, 2001)

Figure 17 represents seven zones of privacy, which Robinson terms a territorial gradient, and were hypothesised by her through the use of space syntax (degree of accessibility) graphs. In the context of neighbourhood space, the seven zones range from public to intimate spaces: public civic domain, public neighbourhood domain, semi-public or collective domain, semi-private domain, private domain, semi-intimate domain, and intimate domain (Robinson, 2001 cited in Mustafa, Hassan and Baper, 2010). If we apply these zones to an Irish context, then the front garden is a merger of semi-public and semi-private space, in which activities such as briefly chatting with neighbours or mowing the lawn are acceptable behaviours, but the act of socialising for longer periods is uncommon. In an Irish context, outdoor socialising would usually occur in the back garden, a view that P28 supports when she states in the extract above that if Travellers socialise, they should “do it out the back garden.”

²⁶ L.r.= living room, k = kitchen, d.r.= dining room, st = stairs, b.r. = bedroom, b.a = Bathroom.

4.3.3 Private space: Customs and rituals

The next challenge for staff on entering some customers' homes was to become accustomed to some of the different cultural practices associated with greetings and phatic communion practised in this space. For example, many of the FI staff referred to the practice of taking one's shoes off:

P48 [I suppose] culturally [pause], one or two differences. I had found with people, um the Polish, they like to take their shoes off at the front door. So they have their, like their outside shoes, and like their slippers or whatever. So I'm always conscious of that, walking in and they're going "no no no" and I was going "no it's fine like I can take off me shoes"

[so] you do take off your shoes?

P48 [um] I would take off my shoes

P48 finds this cultural practice acceptable. However, for P49, the practice is more problematic:

P49 [something] now that's come into my mind, and I feel quite vulnerable, it's when em, when you're expected to take off your shoes going into somebody's home. I really don't like that [laughs], cos I feel like, em I want to know if I can be able to escape, if there's any risk. So, and that's that's with every person em, when there's an expectation to take off my shoes, I feel very vulnerable um [inaudible]

[and] do you take off your shoes?

P49 em [pause] sometimes, I haven't if they haven't insisted on it. But if somebody has, then I have, and I'm not comfortable at all, for that duration um

[mmm]

P50 [so] again, the cultural difference, for me this is natural...to take, you know that's a matter of respect. So, I understand what you saying, cos I have to adopt [sic] you know...And if people coming in my house, and don't take shoes...And I know, I understand completely...what you saying, but the other hands like, I don't have the, you know issue that P49 has...And I can take the shoes you know, it's a matter of respect etc. And they showing me the respect

to asking to take the shoes. I'm not a stranger anymore and you're welcome in my place...

Meanwhile, P24 was asked about removing shoes and other phatic communion communication rituals:

What would you be what was your natural instinct to do?

P24 [oh] I would have taken off my shoes if I asked, yeah yeah.

As we can see from these extracts, the notion of respect for customers is highlighted by many staff, in relation to the cultural domestic practice of taking one's shoes off upon entering a house. However, some female staff such as P49 felt vulnerable carrying out this practice. Interestingly, the male participant P50, does not appear to empathise with this feeling of vulnerability. For him, the importance of demonstrating respect to customers upon entering their home outweighs any personal concerns for safety. Staff also referred to the custom of kissing and hugging (haptics) which occur at the same time as removing one's shoes in the phatic communion process.

Another problem for staff related to the practice of removing one's shoes upon entering a domestic setting, is the conflation of personal domestic space and professional public space, as P53 points out:

P52 maybe in some cult, especially with the Muslim culture [inaudible] have to take my shoes off. It's something to do with respect...you know, it's respecting the people's values and respecting another culture em, and em, I don't really think it's a

P53 [I think] it's kind of when you have your shoes off, generally you're at home... [laughs] you don't usually have your shoes on the beach, it's a holiday. Or, it's a, it's something that you're in control of. Eh, but you're take your shoes off like (you) wouldn't be walking around the office with your shoes off unless your feet got soaked or something

For P53, the custom of removing one's shoes is problematic, as he associates this practice with private domestic space and is something one does when "you're at home." P53 appears to view customers' homes as an extension of his workplace. It could be argued

that he views the promotion of his professional self as more important than performing the domestic practices and rituals common to the household he is entering. He also associates observing cultural domestic practices with a loss of control and a possible loss of his professional identity.

Such an association may denote a subconscious view of the customer/service provider relationship as a power dynamic. In their monograph on interpersonal practice in social work, Seabury, Seabury and Garvin (2011) point out that the power dynamic that exists between social worker and client cannot be disregarded as the social worker inevitably begins the relationship with the client from a “one-up position” (p.129) due to their perceived higher status and level of former education. Consequently, “[t]o practice effectively and competently, social workers must be able to recognise the power dimensions that exist in professional relationships with clients” (ibid). A similar dynamic might exist between a FI staff member and his/her customer. FI staff members strive to build a good relationship with their customers, which can be accomplished by attempts to lessen this power dynamic. Therefore, it could be argued that by removing one’s shoes, staff are sending a message to their customer that they respect their traditions and see them as equal.

Yet, there is a danger in discussions about rituals that one can be too prescriptive about whether to follow another person’s rituals at the expense of one’s own feelings of being uncomfortable. It is vital that staff can conduct meetings with customers in their homes in safety and if the staff feel uncomfortable engaging in haptic communication or vulnerable through the act of removing their shoes, then they should not feel obliged to take part in these acts.

4.3.4 Hospitality

FI staff are required to take part in practices in the private, domestic space whilst operating as professionals. For some FI staff members, the ritual of food offerings was viewed as problematic. Some pointed out that the conflation of professional and personal spheres presents a challenge during their visits to customers’ homes. For P53, this centred on the appropriacy of accepting offers of food, which he associates with gift giving:

P53 [pause]...it's kind of like, like for us it's kind of like to do with presents, people might want to give you a present or something “you must have this”

P52 [yeah]

P53 and you're going you just want to keep real, em

P52 [so] it's a boundary issue isn't it?

P53 [boundaries] and you don't want to be getting like [pause] sometimes the word professional annoys me but, em,

P52 [yeah]

P53 you just want to keep it as as, I'm here to do a piece of work and be friendly and all the rest of it, but I don't want to be getting into um um, you giving me tickets for the match or something you know [laughs]

The concern for P52 and P53 is that customers may misconstrue the customer / service provider relationship as one of friendship. For P53, this professional relationship can be maintained by not accepting gifts from his customers. I went on to ask P52 and P53 if they saw the offer of food as the same as being offered a gift:

P53 [um] [pause], I think the food is a bit, I think they see the food as just. well you're in my home now, some people anyway, you're in my home now and I'm offering you this, and you're kind of thinking well maybe they'll be insulted if I don't even have a taste [inaudible]

P52 [you] know with this particular lady because she...her English is very poor as well, and I ended up taking...it was an apple pie and explaining to her “look I'm going to share it with the team ok?” [inaudible] “This is literally for the whole office, for the whole team” and you know “they'll really appreciate it, thanks very much.” And, I think what I said to her was “I have my breakfast before I come to you, so I can't, as much as I'd like to, sit here and have cake with you,” em, I can't, I'm trying to explain the thing about the boundaries

P53 [mmm]

[so you], the not accepting food, you don't, you want to be careful with boundaries?

P52 [yeah]

[do you] see the food as you becoming too, too close then if you start to eat food with the?

P52 well you don't want it to turn into kind of...maybe for some people they might confuse it for a friendship or something as well, I'm thinking and just trying to keep it um [pause] some way kind of professional

The topic of the association of offers of food with gift giving or attempts to establish a friendship also arose in the interview with P24 and P25. P25 in particular saw these actions as similar:

P25 ...you're doing a piece of work with their interest, you're not judging them, you're there to help them and you help them get to a place where they might have got to but it might've taken them a couple of years. So, they probably see that as friendship and um, maybe that might be a cultural thing, they might just say "oh he's being really nice to me so we have to be nice back." They might want to shower you with gifts when you go around, "there's a cake" or I mean, I remember...XXXX a Brazilian fella "what wine do you drink?"..."you've done loads, I'll buy you a bottle of wine"...but it's maintaining boundaries like it's

P24 [yeah] yeah

P25 [in] all, in all of the sector, isn't it? It's kind of there's a professional line now. Technically, they might see you as their friend, but you're very clear that I'm there to do a job and I will do my best for you and I'll advocate for you...and you do get to know them very very well over the period of time

P24 [but] you're not [inaudible- a friend??]

P25 [but] it's always, it's always a job. You're not going to see them after work, you're not calling in for a cup of tea, you know. It's, it's, I'm there to do the job

In the extracts above, P52, P53 and P25 unconsciously recognise the importance of accepting these food offerings as a way of demonstrating respect for their customers' culture yet accepting food is problematic for them, because they equate this ritual to gift

giving which is perceived by them as an attempt by customers to establish friendship. In the field of social care and social work, there are ethical issues around accepting gifts from clients. In one of the codes of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers, they are advised not to “enter into any agreement or contract or accept any gift that might cause you to act against the terms of this Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics” (www.irishstatutebook.ie). P52 appears to be worried that by accepting a cake from the customer she is crossing an ethical and professional boundary. Meanwhile, P25 believes that by not accepting food or gifts, he will be able to maintain a boundary - “a professional line” and that a customer /service provider relationship can be ethically maintained. He appears to be keen to avoid any hint of favouritism being levelled at him because he has accepted gifts from customers. In addition, he believes it to be a common view held by professional homeless service providers.

P25, P52 and P53 do not comment on the possible motivations of customers behind acts of hospitality. Hospitable acts such as food offerings in the domestic sphere are culturally constructed in many African and Arabic cultures as a way of demonstrating gratitude. In addition, the act of sharing food with staff members could be a means by which customers regain a sense of normality through familiar social engagements with others after a period of existing in a liminal state of homelessness. This view aligns with Vandevooort’s (2017, p. 610) study of Syrian refugees in Belgium, who found that “acting as hosts also serves to restore a sense of social normality” in their new environment. Another reason why customers offer food to FI staff members could be a desire to establish trust amongst the group who are sharing the food (Hofstede, 2009). The skill of developing trust has been identified by a number of scholars as a key component of intercultural competence, which in turn aids the service provider in their attempts to build relationships with their customer/client (Congress, 2005; Deardorff, 2006). Interestingly, in nearly all the interviews many of the staff remarked on the importance of developing trust with their customers. The refusal of the offers of food by some of the staff could in fact result in a loss of trust on the part of customers. The above ritual of food offerings during home visits represents a dilemma for FI staff, as it raises a fundamental question of whether they should accommodate the cultural practices of their customers, which may lead to the creation of trust and building a good relationship, or whether they should retain their professional ethos and refuse to partake in these rituals. Perhaps this refusal is due to the

sense of vulnerability on the part of staff, but, by not agreeing to partake in the cultural practices of their customers, they risk missing out on opportunities to build good relationships with customers.²⁷ There are of course a myriad of other reasons for staff not wishing to accept offers of food including for example diet or dislike of certain foods. Consequently, staff should not be under any obligation to accept food. The subject of whether or not to accept such offers was raised by a number of staff in some of the training sessions. While participants acknowledged that they were not obliged to accept offers of food, many of them were of the opinion that if possible, they should accept these offers, in the interests of building trust and establishing good relationships.

In his monograph about frontline social workers De Montigny (1995, p. 50) maintains that professional training enables the social worker to engage in “a managed integration of personal characteristics with a professional identity” in order to match societal expectations of what a ‘good’ social worker should be. This amalgamation of personal and professional identities equally applies to service providers in the homeless sector. The concerns expressed by some staff members in the extracts above in relation to displaying too much of their personal self is that customers may misconstrue the relationship as one of friendship, thereby leading to a dismantlement of the professional persona they have constructed.

4.3.5 Parental practices

The staff who engaged in home visits often referred to the need to support some of the families in relation to how children were cared for as well as how some of the children were disciplined. Some FI staff members commented on the fact that in some of their visits to African families the children were sharing beds, which led them to question the appropriateness of such a practice. Additionally, a number of the participants remarked on the practice by some families of slapping children and on the fact that it was culturally and legally unacceptable in an Irish context. Some staff members also remarked on the dilemma that they faced in this regard. On one hand, in the interviews staff demonstrated

²⁷ The challenge for FI staff of establishing trust and building good relationships with their customers will be examined further in Chapter 8.

empathy and respect for customers' culture, but on the other hand they also had an obligation to comply with Irish law.

FI staff also commented on the challenge they faced in their attempts to understand the different cultural practices related to childcare by some customers and the importance of deciding whether this behaviour constituted child protection issues under Irish law. One challenge related to the notion of co-ethnic community members' involvement in childcare practices:

P24...but also within the African communities, it took us a while to realise this now, where the woman might say, "oh my sister has the kids" or "the kids have gone to stay with my sister"...but actually then we realised it's not a family member, it's a friend, but they

P25 [refer] to them as sisters

P24 [but] we wouldn't send our kids to somebody's house you know for a few days unless it was a family member or very close friends, so it's sort of that

P25 [yeah]

P24 [the] the childcare and the appropriateness sometime...this um "she's gone off to Dublin for a few days, we don't know where the kids are, but they're with some sister"

Overall, the staff demonstrated some knowledge of African child rearing practices. The above remarks by P24 highlight the involvement of fellow African community members from outside of the immediate family in child caretaking. The staff recognised that such a practice was common, but some questioned whether it was appropriate. At the same time while P24 displays an understanding of child rearing practices within African communities, she also demonstrates surprise when she states, "we wouldn't send our kids to somebody's house you know for a few days". For her, such customs are inappropriate. However, these childcare practices are common and acceptable amongst polymatric cultures in many African countries, such as the Hasu in Nigeria, whereby care and discipline of children is distributed between on average four people possibly including community members (Van Ijzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg and Sagi-Schwartz, 2013). FI staff may be less surprised by polymatric childcare practices if they undergo intercultural competence training, where they can gain greater insights into different

cultural childcare practices, which will then aid them in their support of families who are not originally from Ireland.

A further challenge in relation to child-caretaking is FI staff encountering children being left on their own. In some interviews, some of the staff described the cultural practice of older siblings looking after younger ones while the parents are at work. This practice is termed sibling caretaking (Weisner, et al., 1977) and involves “the delegation of parental authority and supervision to elder children and supports the provision of care in a culturally valued manner” (Hafford, 2010, p. 294). Importantly, these older children may not be teenagers. The staff mainly associated this practice with African customers, particularly those from Nigeria:

P40 I worked with the lady...I suppose it was around child protection, but it linked into that just in terms of different values. It was around leaving children unsupervised, was kind of an ongoing issue, in terms of the older boy minding the baby [inaudible]

[ok], and how old was that older boy?

P40 at the time I remember going in one day to do a property inspection with a colleague and she wasn't in, we sent a letter to say we're coming in and she wasn't there. I'd say he²⁸ was only about 10 or 11 and the baby was probably, at that point, she was probably one and a half maybe, a toddler. So, we arrived in and they were home alone basically and mum was in work. So there was, um I think prior to that there was kind of concerns that could have been happening but em they were living off site in, you know, long-term property, so obviously child protection reported in it would have been a problem prior to that. But it was just the mum I suppose there was financial implications she wasn't able to afford childcare she was paying a loan and was working you know and probably her minimum wage so it was difficult so um yeah...it definitely was, it was kind of an issue...

[ok] and what nationality was that?

P40 she was from Nigeria

P40 she didn't initially see it as being a big problem She thought we were you know, she thought we were making kind of a mountain out of a molehill, that

²⁸ The child.

he was ok, and they had her phone number and there was a phone there in the house if anything happened you know, and obviously we were explaining it's not ok, you can't leave a 10-year-old, whatever, to mind a baby, it's child protection, if anything happened in the house, you know, fire, hot kettle, or whatever

There are a number of issues in the extract above, the most important being the legality of leaving young children on their own while the mother²⁹ is out working. FI staff are bound by law to notify the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA)³⁰ of any incident involving child protection. Therefore, in the case discussed above P40 informed the police and child welfare officials for legal and safety reasons. The phenomenon of sibling caretaking is less common in Ireland now. Usually parents, close family members or professional childminders practise child-caretaking. This practice is associated with many African (Weisner, et al., 1977) and Latino (Orellana, 2003) cultures. Ruiz-Casares and colleagues conducted a sixty-one nation survey on the Supervision of Children in Low- and Middle-Income Countries and generated world percentage maps showing where children were typically left on their own or supervised by other children. These maps illustrate that such practices are common in Central Africa and parts of Northern Africa and some South American countries (Ruiz-Casares, et al., 2018).

Child protection issues notwithstanding, there are some benefits to these child caretaking practices and the adoption of Irish ethnocentric views of this practice might prevent them from seeing these benefits. Indeed, Ruiz-Casares, et al. (2018) point out that sibling child caretaking can lead to strengthening of sibling ties as well as leading to both siblings being socialised into culturally normative roles. However, the authors also recognize the negatives of this practice such as greater risk of injury as children may be too young to look after their sibling in a safe manner.

Some staff members also remarked on the dilemma that they faced in relation to these culturally different childcare practices. On one hand, they referred to the need to develop trust with their customers by demonstrating empathy and respect for customers' culture.

²⁹ In this particular case the mother was a single parent.

³⁰ This name is an amalgamation of two Irish words, Tús, (a new beginning) and Lá (day). The meaning behind the name is a new day for children.

On the other hand, they needed to be conscious of the fact that they have an obligation to comply with Irish law.

4.4 Intercultural competence models and frameworks

The focus of the chapter is on FI staff members' navigation of different spaces in their various roles supporting their customers. An effective and appropriate service for customers by FI staff involves the development of knowledge and skills. In the semi-public space of the coffee shop staff encounter communication issues with customers and they rely heavily on the use of non-verbal language to maintain a safe space for their customers and to communicate effectively with them. Many of the culture general models of intercultural competence incorporate components related to non-verbal communication (Byram, 1997; Bennett, 1993). In addition, intercultural communication scholars focus on non-verbal communication cues and behaviours in great detail (Andersen, et al., 2002). Meanwhile, culture specific intercultural competence models also focus on non-verbal communication components (Sue, Rasheed and Rasheed, 2015). Discussions of these concepts in training sessions would aid staff in situating their TCI training, which relies heavily on the use of direct eye contact, into culturally bound parameters. As a result of this training, staff will become more aware of when direct eye contact is or is not appropriate.

In the private sphere, staff are required to adopt unfamiliar customs and rituals. In addition, one possible role in their support of families might be to persuade customers to develop cultural practices related to child rearing and discipline that may be unfamiliar to them. Knowledge of cultural value orientations dealing with collectivist and individual cultures which can aid staff in understanding different family structures, as well as caregiving/ caretaking responsibilities, may prove useful for staff in supporting customers who live in family units which are different from Irish family units (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, House, et al., 2004). However, we must be mindful not to essentialise family units within strict binary collectivist/ individualist descriptions. Consequently, knowledge of specific family structures acquired through an interrogation of the roles and responsibilities within that family, is also extremely useful for FI staff who support families in their homes. To this end the culturagram (Congress, 2005), might prove to be an extremely useful framework that FI staff can use to obtain this information.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has explored the challenges that FI staff encounter in their movement between public, semi-private and private spaces while supporting their customers. In the public sphere, staff must interact with customers and other agencies related to homelessness care provision. In order to provide an effective and appropriate service, staff need to have knowledge of the role of NVC between interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, in order to navigate public space and interact with other colleagues from various homeless agencies staff must develop a wide range of communication skills and knowledge of metalanguage used by these agencies.

Staff also interact with customers in the private sphere, principally on home visits to the families that they support. Some of these families engage in cultural practices that are unfamiliar to some FI staff and at times may make them feel uncomfortable. Some staff referred to customs and rituals such as, greeting rituals, the removal of one's shoes at the door and rituals of food offerings as being problematic. Staff may also encounter practices such as drawn curtains or customers socialising in the front garden, which the staff themselves or neighbours may find problematic.

Staff also encounter different cultural practices in the domestic sphere in relation to childrearing. They describe the phenomenon of community members from polymatric cultures (Van Ijzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg and Sagi-Schwartz, 2013), helping with tasks related to childminding. Perhaps the biggest challenge staff face in the domestic sphere is the phenomenon of sibling caretaking, particularly amongst Nigerian families. Such a practice whilst not illegal, does pose a challenge for staff in deciding whether individual cases contravene child protection guidelines. When they encounter this practice staff face the challenge of attempting to persuade parents to change this cultural practice.

Training staff to understand the different cultural practices of families they support in relation to childcare will aid FI staff to be more aware of different worldviews. In addition, training in face negotiation will aid staff in the coffee shop who encounter intercultural conflict. Finally, intercultural competence training can provide a greater understanding of different NVC styles which might prevent misunderstandings between staff and customer.

CHAPTER 5: GENDER

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the challenges that FI staff members encounter in relation to gender in their support of customers in semi-public sphere settings, such as FI locations, and in the private domestic sphere. As indicated in the methodology chapter, analysis was conducted using NVivo. A number of nodes were identified in relation to the theme of gender during my analysis of the data, which can be seen in the table below:

Category	Number of interviews	Number of references
Alcohol	2 (1 observation)	4
Value conflicts	4	5
Communication styles	1	1
Domestic violence	4	6
Female customer mistrust of giving personal information	1	1
Frustrating for female staff	2	2
Gendered roles	4	7
Hijab	1	1
Hospitality	1	1
Male customers refusing to work with female staff	3	7
Male dominance in interactions	6	20
Power imbalance	1	1
Role of mother & Isolation	2	2
Staff	2 (1 observation)	4
Sexism	3	3
Single mothers	1	1
Status of male staff members	2	3
Traveller men vetting initial meetings	2	2
Good relationship with customer	1	1

Table 21 codes related to the theme of Gender

Discussion of all the nodes listed in the table is beyond the scope of this current study. Consequently, the following issues will be examined in this chapter, based on the frequency and amount of detail respondents gave when discussing the categories above: value conflicts; gendered roles; domestic violence; male customers refusing to work with female staff; and male dominance in interactions with family members and staff members. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the notion of gender in relation to the intercultural competence models discussed in the literature review and the implications on training for FI staff members.

5.2 Value conflicts

The first challenge mentioned by FI staff in relation to gender was the (issue of) value conflicts between staff members and customers. Laungani, (2007, p. 56) defines values as “the currently held normative expectations that underlie individual and social conduct.” For FI staff, conflicts in values occurred at both a personal and professional level. In the field of social work, Seabury, Seabury and Garvin (2011) maintain that value conflicts between social worker and client are inevitable. They also point out that such conflicts occur from four primary sources: staff members’ personal values; clients’ personal values; the values of the profession; and the laws and conventions of the state in which the staff member practices. The authors believe that it is incumbent on social workers to find a way to reconcile any value difference that exists between client and social worker.

For FI staff members, in the majority of cases, these value conflicts with regard to gender relations are best described as internal dialogical conflicts, which were not outwardly articulated by the staff to customers in their interactions:

P50³¹ [[inaudible]] simple example everybody knows shaking the hand you know dealing with woman and...you have to be aware of this and...is there sometime that's going against you personal values and they not with you they are [inaudible] you know because you are professional. But still it's like when the ladies working with the you know with those families, sometimes that's can be the issue, you know...inside I don't agree with this. I I'm became agitating...you know because the person's not shaking my colleague friend

³¹ P50 is Polish and English is his second language.

or don't even uh look in on her because you know...but then on the top of this you know you have your knowledge about the different cultural differences [inaudible] ok we understand this

P49 em as a female it's a bit uh yeah it can be certainly frustrating um to see it cos it obviously um I was I suppose it it's kind of saying something about me as a female so yeah it, I don't, I didn't appreciate it. Em I felt they needed to be Irish [laughter] you know and em to grow up in this country

The first point to note is P50's demonstration of the knowledge dimension of intercultural competence about differing value systems that customers may possess in terms of gender relations, evident in many of the staff comments. Specifically, P50 shows an understanding of different non-verbal behaviours that individuals display in his interactions with them. In the extract, he acknowledges that customers may communicate differently in terms of haptics (touch) and oculusics (use of eyes, in this case direct eye contact) (Andersen et al. 2002). Nevertheless, even with this acquired knowledge base, P50's comment is representative of the internal dialogical struggle that many of the staff expressed between the personal and professional values that they hold, and the behaviours of some of their (male) customers in relation to interaction with female FI staff members.

P49's feelings about the value conflicts concerning gender dynamics between a Kurdish/ Iraqi couple and herself are described by her as "frustrating," which is reflective of some of the staff member's views with regards to gender relations. Her observations are filtered through an ethnocentric lens because she sees the behaviour of the couple as an unwillingness to adopt Irish values, norms and behaviour. She views the Kurdish/Iraqi couple's culturally construed interaction pattern as incongruent with the Irish value system. Significantly, P49 appears to advocate that the couple assimilate to Irish society by adapting their values to the Irish value system. When stating that the couple "needed to be Irish" she is probably referring to a view of gendered relationships that she is used to and a belief that gendered roles and interactions should be based on equality.

5.2.1 Gender Roles

One area of value conflict on which some staff remarked concerned gender roles, particularly within the Traveller community. Staff commented on how Traveller women and female children maintained the family home while the men worked. Many references were made to the fact that women kept their homes “spotless”:

P17 [um] but I just think you need...you always need to have an awareness as to where the parent control within those families lies. And em, it is still very male dominated and I would say in a lot of circumstances, in a lot of family homes, the man absolutely still has the final say...

P28 um I suppose the fact that you know any house that I have gone into like the woman is at home she's constantly cleaning and the man kind of comes and goes, but yet even though the woman is the centre of the household, it's the man that you are always dealing with no matter what. And um, I've seen situations that wouldn't be pleasant where the woman, the way the man speaks to the woman, I suppose that's the culture I don't understand it and I do sometimes find that difficult like

P17 describes the Irish Traveller family structure from her own value system perspective viewing the structure as male dominated. Her experiences of the role of Traveller men and women in the domestic sphere leads her to believe that Traveller men “have the final say” in terms of decision-making³². Meanwhile, P28 highlights the masculine value dimension which can be applied to the Irish Traveller community (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005), according to which Traveller men leave home to work and Traveller women stay at home to care for the family. Furthermore, the patriarchal structure that exists in the Irish Traveller community (Casey, 2014) means that the men are the decision-makers and as such P28 has to ‘deal’ with them. The use of this word suggests that P28 is somewhat dissatisfied with Traveller interaction patterns between men and women. This is evident when she states that she does not understand the culture and that she finds it difficult. It is unclear whether she means that she has no knowledge of Traveller culture in relation to gender relations, or whether she is actually incredulous about this aspect of their culture.

³² It is unclear whether Irish male Travellers are in attendance at every meeting with P17. In the other extract, P28 remarks that the male Travellers in the families she supports ‘come and go.’ It is worth noting therefore, that P17 may have limited experience of male/female Traveller interactions.

The possible lack of understanding of Irish Traveller values on the part of P28, might be related to the lack of contact between the settled Irish majority population and Irish Travellers. Indeed, a 2017 Behaviour and Attitudes survey found that forty-five percent of the settled Irish population said that they had very little contact with Irish Travellers in that year (O'Mahony, 2017)³³. Given this statistic, it is to be expected that the settled population are not aware of Irish Traveller values.

5.2.2 A typology of positions on value conflicts

Overall, comments by FI staff in the interviews describing value conflicts of their culturally diverse clientele, reflected four main positions in relation to gender dynamics and gender roles: two were ethnorelative, acceptance and tolerance; and two were ethnocentric, objection and rejection³⁴ (see table 23 below). In terms of ethnorelative views, few of the staff adopted a position of acceptance of any worldview on gender relations held by customers that differed substantially from their own.

P20's extract is an example of adopting a position of 'partial acceptance' when she states, "I just accept it" in relation to a son who interrupts his mother when P20 attempts to speak to her.³⁵ In regards to the second position of tolerance of a conflicting cultural value, P31 states that he finds differing views to his own held by Travellers on gender equality "difficult" to accept. He believes that his (settled) value of equality for the sexes is the correct one to live by and he appears at a loss to understand why Travellers would not adopt this value in their own culture. The tolerant or accepting positions that P20 and P31 display are similar to other FI staff members. However, adopting these standpoints can be viewed as problematic, as the two extracts demonstrate, in that they can lead to potential internal dialogical struggles for the staff, either during or after an encounter occurs.

³³ Interestingly, when the settled Irish participants were asked if they had contact with Irish Travellers on a daily basis, only 5% said that they had.

³⁴ (Seabury, Seabury and Garvin (2011), have suggested different positions in relation to value conflicts: Celebrate ↔ Accept ↔ Tolerate ↔ Reject ↔ Persecute. I have adapted these positions for the purpose of the specific context of gender relations and extracts from FI staff.

³⁵ P20 does not know the nationality of the customer other than they are international customers.

Acceptance	Tolerance	Objection	Rejection
<p>[and] how did you find that?</p> <p>P20 [he] used he would kind of jump in front of her [laughs] you know, oh look I suppose it's, it is what it is, I mean I just accept it do you know what I mean? That's normal for them so I wouldn't have an issue with it you know I mean I'm not going to judge anybody else something like that that's the way they were raised that's the way they that's normal where they're from like you know</p>	<p>P31 well I would find that the holding of that attitude difficult yeah yeah um because I would, I would, I worked in the men's network in Ireland and it's like so I'd be aware of gender equality and and that I would want that them to have that for themselves and when I don't see it being played out in reality that's that is difficult to witness</p>	<p>P6 being treated like your lesser and we've always been brought up here this kind of where you want to meet new people and equal like but it's really annoying when you have they won't even look at you, you know, certain... but I I couldn't even tell you what nationalities they are, but I just, they treat you with disdain I suppose that's it</p> <p>[and] would you say anything to them do you say?</p> <p>P6 [oh] yeah I'd be a smart ass...I'd be pointing out to some of them like you know [clicks fingers aggressively] [inaudible] a dog or "say please or thank you" you know if somebody doesn't say thank you like "you are very welcome" [exaggerated sarcastic tone] and and you did nearly shame them into it</p>	<p>P24 well...certainly in my house I'm not the one going round making tea and and and deferring to my husband that wouldn't be happening</p> <p>P25 [laughs]</p> <p>P24 [but] that's that's that would be their household [inaudible- and I would be respectful of that/ and I would respect that??]</p>
↑	Ethnorelative	↑	Ethnocentric

Table 22 A typology of positions utilised by FI staff in instances of value conflicts in relation to gender: Adapted from Seabury, Seabury and Garvin, (2011, p. 5)

FI staff also adopted ethnocentric positions of objection or rejection of customer's different worldviews on gender relations. P6's belief is that Irish values in relation to gender are centred on equality. She adopts an ethnocentric lexis by using words such as "lesser" or being "treated with disdain" in her descriptions of customer's interactions with her. The problem for P6 is that she adopted a sarcastic tone as a technique to rebuke him for not saying 'thank you,' in order to challenge this customer about his sexist views. Such tones, which are familiar to native speakers of English, may be lost on L2 speakers, especially those with lower levels of English. This indirect communication style, where the tone of a message conveys meaning, is quite common in Ireland. However, this meaning might be missed entirely by customers who are used to a more direct style of communication. Meanwhile, P24 describes a gendered encounter during a home visit to an Iranian family where the wife was asked by the husband to make tea for P24 on her arrival. In addition to this, the wife did not take part in the conversation, instead she chose to sit and listen. P24's ethnocentric position of this interaction between the couple is one of rejection, as illustrated by her use of the word "defer" to describe the wife's actions which implies that P24 felt that there was a male-dominated dynamic between husband and wife during the encounter. Yet, despite this rejection, she did not explicitly voice concern or disagreement to the family, because of her overriding respect for the customers she supports.

It is clear from the positions that FI staff take on different worldviews of gender dynamics that they are concerned in the main with an avoidance of cultural bias and the delivery of a culturally sensitive, respectful service. So much so that mostly, even when staff adopt an ethnocentric position, they are reluctant to state this explicitly to their customers. The above typology of positions warrants further research with regard to stances that homeless service providers take when behaviours conflict with their own views on gender relations. In addition, this typology with the examples listed above might be useful in intercultural competence training programmes as a technique for generating discussion on the effectiveness of the different stances in terms of service provision to culturally diverse customers.

5.2.3 Domestic violence

During the interviews, discussions with FI staff on gender roles within different family groupings often turned to the issue of domestic violence (DV), which arose in approximately a quarter of the interviews. Most of the discussion on DV centred on the Traveller community:³⁶

P33...I would have experienced it I suppose working in a homeless hostel in the past I you know would have found it difficult that em that power imbalance I suppose in em Traveller couples. Maybe, um where there might've been domestic violence and um the female may have used the shelter on a particular night, and um the following morning her partner would be outside the door to collect her, and would be quite intimidating to staff, if staff are helping her with bags or you know maybe talking to her at the door or one way or another would I suppose be imposing maybe and make his presence known...

P30 I would have experienced that as well...em with the the the man and you can only talk to the man. The woman can't talk that would have happened me a couple of times as well. I had a very recent case you'd be familiar with it [nods to P28] as well em and he actually caught her and hand and pushed her and...and I was kinda going how far is this going to go? Do you know what I mean? And what am I going to do? [small laughter] Em, but it stopped at that em...

P20...But like um I don't want to stereotype or anything but Traveller men like can often be very controlling over their wives or partners, and I find that quite difficult to...observe or, the kind of domestic violence thing it's a lot more normal I think for Travellers isn't it? Like I mean sorry...yeah look you'd often see Traveller women coming...in with bruises and stuff like that that's that's not an easy thing to see because obviously you'd be concerned that they're sort of in that situation that they're not seeking any help or

P33's comments on a "power imbalance" in this particular Traveller couple's relationship reflects the literature on DV, in which coercive control is a central feature (Allen, 2012). P20 highlights this power imbalance when she describes Traveller men she has encountered as "very controlling." Meanwhile, P30, who is male, experienced interactions

³⁶ There is one reference to DV in a Jordanian family and one reference in a 'Czechoslovakian' (sic) family.

with a Traveller couple whereby not only could he not talk directly to the woman, but also the Traveller man acted in a physically aggressive manner towards his wife. It could be argued that P30 witnessed a form of common couple violence (CCV) which involves “...‘minor’ forms of violence, and more rarely escalating into serious, sometimes life threatening, forms of violence” (Johnston, 1995, p. 285). These physical acts by the Traveller man described by P30 could be interpreted as a demonstration to the FI staff member of the power and control that he has over his wife. The challenge for staff in these examples is to be culturally sensitive, which means balancing one’s own views of CCV or DV with how this behaviour is viewed by males and females who are culturally diverse. This dilemma is another example of a conflict between the personal values of a staff member and client. In addition, staff must also take into account the values of their organisation and profession in general as well as the laws of the state (Seabury, Seabury and Garvin, 2011). In particular, staff are faced with the dilemma of providing a culturally responsive service while at the same time squaring this with their own personal beliefs. This reconciliation of differing values must be extremely difficult to accomplish in certain situations, for example in cases of DV OR CCV.

P20’s views reflect the stereotypical Irish “sedentarist discourse” (Van Hout and Staniewicz, 2012) on Irish Traveller culture. P20 will have undoubtedly read or heard this discourse in the media and the political sphere. For example, an *Irish Times* article (Holland, 2009) based on a report by the Women’s Health Council stated that Irish women Travellers were thirty times more likely to experience DV than women in the settled community. However, this actual statistic is not contained in the report. Inaccurate or misleading reporting such as this leads to misperceptions on the part of the majority settled community about DV within the Traveller community. This type of article, which overstate the prevalence of DV in the Traveller community, may influence individuals like P20 and lead them to think that DV is “a lot more normal” amongst Travellers.

In fact, Allen (2012) argues that accurate data on the prevalence of DV in the Traveller community in Ireland is difficult to source and that there is “no evidence to suggest that it is more or less prevalent than in the community in general” (p. 875). On the other hand, Irish Travellers constitute just under one-percent of the population in Ireland, yet represent

15% of those availing of services from gender-based violence organisations. This could indicate a proportionately high rate of DV within the Traveller community.

Not all staff referred to the issue of power within an Irish Traveller family structure in the same manner. P16 believes that such a gender dynamic may be changing amongst young Travellers:

P16 I think even since I've been here, Travellers have kind of assimilated a lot more than what they have when I first got here. Um, you know the whole male/female thing is is kind of hit a plateau. You you don't get, I know it's still there, but you you don't um...it's not a strong, I don't think, as what it was like. I I think the younger generation that are growing up on much more accepting of...

Interestingly, P16 notes that this change to greater equality between young Traveller men and women is the result of assimilation into the majority Irish sedentarist society. She seems to be suggesting that, by 'settling', young Irish Travellers are becoming 'more accepting' of Irish settled values such as equality between couples in areas like childrearing and household tasks.

5.3 Male customers refusing to work with female staff

There is a growing body of literature on experiences of engagement with homeless service providers from the client's perspective (Persaud, McIntyre and Milaney, 2010; Bowpit, et al., 2011; Maycock and Sheridan, 2012a, 2012b; Maycock, Parker and Sheridan, 2013; Sheridan, 2017; Zufferey, 2009). There are also studies which focus on service providers' experiences of working with culturally diverse clients (Graham, Bradshaw and Trew, 2009; 2010; Truong, et al, 2017). This next section examines the contributing factors involved in some male customers' from a culturally diverse cultural background refusal to work with female FI staff members.

In the interviews, many female staff referred to an unwillingness, or even refusal, from some male customers to interact or engage with them. The following extract is from a female A&I staff member who works in the coffee shop in Dublin:

P18 [em] but that we we had another incident with one of the Romanian families, where em one of the team were trying to explain something that they need to do, and um the the father, the male of the family got quite agitated and

came across quite aggressive in his behaviour towards the team member. And we we actively had a conversation around that that. We we did at that point feel it was because of it was a female member of staff dealing with him and you [nodding towards P16, who is male] were called down to the floor that day

P16 [yeah]

P18 [and] he he, his his attitude completely changed when you approached the family

P16 [was] that the one that was after work and I went down and I said exactly the same thing as the girls had been saying and I went, “ok?”

P18 [and] he said “that's fine” and off he went

[laughter]

P16 yeah also the the male role in a lot of cultures is is a lot more dominant in some other cultures and unfortunately or fortunately, whichever way you want to look at it...in this sector it's very much a female dominated sector. So em, when they're coming into, to use services, they're generally running into female workers that they're having to deal with, and um I I'd say it's more of a struggle for them than for us

The comments from P16 and P18 illustrate the difficulty female staff in FI sometimes have when male customers are unwilling to work with them and highlights a number of important points. Firstly, we can see that the FI staff are very reflective. Not only do they have daily handover meetings during which cases and incidents from the previous day are reviewed, but they also discuss problematic situations on an ongoing basis throughout the day in order to arrive at the best solution to any problems they encounter. In this case, the staff had to deal with a Romanian male customer who was acting in an aggressive manner. The belief that this behaviour was due to the fact that the FI staff member dealing with him was a woman was confirmed when the same message, delivered by a male member of staff, was accepted by the male Romanian customer.

Research on the issue of female staff experiences of service provision is limited. Existing research focuses primarily on clients' experiences of service provision. There is some research in the experience of service providers in relation to Muslim service users. A study of Muslim clients seeking social work support in Canada found that male clients

responded badly when they realised that they had to deal with a female service provider because no male service providers were present (Graham, Bradshaw and Trew, 2010). Whilst the Romanian customer in the extract might not have been Muslim, this finding could explain the reason for his aggressive attitude when dealing with a FI female staff member, as the act of asking for support from a female service provider may have constituted a loss of face. Consequently, by acting aggressively in front of his family and receiving service from a male FI member of staff, face had been restored.

Later in the same extract, P16 recognised the difficulty that male customers face when availing of services, which are often offered by a predominantly female staff. This arises from different cultural attitudes towards interacting with female staff. Interestingly, P16 displays a sophisticated level of intercultural competence in expressing her desire to provide a culturally sensitive service to customers who may “struggle” when dealing with female staff.

Conversely, FI staff noted that some male customers preferred working with a woman in some instances as the two extracts below show:

P14 You know some customers prefer you know a much more gentle approach maybe ehm, which is maybe what we offer as female staff and maybe the male staff sometimes heighten them or agitate them and we don't know what that is maybe that's based on I don't know life experiences or something like that

P24 well initially, I've two families that I worked with a while back em they weren't actually in Direct they were programme refugees em programme refugees... um] but they only wanted to work with a woman

P25 [oh yeah] (pause) if even even though I was the only one available [laughs] yeah I couldn't yeah but it was cultural so

[and] what nationality were they?

P24 [eh] from Iran...no but I, one of the referrals was from another agency eh who said “can I send this woman down she needs help around housing whatever it is” uh and I said I'll make an appointment with P25 and she just said “no it it's to do with their culture” she can't be on her own with a man...if he's not a family member

P14, P24 and P25's remarks may reflect Irish societal views that women provide a more compassionate service than men. P14 suggests that some male customers may have had bad experiences in their dealings with males in the past, and as a result, prefer what she views as a more sensitive support of female staff. Although there appears to be no scholarly research with regards to female homeless service providers in the non-for-profit sector, there is research in relation to social workers. Myers (2010) argues that there is a perception that social work is more suited to women because qualities such as caring and building relationships are traditionally linked to women more than men. He further supports this argument by citing the National Social Work Qualification Board's survey published in 2005, which found that eighty-two percent of social workers in Ireland were women (Myers, 2010). This perception is reflected by P14 in the extract above. In addition, P24 indirectly points to the role of religion as another factor relevant to some customers' preference for support from female service providers. However, there is a paucity of research in this area. Some studies have found that service provision should be culturally sensitive, particularly in relation to clients who avow a strong religious identity. For instance, a study of female Muslim immigrants' experiences of health care in rural regions of the United States of America found that these patients preferred to be treated by female doctors and nurses because of their Muslim identity. If the female patients had to interact with male medical practitioners, they expressed a desire for another female to be present and required that the doctors interact with them in an interculturally sensitive manner, based on religiously defined female to male roles. Thus, the patients expressed their preference for limited and non-direct eye contact and no handshakes when greeting (Simpson and Carter, 2008). Consequently, FI staff should consider a customer's religious identity and values when deciding whether a male or female staff member should support a particular family. This is especially important in relation to service provision, where staff are supporting vulnerable groups. In this context, the creation of a respectful space where customers can feel comfortable and safe can lead to a more effective and appropriate service.

5.4 Male customer dominance in interactions

Even when male customers agree to work with female staff there were some instances when they dominated interactions, on either a one-to one or a group (including the man's wife or family) basis:

P17 we had a family recently a rather large family³⁷ and I'd say there was about maybe 9 of them in the coffee shop and none of them nobody would engage with us until dad arrived coz he would speak for the family. So they literally stayed silent um, and we weren't able to do any assessment on their needs or or work out what they wanted or where to take the case. So we had to wait on dad to come who spoke for

[And] how did you find that was that was it frustrating for you or were you?

P17 um I think you just take each case as it comes it's I'd say more difficult as P16 said for the families than for us...I think it's important to I suppose facilitate as much as we can

P24 ...on one occasion that the husband wasn't there but the older son was visiting he was there in college so it was deferred to him

[And] do you get a sense, who had the decision-making in, was it the mother, or?

P24 uh in one family the mother yeah and then but the other family definitely the dad and the brothers and then it was like a pecking order

P49...it's just sometimes where you go into a home em let's say in Arabic home and it's just it's the male that is the dominant person and you know I'm I'm trying to work with both you know husband and wife or partner or whatever and em she often would leave the room...and not be a part of that conversation or she goes to the corner tending to the children or she's she's been told to make food for me or you know you know kind like oh it's ok. I don't need any of that, and I'm trying to encourage let's say Mum to sit down and be part of the conversation and have a conversation with let's say the husband...you know if she wants to sit down and you're³⁸ like it's ok it's grand

³⁷ P49 reflects a rejection of a different worldview on gender dynamics, while P50's position reflects a tolerant view.

³⁸ P49 means the following is the husband's view.

she's busy doing her thing uh and then I just have to obviously accept that I can't

[ok] and what nationality were they?

P49 I'm trying to remember it was em Kur Iraq um Kurdish Iraq

In the three extracts, the participants refer to male domination in the respective family structures. In P17's example, this male domination takes the form of the family not wishing to interact with her until the father arrives. Meanwhile, P24 remarks on the patrilineal structure of an Iranian family she supports. In P49's example, the patriarchal domination occurs in the form of the man interacting with her, but not his wife. P49 believes that the husband is denying his wife a voice during interactions. There is an element of frustration for P49 in the example above, when she states that "she doesn't need any of that" to refer to the mother tending to the children or leaving the room to make food. P49 is alluding to the gendered dynamics that are taking place in this particular family structure. Clearly, P49 is unhappy with the wife being "told" to make food. Again, this conflicts with P49's personal values and there is a suggestion that she is unhappy with the gender roles in an Arabic family where the mother is the carer and provider of food. The position P49 adopts in this value conflict is to reluctantly accept this gender dynamic, even though she herself prioritises female self-determination for this particular customer. On the other hand, P16 and P17 both adopt a cultural relativist standpoint, believing that working with female FI staff is in fact very difficult culturally for some international customers.

In the interview involving P52, the discussion turned to the patriarchal family structures of families from Bangladesh and Sudan. P52 commented on the fact that the male heads of the household took the lead in discussions, stating that the women would "defer" to their husbands. In addition, these women did not attend meetings with staff in FI locations. P52 continued the description of the family dynamics in the extract below, in which the discussion is framed around her attempts to encourage the women to attend English classes:

P52 [inaudible phrase] the family from Bangladesh ehm you see and the other thing we have to factor in is the English you see. I think maybe in just and I

don't want to be kind of generalising at all, but just in these two two cases it ehm the dad's English has been better ok, so maybe he's been the one out working he's...had maybe more conversation and he's learned English if you know what I mean. But trying to get both mothers into English classes is kind of like no they're not really that interested because I think literally...it's literally minding my kids and childminding and it's not really a priority do you get me?

Both P49 and P52 see the principal role of the mothers as carers. In this extract, P52 displays one of the main goals of FI Ireland staff, namely self-determination. She believes this can be achieved by developing the women's language proficiency, by attending English language classes. Self-determination is also one of the central tenets within the fields of social work and social care. In the case above, P52 believed that by asking the husband to encourage his wife to attend English classes, his wife may develop greater self-determination. Indeed, some research has found that greater English proficiency might lead to less isolation on the part of the women, which may in turn lead to greater integration into the wider community. One study of Muslim families immigrating to Western Australia found that some of the women felt isolated due to language proficiency issues and a lack of female friendship groups (Bouma and Grace-Govan, 2000).

The objective of self-determination is also important for P22 and P25. However, as we can see below the strategies that each staff member employ to encourage this self-determination are different:

P22 [and] what I'm trying to do when I meet a family is I'm trying to show eye contact with both of them em bearing in mind cultural differences possibly that are there em but at the same time get acknowledge the wife or acknowledge the child that's in the room em and go go from there so again trying to and like if the if the dad is talking and the wife is saying something I'll just say like does the wife need to say some do you know and trying to bring them in

P22 employed an indirect communication style in order to encourage participation by the woman in the family. In this case, she uses non-verbal communication signals in the form of eye contact with both the male and female customer to signal to them that she would like the woman customer to be involved verbally in the interaction process. Interestingly, P22 demonstrates knowledge of the different gender dynamics from different cultures,

thus demonstrating in turn effective intercultural competence in this particular encounter. However, it is unclear from this example whether the two customers actually understand the Irish non-verbal communication system.

On the other hand, P25 preferred a more direct approach when explaining that he would interrupt a male customer and ask the female customer something directly, remarking:

P25 ...“I asked her the question like can, can she answer it?” and I, I don't think there's ever been you'll see them go [makes a face with slight shock] they'll jump back a little bit but, but, I mean you're looking for their perspective on things or you're looking for their opinion ...there's no point somebody else saying it

P25's discussion of a hypothetical scenario and how he would deal with male partners dominating interactions is far more direct. In addition, he appears to worry less about the reactions of customers, even if they are shocked. For P25, the goal of developing self-determination for female customers outweighs any notions of supporting customers in a culturally sensitive manner. It could be argued that P25 may have been unwittingly disrespectful towards this family, because of his direct style. Such directness to the head of a family with collectivist values may result in a loss of face for the patriarch. It is not clear in the following part of the interview whether P25 has the cultural sensitivity and awareness to realise that this direct style may be considered disrespectful by the family.

In the next extract, the participants discuss male domination within Traveller families:

P45 [Yes] they do uh by eye contact mostly you can tell with eye contact um...for instance if I ask her something about the children she'll look at him and he might answer and if I find out how things are going with the tenancy any issues she'd look at him and he'd say “no everything's fine isn't that right? Um yeah they tend to dominate yeah...and that's still that's very much there...

P44 Yeah yeah definitely with the one particular Traveller family he dominates he it's um when they come over he speaks she's there with him and it might be to do with her that they come over like recently...and he, he spoke the whole time and she just agreed with everything he says

P45 highlights the use of subtle forms of domination by a Traveller male over his wife through the use of non-verbal language, in this case eye contact, as a means of coercion. In the second extract, P44 believes that the male customer dominates through his constant presence in interactions. She describes an encounter where the couple presented at the office enquiring about car insurance. However, the husband did not drive, so P44 questioned his need to be present if all the information needed for purchasing insurance related only to his wife. These extracts reflect the patriarchal structures sometimes associated with the Traveller community (Casey, 2014). A prominent feature of this is the exertion of power by Traveller men over Traveller women (Rose, 2013). However, there is a danger in essentialising Traveller families along narrow gendered roles. What may seem to be the case in the public sphere may be quite different in the private sphere. As Cemlyn et al. (2009, p.226) point out “[w]hile a woman will generally take a lesser part in public discussions...in private the couple will usually be equally involved in decision-making. In public, women are expected, and are generally willing, to appear to be subservient to men.”

From the extracts above, we can postulate two factors contributing to some male customers sometimes dominating interactions with FI staff. The first pertains to one of the core values in FI- respect, which is also part of the Irish Association of Social Workers’ Code of Ethics, which states the importance of respecting the cultural, social and environmental context in which clients reside that must take precedence over personal beliefs of the social worker (IASW.ie). In addition, the National Association of Social workers (NASW) in the UK have identified a number of core principles and standards, which include: respect for individual and group difference; respect for confidentiality of relationships with clients; willingness to keep personal needs and feelings separate from professional relationships; commitment to develop clients’ ability to help themselves (Reamer, 2013, p.24).

The second contributing factor is that FI staff support some families who are from collectivist cultures, in which, typically, the family structure is hierarchical, whereby children are expected to be obedient towards the parents. In addition, the patriarch makes decisions on behalf of the family. Frequently, terms such as “traditional”, “patriarchal”,

“conservative”, and “lineal authority” are used to describe this type of family structure (Renzaho, McCabe and Sainsbury, 2011, p. 417).

Research of collectivist cultures mentioned by FI staff in the extracts above include: India and Bangladesh (Chada and Deb 2013; Laungani, 2007); Nigeria (Ibrahim, 2015; Makama, 2013); Irish Travellers (Rozelle, 2008); Roma (Eklund Karlsson, et al. 2013) Romania (Friedlmeier, and Trommsdorff, 2011); many Arabic countries (Sidani, and Al Hakim, 2012) and Sudan (Este and Tachble, 2009). If families from primarily collectivist cultures relocate to a society that is broadly individualistic (in this case Ireland), they will inevitably encounter acculturation issues in relation to a possible fragmentation of this collectivist family structure. For example, a study of Sudanese, Iraqi and Lebanese families relocating to Western Australia found that as time progressed, the fathers became less certain of their status as the head of the household, resulting in a change in decision-making roles from the father only, to both parents (Renzaho, McCabe and Sainsbury, 2011). Thus, this fragmentation of family structure and perceived loss of status by patriarchs might explain a male customer’s need to dominate conversations in interactions with FI staff, as a way to maintain their status.

However, not all collectivist cultures are necessarily characterised by a patriarchal decision-making structure. For example, a study of fatherhood for Russian and Sudanese immigrant families who settled in Canada found that in the Sudanese families, decisions were made by both parents (Este and Tachble, 2009). In addition, recent scholarly research has viewed immigrant family structures in more flexible ways. A study of Muslim Meskhetian refugees living in the United States found that, whilst families were in the main attached to values connected to collectivism, patriarchy, and Islam, there had also been some change to their social structures due to US influences in relation to values. Yet despite these changes, outwardly women were concerned with cultural maintenance, so therefore, in public sphere settings Muslim Meskhetian men were still publicly recognized as “heads of households,” even though the decision-making power had in fact become a joint process between husband and wife (Pirtskhalava, 2015).

As a result, FI staff should be aware of the possibility that such change in family dynamics may occur in the families that they support, and that the illusion of a patriarchal family

structure in the public sphere, where males have control and dominate and wives ‘defer’ to their husbands, may not be the reality in the private sphere. One framework that FI staff could utilise in order to discover the dynamics within families is the Culturagram discussed in the literature review, which can provide a very useful and detailed description of a particular family, including the power structure and decision making within each individual family (Congress, 2005).

5.5 Gender and Intercultural competence models

Many of the culture-general models of intercultural competence, described in the literature review chapter, do not make specific reference to gender in their description. However, cultural worldviews associated with gender relations are discussed in the models developed by scholars in the field of social work (Sue, Rasheed and Rasheed, 2015; Congress, 2005). These scholars point out the importance of social workers recognising that clients may have a different worldview which, in turn, has a bearing on whether or not an individual accepts or rejects certain cultural or religious practices and behaviours. Meanwhile, Congress’ (2005) focus on gender in her culturagram centres on the fact that upon relocation, migrants may encounter crisis events, including some with a gender focus. For example, she suggests that families could encounter conflict between the generations in relation to expectations about familial roles and that individuals within a family may have different expectations in relation to gender and socialising. Upon relocation to a new society, hidden fissures within the family structure regarding these potential crisis events might emerge and cause conflict.

5.6 Summary of Chapter

The findings in this chapter support the view expressed in the literature review that as with social workers, FI staff members need to understand how the family structure is viewed in different cultures. FI staff members pointed out that issues such as gender roles within the family, in terms of decision making and the nurture of children (which was discussed in the previous chapter), were problematic for the staff in the effective provision of a service due to a clash in gender values. The analysis on gender found FI staff members need to understand the hierarchal, male-dominated family structures that are common in

some collective cultures when attempting to arrive at solutions for families who are experiencing homelessness.

CHAPTER 6: RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND PREJUDICE

FI staff members encounter challenges in relation to racism, discrimination and prejudice, in their support of culturally diverse customers. Bailey et al. (2017), define racism as:

the totality of ways in which societies foster racial discrimination, through mutually reinforcing inequitable systems (in housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, criminal justice, and so on) that in turn reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values, and distribution of resources, reflected in history, culture, and interconnected institutions (p. 1454).

According to the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI),³⁹ there are three categories of racism. The first involves individual racism, where individuals from minority ethnic groups may be physically attacked, experience verbal racial slurs, or have their property damaged. The second is cultural racism, whereby (usually) the dominant ethnic group consider their values to be superior to those of minority ethnic groups. The third category is institutional racism, which is the “collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin” (NCCRI, p. 24). Meanwhile, discrimination “is commonly understood as differential treatment on the basis of group membership that unfairly disadvantages a group” (Russell, et al, 2008, p. 3). The four main types of discrimination are: direct, indirect, discrimination by association and positive discrimination. Finally, Allport (2000, p. 22), defines prejudice as “[a]n aversive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to

³⁹ This committee was established by the Irish government in 1998. Its role was to 1) foster initiatives to combat racism 2) develop intercultural policy 3) promote cultural diversity and advise the government on intercultural issues (Watt, nd). As a result of budget cuts, due to the economic recession, the committee was disbanded at the end of 2008.

that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group.” This seminal definition aligns with what Anderson (2018, p. 694) terms classical prejudice which is “an old-fashioned and blatant form of hostile attitudes that manifest as overt negativity toward out-group members.” He also refers to modern prejudice which he believes is “a form of covert attitudes that manifest as subtle negativity toward out-group members through the denial of discrimination, or by placing conditions on the acceptance of minority group members” (ibid).

This chapter will focus on FI staff members’ perceptions of racism, discrimination and prejudice, based on incidents that have been relayed to them as well as on their own experiences accompanying customers to various meetings. In addition, the manner in which these issues present a challenge for FI staff members in relation to an effective provision of service for their customers will be examined. Respondents highlighted instances of racism, discrimination or prejudice, both within FI locations in which staff members have a degree of control or influence and within the wider community, where they had very little control or influence.

Analysis of the data brought to the fore a number of categories related to racism, discrimination and prejudice, presented in the following table:

Category	Number of interviews	Number of references
Racism, Discrimination & Prejudice	10	44
Abuse	1	1
Acceptance in community	1	1
Comments towards staff	2	2
Discrimination	5	9
Surname as marker of traveller identity	2	2
Accent as marker of identity		
Fear	1	2
Institutional racism	1	1
Landlords	3	6
Microaggressions	2	3
Prejudice	1	1
Pigeonholing	2	2
Resentment	1	1
Stereotyping	2	2
Reflection of society	6	7

Stigma	1	1
Inadequate service from An Garda	2	2
Síochána ⁴⁰ towards FI customers	1	1

Table 23 Codes related to the theme of Racism

Based on this table, the chapter will examine: racist behaviour towards staff by customers; racism between customers; racist and discriminatory practices within local communities; discrimination by landlords towards ethnic minority groups; institutional discrimination and prejudice in relation to misperceptions around housing allocation.

6.1 Racism

Dealing with issues of racism presented a clear challenge for staff and the topic was raised in over half of the interviews conducted. Racism may be “reflected in policy, language, behaviour, everyday activity and relationships between people” (NCCRI, p. 24).⁴¹ Throughout the interviews, staff referred to all five of these contexts, which will form the basis of the analysis to follow.

6.1.1 Racist behaviour towards staff by customers

In the interviews, discussion on racist behaviour directed towards FI staff centred solely on international staff working in the coffee shop, as those working in other sections of FI did not report any such incidents. FI coffee shop staff were very keen to point out that while racist slurs from customer to staff member do sometimes occur, they originate from a very small minority. It was the Irish catering staff in the coffee shop who commented on incidents of racism being directed towards their Polish and Vietnamese colleagues at the café pass where customers buy their food:

P5 oh yeah, we had an incident there a couple of weeks ago [pause], a man and his friend came in and they were getting breakfast and they asked for extra bacon, So, we don't give out the extra bacon and they charge 40 cents anything going on. And, you know, “you fucking here ten years and you can't even speak a bit of English,” or just things like that...Then they got banned then,

⁴⁰ This is the Irish term for the police. An Garda Síochána are also referred to as the Gardaí or colloquially as “the Guards.”

⁴¹ The NCCRI was disbanded by the Irish government during the recession. Nevertheless, the observations of this body during the period it was in existence still remain pertinent in the Republic of Ireland today.

about three weeks after only, just came back and said “look, I'm not racist” and it'd just be all like stupid things just for them to

[right] who is he saying that to?

P6 [to] P4

Oh, to P4, yeah so “you can't even speak English.” So, do you get racist would you get racist comments, or is it, or is it mainly to?

P4⁴² yeah all the time, sometimes I could understand what they say...so they'd be like mumbling under [inaudible] but they definitely saying something about me yeah

P11 [but] he does get it⁴³ a lot yet yeah

P10⁴⁴ [inaudible chunk] yeah what they told me they told me Chinese and I say “who cares who is that?” [laughs]

P11 [that's] the way he goes on you see because he's not Chinese he's Vietnamese [inaudible]

[loud laughter]

...but were they being aggressive towards him?

P11 [sometimes]

P12 [sometimes] yeah [inaudible]

P11 “chicken curry,” you know? [P11 is impersonating customers putting on a Chinese accent]

[yeah]

P12 “Chang Wang [inaudible]” [P12 is imitating customers impersonating a Chinese person with a Chinese accent] they call him every name under the sun

⁴² P4 is Polish.

⁴³ Racist abuse.

⁴⁴ P10 is Vietnamese.

The extracts illustrate the racial slurs and abuse that two members of the catering staff have endured from Irish customers. In terms of racism, FI has very clear guidelines in relation to treatment of staff and customers. As previously mentioned, respect is at the core of service user and service provider interactions. Consequently, FI does not tolerate discriminatory or racist behaviour in any form. This is in evidence in the first extract above as the customers received a three-week ban from entering the coffee shop premises. I was informed during interviews and observations that because of the nature of comments like these, such bans are very strictly enforced by FI staff.

The racial slurs that P4 and P10 suffered are termed *ethnophaulisms* (Mullen, 2002), or *microaggressions* (Sue, 2018). Specifically, both members of staff experienced a form of microaggression known as a ‘*microassault*’, a term used to describe racist statements which are intentionally expressed through slurs, jokes, hate speech, insults and so on (Sue, 2018). The forms of abuse directed at P4 and P10 are numerous. P4’s ability to speak English is questioned by customers, who also mumble insults towards him thinking that he cannot understand. In P10’s case, he is categorised inaccurately as Chinese when in fact he is Vietnamese. The insult is compounded by customers ascribing stereotypical Chinese surnames to P4, as well as mimicking a Chinese accent whilst pretending to order food from a restaurant/takeaway. All of these slurs have the effect of both ‘*othering*’ these staff members and denying P10 his Vietnamese heritage by being incorrectly categorised as a Chinese national. From a sociological perspective, *Othering* is “a process of differentiation and demarcation...in which difference is translated to inferiority by applying differential moral codes to differing social categories” (Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin, 2010, p. 695). As such, *Othering* is a form of racism against the out-group.

It is interesting to note P10’s strategy of dealing with these microassaults. Initially, in an earlier part of the interview, he makes allowances for racist insults directed towards him by customers, stating that they are ‘*sick*’, by which he meant the customers who abused him had either substance abuse or mental health issues. In the extract above, he challenges the abuse by joking with the customers saying, “*who’s that*” when they ascribe his identity as Chinese. There are multiple explanations for racial slurs being directed towards service providers by their clients. A study of the experiences of migrant social care workers in the UK, found that some service users’ racist behaviour was due to mental health issues

(Stevens, Hussein and Manthorpe, 2012). However, there is limited research on racism directed at migrant workers by customers or clients in service provision contexts and the issue certainly warrants further research.

6.1.2 Racism between customers

Coffee shop staff members were keen to point out that racist insults or confrontations between customers are rare, but when they occur, they tend to be indirect in nature:

Right, so you don't witness any aggression on the floor between nationalities?

P4 no I don't think so

P6 [you can] hear them mumbling [...]. They're all really brave like. If an Irish person came in and they were queuing up, they might be like "African [...] fucking coming over here, ahead of me in the queue" you know, you just hear little mumbles like that

P6 gives an example of an Irish customer's resentment of the presence of an African customer ahead in the queue. It is unclear what ignites this resentment, but the African customer's⁴⁵ phenotype could be a factor. In addition, we cannot be certain whether this resentment is caused by xenophobia or a manifestation of misplaced anger by the Irish customer about her/his current plight. As previously discussed in chapter 4, many of the staff in the coffee shop highlighted the Pass area, where customers select and pay for food, as a potential flashpoint for aggressive behaviour, which could either be directed at staff or towards other customers. With regards to the above extracts, this aggression sometimes manifests itself in racial slurs and behaviour.

6.1.3 Racist and discriminatory practices within local communities

FI staff also reported challenges in their attempts to house customers from different cultural backgrounds in areas where they would not suffer from harassment from individuals in the local community:

P28 [but] like we have housing estates in Carlow that you actually can't put a black family into because the abuse they would get is absolutely shocking. And like the council at times in fairness, they have moved families out because

⁴⁵ Although this label may be inaccurate as they could be from other parts of the world.

they have been completely targeted like. But a lot of time then you had to be fighting with the council, saying you cannot house families in this estate anymore so you can't simply because of the abuse they're going to get

This is an example of societal racism that is beyond the control of FI staff members. While the respondent does not specifically refer to the forms of abuse that take place on this estate in Carlow, we are aware that the behaviour is racist, as it involves the specific targeting of black families for abuse. Furthermore, the use of the word 'targeted' by P28 shows us that this abuse is planned and repetitive. This is a common issue in Ireland and is reflected in a number of reports on harassment of ethnic minority groups. A European Commission report on discrimination in Ireland (Grotti, et al. 2018) found that approximately one quarter of immigrants had experienced insults or harassment by neighbours in the previous year. Another study from the Immigrant Council of Ireland found that Black Africans⁴⁶ were the most discriminated group in the social housing sector representing 46 per cent of victims reporting harassment. The next largest groups were Central/Eastern Europeans and Asians respectively. Seven per-cent of the Roma and Muslim populations reported discrimination from the community. The types of harassment which were highlighted in the report included acts such as verbal abuse (sixty-percent) as well as racist graffiti and/or other property damage (30 per-cent) (Ní Chonaill and Buczkowska, 2016). While P28 did not elucidate on the type of abuse that these black families experienced, it is likely that some or all of the forms mentioned above occurred.

The response by the local council is interesting. P28 recognises the contribution made by the council in combatting racism, by moving the family away from this particular estate. Furthermore, she refers to the 'fight' that she has had in attempting to prevent the council from housing other black families on this estate. It is unclear, based on this one extract, whether councils themselves discriminate against ethnic minority groups.

6.2 Discrimination

There is growing societal concern about discrimination directed towards migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland. Two EU reports on discrimination in relation to access to housing (Russell, et al., 2008; Grotti, et al., 2018) point out that Travellers,

⁴⁶ This is the term used in the report.

Roma and members of the black community in particular suffer the most discrimination. It is worth noting that in the decade between the publication dates of both reports, little has changed in regards to discrimination towards these ethnic groups. In addition, a CSO report (2019) highlights that discrimination in relation to access to housing is the third most frequent form of discrimination in Ireland, after workplace discrimination and attempts by immigrants to secure jobs.

The participants in the present study referred to two types of discrimination: discrimination by landlords towards potential tenants, particularly, Irish Travellers and the Roma community; and institutional discrimination.

6.2.1 Discrimination by landlords towards ethnic minority groups

This section discusses discrimination in the contexts of ‘relationships between people’, namely between landlord and tenant⁴⁷ and between Focus Ireland customer and local council officials. The most frequent challenge noted by FI staff in this regard were the discriminatory practices of Irish private landlords or estate agents towards ethnic minority groups, in particular Travellers and the Roma community. In this respect, the participants’ comments on this phenomenon align with the findings of official reports. However, other than these reports there is a paucity of research in relation to housing discrimination in Ireland. In a field experiment study on ethnic discrimination in the private rental market in Ireland, Gusciute, Mühlau and Layte (2020) found that Irish applicants for accommodation were more likely to be invited for viewings followed by Polish then Nigerian applicants. Furthermore, two reports found that the Black population is five times more likely than white people to feel discrimination in relation to housing (Grotti et al., 2018; Irish Human Rights Equality Commission, 2019). Such denial of access for international customers by landlords is a frequent challenge for FI staff members:

P26 I think the biggest difficulty is not working with the people themselves, it's when you're working then with landlords or different things

P27 [yeah]

⁴⁷ This is one of the five contexts listed by the NCCRI in which racism can occur, which was discussed in section 6.1. Although it relates to racism, this context is also applied to acts of discrimination in this study

P26 [like] I suppose...being in this job I have realised in Ireland the people are not as accepting as they would like to think they would be

P27 [yeah]

P26 [you] know em, there's a lot of racism out there there's a lot of [...] stigma around other cultures

P26 points out that in her job, the challenge does not lie with working with customers from different cultural backgrounds, rather in working with landlords who display intolerance of individuals who are ethnically diverse. Some of P26's interactions with landlords have shown her that their attitudes often reflect societal views of 'the other', which are framed by racism and stigma towards members of a different cultural group.

Many of the staff who discussed the issue of discrimination by landlords towards ethnic minority groups attempting to access private rented accommodation referred to the difficulties that Irish Travellers encountered:

P30 [for a] Traveller to get private rented accommodation no matter what they do literally they can't even make a phone call their accent is quite distinctive em, and physically as well the way they present it you know, and no landlord wants to house them, that's in in my experience...it's almost impossible

P43 when you're ringing up um landlords or agencies um, say with people in the Travelling community, then yeah like I suppose, the minute they open their mouth and they speak and they are identified quite distinctively I suppose by that. And like even to get a viewing it's very very difficult for them to get the accommodation

P27 or, I often hear like even one of the families are emergency accommodation the minute she says "hello my name is" and at that it it's very apparent that she's a Traveller just by her accent and it's a no from there you know em

P27, P30 and P43 comment on three forms of discrimination towards Travellers by landlords, namely, discrimination based on phenotype, clothing and accent. As such, these markers of Traveller identity are seen by landlords as indicators of out-group ethnic minority membership.

The comments by P27, P30 and P43 are all examples of linguistic discrimination (Dovchin, 2019). In these instances, “the ‘Traveller accent’ [acted]⁴⁸ as a cue to trigger discrimination” (Joyce, 2018, p. 107). Consequently, for Irish Travellers, phenotype and accent (as well as dress) are deficit markers of identity. In other words, landlords might associate negative attributes to an individual who both looks and sounds like ‘a Traveller’ and deny access to housing based on these negative perceptions, even at the initial stage of enquiry. It could be argued that Landlords are engaging in both racial profiling in terms of phenotype and dress and what Baugh (2003) terms ‘linguistic profiling’ which is discrimination of individuals based upon accent.

In addition, P27 highlights a fourth form of discrimination against Travellers, being denied access to housing based on their surnames:

P27 [it's] shocking the discrimination they're facing you know...the discrimination they face here in Ireland is alive and well you know you just have to say second name XXXX or XXXX [two Traveller surnames well known in Sligo] and the phone would nearly be put down.

In discussions on discrimination towards Travellers, the topic of feuds⁴⁹ arose on a number of occasions. Paradoxically, one of the reasons for Traveller homelessness is that some Traveller families wish to escape local Traveller feuds; yet this is the reason put forward by landlords or local councils for their denial of access to housing:

P30 [and we] have quite a high profile feud in Waterford seven or eight years ago

[yes] I remember that

⁴⁸ My insertion “acts” is in the original quotation.

⁴⁹ Feuds involve extended family members engaging in disputes which can include acts of violence over a period of time. Mulcahy states that “[f]euds among Travellers may arise and persist, partly at least, due to the sheer weight of tradition, and from the pressure to secure some form of resolution to ongoing disputes in the absence of widespread trust in the police” (2011, p. 313). Some scholars believe that the reporting by media of incidents of feuding within the Traveller community are disproportionate and that some media outlets engage in stereotyping Irish Travellers as violent, which in turn “serves to reinforce prejudice” (Bhreatnach, 1998, p.288).

P30 [and] there was 28 houses burnt out, so like the chances of anyone being housed by a private landlord are like you know, that's still very fresh in everybody's mind like that sort of thing

P27 [but] it's very difficult to work with the Travelling community, because I also feel the likes of the local authorities aren't doing enough to house them. I think they're pushing them back on any other service they can, saying "not our problem." Em, and I suppose unfortunately, with a lot of Traveller families what comes hand in hand is antisocial behaviour or feuds, or whatever. And it mightn't be that you, like if P26 was the Traveller family, say, it mightn't be her who who's involved in a feud it could be her cousin. But P26'll still be targeted and not given a house, based on that fact another traveller family might live near P26 [...] so I think there's a lot of indirect discrimination as well

The remarks by P27 and P30 illustrate the problem that staff have in that some landlords and local council officials stereotype all Travellers as being involved in feuds in order to deny these families access to housing. P27 believes that there is an abdication of responsibility from council officials to house those Travellers wishing to escape feuds. At the same time, in other discussions FI staff recognise that the issue of feuding is a genuine concern for landlords and councils, who believe that if a Traveller family were to be housed by them, then the feud from which the family were attempting to escape may be brought literally to their doorstep. Interestingly, P27 points out that councils are in fact engaging in indirect discrimination towards these Travellers by informing them that they must seek support from other agencies (or indeed return to their original location) in order to access housing.

The issue of surnames preventing families from access to accommodation was more frequently referred to by staff working in locations outside Dublin, such as Waterford, Cork, and Sligo, where the local community are more aware of Traveller ethnicity based on family surnames because of the smaller population density in these areas. There is a paucity of research in relation to the attitudes of landlords in the Republic of Ireland towards Irish Travellers and further exploration of discriminatory practices in the rental market based on the phenotype, clothing, accent and surnames of Travellers is required.

Another challenge for staff is the perceived tendency from landlords and members of the community to view Travellers as criminals:

P45 there's always a minority that will cause trouble like the settled community. But like the Roma, everybody, seems to get tarred with the one brush you know

So you have the same issues with Travellers then?

P45 yeah it's very very difficult

The task for staff is to try to persuade landlords that not every member of an ethnic community should be “tarred with the one brush.” The question remains however, how might this stereotyping be overcome? Evidently, attempts to change negative attitudes towards minority groups such as Travellers and Roma is beyond the control of individual FI staff members and is a societal issue (McGinnity et al., 2018).

For P45, the challenge is not only trying to persuade landlords to allow Traveller or Roma families to view properties, but also to persuade them to provide appropriate accommodation for the Traveller or Roma families that are already in substandard housing:

P45 uh with the Roma community I find that people are very prejudiced against them

P42 mmm

Ok

P45 um and it's almost impossible to find them, a landlord to take them uh, the family that I do have are living in in very substandard accommodation and the landlord is taking huge money from them. Nobody else would live in what the conditions they're living in

Right, what does that mean substandard?

P45 it means that it's a two bed, they've three children. uh there's no heating in it, there's a communal washing machine somewhere that's never working, uh a tiny kitchen with damp running down the walls, uh they can't open um the front door into the apartment block, doesn't work it's open, so they have to lock their apartment to keep it locked all the time um it's yeah [pause]. So the landlord is getting his money. I can't move them out, because you know

there's nobody who's willing to take them, because of like people say their reputation. A great family who would make fabulous tenants. I did get one landlord to take another family I have, and that's working very well um, and I think it's just prejudiced, by general it's the Roma community and it's like the Irish Travellers, they're all tarred with the one brush

P45's challenge is persuading the landlord to provide habitable accommodation that meets basic human rights, or failing this, to try and procure alternative accommodation for the family. Furthermore, these shocking details on the plight of one Roma family on whose behalf P45 is advocating are not isolated cases. Indeed, the issues she describes, such as lack of facilities and overcrowding, are reflected in a report commissioned by Pavee Point⁵⁰ and the Department of Justice and Equality, which found that a number of Roma families throughout Ireland are living in private rented accommodation without basic utilities, such as running water or heating or facilities, such as kitchens (12%), cooker (9.6%) and fridge (13.5%). Some families also reported not having a bathroom in their house or flat (14.4%). In addition, a regular complaint by the Roma families who were interviewed for this report centred on inhabitable living conditions, specifically rat-infested accommodation (Kennedy, 2018).

It is P45's belief that the landlord referred to above would not provide such substandard housing to other families. This view suggests the lack of power held by the Roma community in Irish society compared with other groups. Another problem is the societal negative stereotyping of the Roma community, which means that P45 has found it difficult to persuade other landlords to house this family. Again, this is problematic for FI staff as what is needed is a societal shift away from negative stereotypical beliefs, prejudice and discrimination towards certain ethnic minority groups. This shift can only be achieved through interventions at government level in areas such as education and positive social interaction (McGinnity et al., 2018).

Finally, FI staff made some references to attempts by customers from the black community to access private rented accommodation:

⁵⁰ Pavee Point is a Traveller NGO.

P26 I suppose I haven't experienced anything that extreme but we might have landlords saying "oh no we had a Nigerian person in there before and it didn't work out," you know. So what's to say that it's not going to, because they're two completely different people, separate family, different circumstances the whole, but by grouping them altogether and kind of stereotyping, you know it's

Denial of housing by private landlords in this above is predicated upon stereotyping members of the black community by attributing certain behaviours to all its members. However, there were fewer comments by FI staff regarding the black community than Irish Travellers and the Roma community in relation to attempts to access housing in the private rental market and the discrimination that these groups encounter. This finding does not align with some reports on this issue (Grotti et al., 2018) whereas the many examples given by FI staff in relation to Traveller or Roma discrimination in housing allocation are reflected in existing reports (Visser, 2018).

6.2.2 Institutional discrimination

There are conflicting views amongst FI staff in terms of whether the local councils engage in discrimination towards minority ethnic groups, as the two extracts below concerning their actions towards Irish Travellers and the Roma community illustrate:

P30 [...] and then the second thing is the government, the inconsistency of the government policy right, because they have an obligation they will house Travellers, but it, they make some people jump through more hoops than others

P28 [sighs heavily] yeah

P30 [and like] I know that they're going to be housed, but why do we have to play this game of jumping through all these hoops and battering these people further, do you know what I mean? I don't like it, either it is the policy or it's not the policy and you can't pick and choose

P30's comments in this first extract relate to indirect discrimination on the part of the council. She points out that local councils have an obligation under law to house

Travellers⁵¹, yet they appear to overcomplicate the process Travellers must complete in order to access housing. She believes that this problem is created at national government level with bureaucratic red tape. In addition, the metaphors used by P30, such as “jumping through hoops” and Travellers being “battered” imply that the process is not only bruising but also mentally draining for Irish Travellers. P28’s heavy sigh in agreement with this view suggests that the process has a similar effect on FI staff.

However, as we can see from the second extract there also appears to be disagreement amongst FI staff as to whether or not local councils do discriminate towards Travellers:

P45 but I think with the council it, there is a policy if the council review people’s status every year, so they send out a review form to see if people’s circumstances have changed. Um, if people don't fill in that form, then the council will assume that they've moved on, or they're housed, so they come off the council list for 18 months and that's a policy more so in the council, it's not discriminatory...it's policy...[yeah] it's a set rule for everybody

and everyone is dealt with the same way so you don't feel it's discrimination?

P45 well I haven't experienced that, I don't know what P44

P44 this particular family, we've sent in the changes, we've done all that and they're still not been put back on the housing list

P45 yeah so different situations

Later in this conversation, three of the four participants thought that the councils did not act in a discriminatory manner and applied policy fairly to all families, regardless of ethnicity. Indeed, P43 believed that “the same rules apply” (to everyone). Generally, throughout all the interviews, staff spoke very positively about local and county council housing policy in relation to homelessness, feeling that in the main, council officials were fair to all individuals or families applying to be housed.

However, according to a European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) report (2019) and an *Irish Times* article (Holland, 2019b) some local councils have not drawn down the totality of funds available to them from the Department of Housing,

⁵¹ Traveller Accommodation Act 1998.

Planning and Local Government, to provide social housing for the Traveller community. Indeed, fourteen local authorities failed to draw down any funding at all, while ten underspent on their housing allocation from central government. There could be a myriad of reasons for this, one of which may be that many local councils do not prioritise Travellers in relation to the provision of housing, which could be viewed as discriminatory. Other reports, while not going as far as suggesting discriminatory practices by government highlight an incongruous approach in terms of governmental policy: “Traveller accommodation policy remains characterised by inconsistent delivery and ongoing failure in meeting the accommodation needs of the Traveller community” (Visser, 2018, p. 5).

6.3 Prejudice

As defined previously, prejudice is a belief or attitude framed in notions of superiority, which may or may not be explicitly stated by individuals. Unlike discrimination or racism, it is not an act and is thus cognitive. Prejudice was probably the most frequent issue mentioned by FI staff whenever the topic of racism was raised during an interview. A significant challenge in the provision of an effective service for their customers was the need to overcome prejudicial beliefs, particularly from Irish customers, misperceptions around housing allocation.

6.3.1 Misperceptions around housing allocation

There is broad consensus that prejudice amongst in-group dominant members increases towards minority out-group members in times of economic hardship when competition for resources becomes more problematic (Ni Chonail, 2009). On the other hand, not all in-group members develop prejudice towards out-group members during these times (Brewer, 1999). There are a number of extracts from the interviews where staff refer to Irish customers questioning out-group international customers’ rights to welfare in the form of housing allocation:

P29 [sometimes] I would have customers who are Irish born in Ireland come in. They're on the housing list, they're not being housed yet, they may be frustrated with the system, frustrated with how things are going for them, and in their eyes, they seen [sic] non-Irish people, uh that's a nice way I'm putting it, they they put it differently, getting housed before them and

[how] do they put it?

P29 [sighs]

P30 [it's] terrible

P29 [yeah “refugees”] or “foreigners” usually foreigners or uh “they don't belong here”, it can be do you know? A lot of times people have notions about who gets housed off the housing list, so if they're not getting housed they assume that they're being wronged and maybe they are, but some individuals have then accused people who aren't originally from Ireland of taking places on the housing list that should go to Irish Nationals

P29 [um] so that can be frustrating to try to, not educate them but uh, try to suggest that perhaps maybe that's not what's going on but like that can be tricky because people can be angry

The comments from respondents are illustrative of the challenge that they face in attempting to persuade Irish customers that other customers, who are newcomers, are not ‘queue jumping’. The key word used by P29 is “frustrating.” This suggests international newcomers are being scapegoated by Irish customers, resulting in misplaced anger by some towards out-group “foreigners” or “refugees”. This is made all the easier with the use of the official term “non-Irish” which immediately has the effect of establishing an in-group out-group dynamic - a “them” and “us”. It is interesting that P29 uses this word perhaps subconsciously, when it is clear from the whole interview that she respects international customers and clearly wishes to advocate for them to the best of her abilities. In fact, a number of FI staff used the term ‘non-Irish’ during the interviews. The reference to this category comes from the official paperwork that staff often complete when supporting their customers.

Other examples of prejudiced belief about economic and social privilege for newly arrived migrants centres on the use of prejudice talk (Van Dijk, 1993) by some members of the majority in-group white Irish customers. This talk is framed around phenotype and the promotion of in-group cohesion, which is accomplished by representing themselves as being overlooked and mistreated due to their regional identity:

P30 [the] Waterford one as well - “I’ll paint myself black and go to the council and then they might give me a house”

P29 [sighs]

P30 [and I] hear that a lot

P28 [mmm]

P38 has a similar experience with a number of Cork customers who often use the acronym ABC- ‘Anybody but Cork,’- to describe the frustration they feel as a result of the perception that any other minority groups are placed ahead of them on the housing list, or receive houses before they do: ⁵²

P38 some of the [Inaudible-lads??] would say ABC...um, which is quite unfair and untrue as P36 has stated. But I have said to the lads, I have come up against this ...“Polish, or this that the other and we’re homeless” I says like “it wasn’t the Polish people who created a housing crisis or an economic crisis”...so “you’re missing the target lads” when you’re...they’re saying ABC, Anybody but Cork...Which is statistically [laughs] insane you know if you take if you take a look at it, but that doesn’t take away that mind-set, that way of thinking and that lack of understanding in relation to [...]

P38’s comment is another example of in-group prejudice directed at out-group members. This term “ABC” not only stems from a feeling of being threatened by newcomers, but also by a perceived sense of being overlooked by political authorities. P38 is keen to point out that this perception is untrue. Interestingly, throughout the interview involving P38, there was an overriding sense on my part that he took a pastoral approach with the young men for whom he advocates. This is certainly evidenced by his attempts to inform the young Cork males that the actual problem is not caused by newcomers to the area but by the implementation of government policy on homelessness. Despite this, the young Cork males still believe they are overlooked.

The prejudiced views that some FI customers express align with Ni Chonail’s (2009) analysis in a study in Blanchardstown (a North Dublin community with a large migrant community). She found that a few participants in some of the Irish focus groups⁵³ whom she interviewed believed that Black and Ethnic minority groups were often housed more

⁵² This perception is inaccurate.

⁵³ The researcher grouped the participants into an Irish cohort and a newcomer immigrant cohort.

quickly than their Irish equivalents. The study also suggested that in-group Irish participants expressed racist views because they felt disempowered. This is certainly a finding that is echoed in this current research, as can be seen from the comments of P38.

A theoretical basis for the formation of prejudice by a dominant group over minority groups can be found in the fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology and discourse analysis. In all four fields, 'threat' is identified as an important component of prejudiced behaviour by the dominant in-group towards the minority out-group member. Scholars of Social Identity Theory point out that in-groups have a more positive outlook towards other in-group members and assign more negative characteristics to out-group members, particularly when feeling threatened by them. This forms the basis of group prejudice towards out-group members (Tajfel and Turner 1979). An extension of this theory is Ethnic Competition Theory, which posits that prejudice is heightened when resources such as employment or housing become scarce and the population is competing for these dwindling resources (Quillian, 1995; McGinnity et al., 2018). This is manifested in prejudicial talk by in-group members (Van Dijk, 1987).

FI staff also pointed out another argument put forward by some customers in relation to prejudice, which centres on a nativist position. That is, in-group identity is linked to country of birth and as a result, in-group members should be prioritised over out-group members in relation to areas such as social welfare and housing (Pakulski, and Tranter, 2000):

P35 [so] a lot of people we'd get, they'd kinda say well like "why would you?" You know, "I've lived here all my life and why would you even consider other people like?" you know. That "we should be first in line for everything because, well, Irish" that's kind of definitely, that's, I've heard that as well like. That, they wouldn't even like to hear you were interviewing Polish people or whatever, it might be like they kind of feel "why you interviewing him for?" like

P24 [yeah] there are there are some [...] I think Irish people are inclined to to feel...entitled to a council property. You don't get that with non-Irish. Em, whereas Irish people particularly local Sligo people "well I'm so long on the housing waiting list and Joe Bloggs came from Africa and is housed down the road," em "why amn't I housed?"

As we can see, the belief of some of P35's customers that they should be housed before any newcomer is predicated on the fact that they are born and have lived in Ireland their entire life, leading to a sense of entitlement. This argument can be seen in P24's comments whereby customers state that African families or individuals are being housed before them. The implication in this statement is that Irish customers are treated unfairly in terms of housing policy.

A further extension of the nativist argument and Ethnic Competition Theory is the concept of welfare chauvinism which is the belief that the native population are more deserving of social welfare, and in turn that newcomers, based solely on their nationality, are not (Van der Waal et al. 2010; De Koster, Achterberg and Van der Waal 2013). Interestingly, these perceptions were reported during interviews, which took place in Cork (Ireland's second city) and the smaller cities (Kilkenny, Waterford and Sligo); these arguments of entitlement to housing on the part of Irish customers over newcomers were not highlighted by Dublin FI staff. To date, there is a dearth of research with regards to the correlation of frequency of Ethnic Competition Theory arguments with size of the population.

While FI staff members did not agree with the prejudiced comments expressed by some of their customers, they did display empathy towards the fact that these customers are competing for a limited supply of housing stock:

P36 I think I think, unfortunately, it's kind of the system has made people very, it's brought people back in years everybody is looking at fighting their own little corner and minding their own corner. But it's far more vocalised now I think

Some Irish-born customers may "mind their own corner" by engaging in prejudicial talk. Van Dijk (1993) proposes this term to refer to different categories of prejudicial speech acts such as: economic competition ("they take our houses/jobs"); social privilege ("they are all on social welfare"); and cultural threats ("they don't even speak the language"). Some journalists (Quinn, 2017) uses prejudicial talk to put forward ethnic competition arguments. David Quinn is a conservative religious and social affairs commentator, who writes opinion pieces about societal issues in Ireland in national newspapers (*The Irish Times*, *The Irish Independent*) and religious publications (*The Irish Catholic*). He is also a director of a socially conservative religious lobby group called the Iona institute. In this

article, he argues that the immigration policy in Ireland puts a strain on resources, particularly in education, health and housing. He frames his arguments by ‘othering’ immigrants, particularly those who are from non-EU countries. He posits a welfare chauvinism viewpoint in claiming that immigrants are overrepresented in the social housing figures. In addition, he also complains that a large number of immigrants are renting privately, with the implication that they are preventing the Irish population from accessing housing.

Racist language has been used in the Irish political sphere at both local and national level. For example, during the 2018 Irish presidential campaign one of the candidates, Peter Casey, targeted Irish Travellers in his rhetoric while campaigning. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in a recent report, while not referring directly to Casey, highlighted its concerns about the frequent use of hate speech, in Irish elections (CERD, 2019, p. 4). Thus, in order to combat hate speech⁵⁴ the committee recommends that the Irish government “[e]ffectively investigate and, as appropriate, prosecute and punish acts of hate speech, including those committed by politicians during election campaigns” (ibid, p.4).

It is against this societal backdrop that FI staff members are attempting to combat racist and prejudicial talk from some of their customers. They face the challenge of dispelling any misconceptions that their customers might have because of misinformation stemming from societal, political and media discourses regarding immigration and housing. In particular, there is a dearth of research in the Irish context on how media misinformation affects local community members’ views of newly arrived immigrants. However, a study in the UK points out that the language used by media in relation to newly arrived immigrants is “often generalised and inflammatory, perpetuating stereotypes and popular

⁵⁴ Ireland does not have specific legislation to deal with hate speech (Department of Justice Report, 2019). Consequently, there does not appear to be any annual comparison figure to indicate whether this form of hate is increasing or not. A report on hate crime states that there has been an increase in hate speech but does not provide any figures in support of this. It does provide figures for hate speech incidents that were reported in 2018/2019. There were 174 reported cases of hate speech out of 530 reported incidents of hate crime overall. Hate speech incidents include 113 social media, 31 websites, 13 politicians, 13 tv and radio 12 newspapers (Michael, 2019).

myths about immigrant populations” the effect of which is to fuel tension within the community (Robinson and Reeve, 2006, p. 23). It is probably this type of misinformation and inflammatory discourse that P36 is referring to indirectly when she states, “it has brought us back in years.” By using this phrase, she appears to indicate that societal views have regressed.

Some of the FI staff commented on the various strategies they use to combat prejudicial talk and misconceptions about council housing waiting lists:

P28 every single time we're seeing people and then they'll go along again and be like “oh there's a black family down the road and they're not even from here and they got a house and how come they got a house?” and then I won't even entertain that though, cos you can't just get into every single discussion like...I say “I'm not even going there, so I'm not,” I say “that's not a conversation I'm having with you,” and sometimes they can they can get wirery with you when you say it and other times they can they'll know straight away that they're after crossing a bit of a line like, so then they'll pull back

P36 [I suppose] the one thing what comes to mind as well, is when you're working with uh a variety of cultures as you know like, you have including the Travelling culture and I suppose the lads from Cork and the lads from Dublin whatever, is their, you know, what can often come up is the um, sometimes the resentment against the other, I suppose other nationalities. That comes up you know like

P35 [mmm]

P36 [“oh] he got a house and he's from here” and whatever you know which is, and is completely untrue, and how to have to manage that in a way that doesn't you know cut a person off completely um, but that you can you know take a stance on it in an appropriate way

These remarks illustrate the different strategies that some FI staff use to attempt to combat some Irish customers' allegations that foreign customers will be housed before them. We can see that P28 is much more direct when she says to customers that this is a conversation she is not having or directing them to not “even go there”. On the other hand, P36 sees the complexity of the causes of such views, particularly his customers' deflection of their anger at their plight onto newcomer groups to Cork. Consequently, in recognition of the customers' anger, he adopts a more indirect approach by ‘managing’ the situation. It is

unclear how exactly he does this, but he could mean that he allows the customer space to vent this anger, yet at the same time, he makes it clear to them that he does not agree with the beliefs expressed.

However, despite the use of these strategies, it is clear that customers have resentment towards ethnic minority groups. As P28 indicates, even though she attempts to dissuade customers from expressing prejudicial talk centring on economic competition (Van Dijk, 1993) about international customers receiving preferential treatment regarding housing allocation, some Irish customers will often repeat the same misinformed allegations in subsequent visits. Thus, the challenge remains for FI staff to break down these strongly held misconceptions by some customers.

6.4 Racism, prejudice and discrimination in intercultural competence models

There is significant variation in terms of a focus on issues of racism, discrimination and prejudice within intercultural competence models. For example, in Kim's monograph (2001) on cross-cultural adaptation, very little discussion is directed towards these issues. She makes fleeting references to discrimination and prejudicial talk in her descriptions of the role of host culture members in welcoming strangers to their new society. This lack of detailed focus on discrimination, racism or prejudice is surprising given that the adaptation process might involve the stranger encountering these to varying degrees in the process of adaptation. On the other hand, some intercultural competence models or lists of competencies focus on racism, prejudice and discrimination in great detail. Indeed, the Council of Europe document on developing intercultural competence through education, which was discussed in the literature review, details the importance of both educators and students possessing an "[a]n awareness and understanding of one's own and other people's assumptions, preconceptions, stereotypes, prejudices, and overt and covert discrimination" (Barrett et al, 2014, p. 19). The document contains exercises on the issues of racism, discrimination and prejudice to aid in awareness raising for students on this issues.

In addition, many models from the disciplines of sociology and social work, which were discussed in the literature review chapter, examine racism, prejudice and discrimination in detail. For example, Sue's (2001) multidimensional model for developing cultural

competence highlights the need for social workers to be aware not only of their own biases and prejudices, but also the racial and cultural-specific attributes of their clients. In addition, Sue, Rasheed and Rasheed (2015) point out the need for social workers to have knowledge of the possible existence of institutionalised racism and the impact this might have on clients.

The FI staff members' comments with regards to racism, discrimination and prejudice that is directed towards their customers, either internally by other customers or externally by other individuals such as landlords, highlight the importance of the inclusion of these issues in any description of the components of intercultural competence. These components were included in the model of intercultural competence which is posited in chapter eight

6.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has focused on the challenges that FI staff members encounter in relation to racism, discrimination and prejudice. The first relates to racist behaviour being directed towards staff in the coffee shop or between customers at the kitchen pass in the coffee shop. While this did not occur often, it is nevertheless important to highlight, as many new FI staff members will often begin their work in the coffee shop and therefore possibly encounter this problem.

The next significant challenge was the issue of societal racism directed towards newcomer ethnic minority groups who are newly housed in estates. The findings from this study echo reports which highlight difficulties that ethnic minority groups may encounter, because of racist behaviour directed towards them by some local community members. Such racism is beyond the control of FI staff members other than advocating strongly for the re-location by county councils of ethnic minority families experiencing racism.

A further challenge for FI staff members involved advocating for customers, especially Irish Travellers, who encounter discrimination by landlords in the form of the denial of access to private housing because of their phenotype, accent or surname. Often, when

dealing with private property owners the staff have to persuade them not to stereotype Irish Traveller families and provide housing on an individual case-by-case basis.

The final challenge regards the issue of prejudice of Irish customers towards other cultural groups. The findings suggest that staff often have to combat the misconceptions of Irish customers that newly arrived immigrants are given priority in terms of housing allocation.

CHAPTER 7: LANGUAGE OF STAFF, CUSTOMERS AND OTHER INTERLOCUTORS IN THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

7.1 Introduction

When FI staff were asked during the interviews to discuss the challenges that faced them in their attempts to support customers who were culturally diverse, the first issue that respondents referred to was language, specifically the language barrier that often existed between them. Discussion often centred on customers' language competence, mainly in relation to English language proficiency. This chapter examines the following issues in relation to language: the language barrier between customer and service provider; documentation and literacy issues that customers have to deal with; the use of children and emerging adults, adults and colleagues as language brokers; the practice of using interpreters when they are available; and the role of translation in the communication process.

7.2 The language barrier

As stated above, the most frequent issue noted by the staff in relation to the provision of an effective service was the language barrier, on which some staff made broad comments:

P2 and the barrier would be the language barrier

P49 [inaudible] the huge one is the language barrier ehm and it's just trying to be able to provide a service and help people but it's very hard to kind of help people when they can⁵⁵ communicate what they want from you.....

Meanwhile, other staff members commented on the issue in greater detail:

P26 I think the language barrier can be a massive massive massive barrier to getting the work done that needs to be done

[right]

⁵⁵ The staff member means can't here.

P26 [I think] sometimes the family or the person that you're dealing with might say you know that they understand you or say that they agree or you know and you might think that they do and it's not until you meet them the next time...that you realise that they don't

P27 [a] lot of respect for people who, do you know, like manage to learn a second language, cos I always say we're Irish and I can't speak Irish properly never mind if I was to go off to Africa and try and start speaking you know. So I've a lot of respect for people that, they are trying and I can only imagine how difficult it is, but I suppose the reality is, is unless they have some level of English our job is next to near impossible

P27's remarks recognise the inherent difficulty of relocating to another country and attempting to learn another language. Nevertheless, she also points out that without a good level of English, the job of providing effective support for international customers is problematic. Indeed, the majority of staff who were interviewed expressed concern in relation to the provision of an effective service to those emergent L2 customers⁵⁶. There is some research in relation to this phenomenon. In a study of the routes out of homelessness for immigrant women experiencing domestic violence in Canada, Saulnier et al. (2007), found that limited language proficiency⁵⁷ prevented the women from effectively accessing relevant services. However, research into the relationship between English proficiency levels and the ability on the part of a migrant to access or make good use of a particular service related to homelessness appears to be somewhat limited.

In some instances, staff commented on the fact that the existence of a language barrier meant that they could not explain the complexities of homeless care provision in the state:

P8 [I] find very difficult if they're a new presenter and you're trying to explain the system I find the language barrier can be hard sometimes

P7 & P9 [yeah]

P8 [and] you're trying to explain the homeless service and the Freephone and it's a lot of information for anyone to process, but when someone finds English, when you know, English isn't their first language it's it's so difficult

⁵⁶ This is the term which I am using rather than 'customers with limited English proficiency' as I believe this term is a deficit term.

⁵⁷ This is the authors term.

to explain and they're like “beds?” And you can't guarantee them a bed...it's horrible

In this extract, P8 highlights the inextricable links between language and social/ cultural capital. It is sometimes difficult for emergent L2 customers to understand the content of discussions with FI staff. P8 describes the problem she has in explaining to the customer how beds are allocated on a nightly basis. If such fundamental information proves difficult to convey, then more complex descriptions of homeless care provision in general, must be extremely challenging for the staff. The issue for these customers is a lack of understanding of how to gain access to social welfare, housing and health services in Ireland. Furthermore, they may not have had enough time to build the social capital necessary to avail fully of these services or even have knowledge of “the system.” This point was made in the interviews with the catering staff, who noted the advantage that Irish customers have in being socialised within the context of a system of social welfare. There is no research in an Irish context in relation to difficulties migrants have in understanding the provision of support for those experiencing or in danger of homelessness. However, in a study of Syrian refugees who had relocated to Ireland, Čatibušić, Gallagher and Karazi (2019) point out that some of them found that the welfare system in Ireland was often difficult to navigate, particularly in relation to access to health care and education.

During the interviews, staff mentioned particular areas of difficulty in relation to the language barrier which included accent; the fact that interactions and completion of tasks might take longer; not being able to explain how the homeless social welfare system operates in Ireland, and the difficulty customers have in understanding documentation associated with homelessness. The following table highlights the codes that were generated in relation to the language barrier:

Category	Number of interviews	Number of references
Language barrier	18	174
Accent	1	1
Adapting language complexity	3	3
Age	1	1
Customers multilingualism	1	1
English classes	1	1
L1 being spoken too much	1	1
Language brokers or interpreters	14	57
bias of interpreters	1	1
Documentation	3	6
FI documents	1	2
interpreters and power	2	2
multilingual interpreting	1	1
Professional interpreters not good at job	1	2
Literacy issues	4	8
Mix of l2 ability in families	1	2
Not an issue	1	1
Not understanding staff	1	1
Showing customers information on a computer screen	1	1
Slows effective service	2	4
Staff and customer using shared knowledge of a third language	3	3
Staff using own L2	2	2
Strategies to check understanding	1	2
Translation	7	15
Using colleagues	7	13
Understanding the system	12	22
Vulnerability of customer due to lack of English	1	1

Table 24 Codes related to the theme of Language competence

Interestingly, most of the participants referred to the language barrier in terms of a deficit on the part of the customers, thus not recognising the fact that their own individual language usage might be a source of difficulty for emerging L2 customers. In addition, not only were the participants unable to see the importance of adjusting their language complexity to the level of English proficiency of the customer, they were also not conscious of the difficulty customers may have in understanding Hiberno English usage, or the need to moderate speed of delivery to the level of their customer. Thus, the majority of staff appear to lack the cultural humility component of intercultural competence that

was discussed in the literature review. This affective variable is present in a Chinese model of intercultural competence and describes, amongst other features, an individual's ability to assess her/his limitations in the communication process critically (Wang and Kulich, 2015). In fact, only three members of staff referred to this ability when discussing the challenge of communicating with customers:

P47 [I] think the only approach that I take differently, depending on their level of English, is how I say things and how much I say in a sentence. I'm not sure if that's because when I was in college with Polish girls in Costa⁵⁸. So, I do it without knowing I don't say a whole without being ignorant. I suppose you simplify things down rather than you know sometimes you have the Irish banter or whatever with others. I don't really find that you have that it's more you're going in there and clear concise

[right]

P47 [they're] happy enough with that yeah basic kind of simple enough English and I always you know no without again without being ignorant you know "is that ok? Do you understand? Do you have any questions?" Just to make sure that I'm not

[yeah] so you use clarification questions yeah?

P47 [yeah]....I just know, for me it's more, I'm a little bit more conscious and aware of how I say

P46 [the] language

P25 she has quite good English, but you're trying to you're asking specific questions. Or, you you're, you know, you're kind of feeding back to what you think she said and she would look "no." So it's anything, can, "how can I say this, differently." So, you have to kind of adapt, I suppose, your language to layman's terms, but even then you're not 100% sure if they understand the context. So it's it's slow... much slower

P28 and then you try to nearly explain more and more

[laughter]

and then you you're looking at the person, and you can see "oh my god this poor person's absolutely just baffled" But what I'm saying, and I have a terrible habit then of talking really really quick as well, which I have to kind

⁵⁸ This is a coffee shop chain

of really slow down, especially when I am speaking with people where English wouldn't be their first language huh [sighs]

The comments point to a similar issue in that all three participants are reflecting on their language usage, not only at the time of speaking, but also after the encounters. These are the only examples where staff mentioned adapting English usage to the level of their customer. It is worth noting that P47 equates her ability to modify or adapt her language usage in interactions with customers because of contact with work colleagues not originally from Ireland in a previous job. Furthermore, she provides us with examples to demonstrate how she would check if a customer understands through clarification questions. Therefore, it could be argued that contact with people from another country might aid an individual in their ability to develop effective intercultural communication skills. Other interesting features of effective communication during the intercultural encounter itself include the modification of tone of voice and speed of delivery, as well as reducing the amount of talk by staff members in each interaction.

There are two possible reasons why the staff do not think too much about their language use in interactions with emerging L2 customers. Firstly, they are speaking in their first language and do not typically need to moderate language use in daily interactions. Secondly, in public discourse and the media, it is primarily the responsibility of the newcomer and not the host community member to adapt and develop good language proficiency. While there is a dearth of research on the role of media and public discourse in framing responsibility of immigrants to learn English in the Irish context, it might be possible to extrapolate from the British experience. In a corpus-based discourse analysis of the language used by the “right-leaning” British press in their representations of immigrants in Britain, Wright and Brookes (2019) found that an anti-immigrant narrative articulated by some newspapers was framed around the immigrant’s responsibility to learn English.

The debate about whether host governments should provide language supports or whether it is the responsibility of the individual migrant to find ways to learn the host society language in order to integrate is complicated. The Council of Europe views integration as a “two way process”, which involves both parties. On one hand, migrants have a responsibility to learn the language(s) of the host society as one “instrument in the

integration process”. On the other hand, if governments support the integration of migrants, then initiatives such as language programmes should be adopted. In addition, as well as language supports, governments and other actors such as the media have a role in “encouraging acceptance of social and cultural differences” if integration policies are to be successful (Council of Europe, 2021).

7.3 Documentation

Another challenge for a number of staff was supporting customers in the completion of an array of documentation. The main problems centred on the complexity of language in official documents related to homelessness, concerns about whether customers were signing documents without really understanding what they were signing and the issue of not having translated versions of forms in FI:

P23 or filling in forms or filling in documents you know...can take a half an hour whereas if we had the information there it would do, you know? And again I just think it's personally I think it's disrespectful that we don't have that

P27 [twice] as long but much easier cos it does take twice the amount of time

P26 [yeah] and I suppose the talking part is one thing you're trying to explain things you know uh, and the unfortunate thing about our job is everything has a form so when it comes to the forms then it's very different you know that that's kind of that that's the really hard part like when it comes to forms because obviously like people might be able to speak the English and have a conversation with you but when it comes to the reading and writing of it that's a whole different story like you know

The comments by the respondents illustrate a number of challenges that FI staff encounter in relation to customers with literacy issues. The first is the fact that the documents produced by many state or not-for-profit agencies require further explanations in plain English as noted by P26 and P27 in their discussion on the value in using interpreters as opposed to having to explain documents to customers themselves, which can be a time-consuming process for the staff. Interestingly, P23 believes that FI as an organisation is being disrespectful towards its customers by not having documents translated into other languages. This value of ‘respect’ is very important for FI staff and is embedded in the

organisation's list of core values. It is a term that was mentioned on multiple occasions throughout all eighteen interviews.

7.4 Literacy issues

A further issue on which participants commented in relation to documentation was the literacy levels of some of their customers. This concern relates to Irish society in general, where one in six adults have difficulties in reading or writing (National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), 2020).⁵⁹ FI staff mentioned many groups in relation to this issue, but the customers most frequently referred to were those who identified as Travellers and Roma:

P40 ...literacy I've come across and it's something over the last couple of years ehm members of The Travelling community uh poor literacy. There's a little girl I work with ehm, she'd be able to read mmm, I suppose her reading is it's limited her reading and writing skills but she'd um she'd always ring me if she was after getting a letter from wherever you know the crèche or whatever just to go in and have go through it with her to make sure she's after understanding it correctly. Um I was referred, I would have done some language some literacy actually with another organisation...But literacy would be something...they have the support here, the staff you know can either re refer them to PETE⁶⁰ or um the Adult Education or else we can we've the letters for them so they're not dependent on other people. We can explain what's in the letters you know, for schools or whatever, anything like really you know it's any correspondence yeah

P40's experiences are in line with research on the issue of literacy and service delivery. In their study of Roma and Irish Travellers' access to housing and health provision, Van Hout and Staniewicz (2012, p. 201) state that "their high levels of illiteracy mean that Roma (and to a lesser degree Travellers) have great difficulty in dealing with even minor bureaucratic requirements such as form filling." There are studies which have found a link between homelessness and illiteracy (O' Carroll and Wainwright, 2019; Olisa, Patterson and Wright, 2010). However, this link is under-researched in general (Morris, Hanckel, Yasukawa and Gamage, 2017).

⁵⁹ National Adult Literacy Agency.

⁶⁰ Preparation for Education, Training & Employment.

The comments by P40 also raise the question of whether FI staff have sufficient training in literacy skills, such as appropriate techniques to help customers improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills, support customers in helping their children to improve in reading, writing and spelling and work on literacy and numeracy in order to access employment (NALA, 2012). Only P40 refers to some form of literacy training that she received in a previous organisation. Perhaps this lack of training is due to the fact that FI runs a skills training programme for customers, whereby they can develop their writing skills in order to apply for jobs. Thus, the organisation may feel that they are addressing the issue. The section is known as Preparation for Education, Training & Employment (PETE). This educational section of FI is located in Dublin and addresses the customer's barriers in accessing adult education including literacy support for customers with low-level literacy skills. P40 refers to existing support measures for customers such as the provision, if required, of standard pro-forma letters that they can take with them to parent-teacher meetings, for example, as well as access to PETE⁶¹. It is unclear from the eighteen interviews whether staff receive mandatory adult literacy tutor training. If they do not, this could be an area that FI can address, as the existing support measures to help staff who are helping customers with literacy problems are insufficient.

The experiences of FI staff in relation to language competence are not always reflected in the intercultural competence models discussed in the literature review. While language is one of the key factors in a number of models of intercultural competence stemming from the fields of communication, sociology, and language learning (Byram, 1997; Spitzberg, 1997; Sue and Rasheed, 2015), other influential models, which were examined in chapter two, do not focus on language specifically⁶² (Deardorff, 2006). Indeed, Deardorff (2006, p. 259), in her Delphi study, pointed out that there was a divergence of opinion between scholars and administrators on the role of language⁶³ in intercultural

⁶¹ This is just one example the organisation has a range of proforma letters that customers can take social services or utility companies.

⁶² The pyramid model does include a sociolinguistic awareness element but not a language competency element.

⁶³ It is unclear whether Deardorff is referring to an individual's first language or their ability to speak a foreign language. She refers to both extensively throughout her dissertation.

competence. She maintains that this issue was “controversial.” Unfortunately, she did not elucidate on the nature of this controversy, only suggesting that the issue required further research. This is somewhat surprising, given that the context of this research was higher education and that the experts and administrators all worked in this sector. It would have been useful to know why the administrators valued this dimension, but the experts did not. Perhaps the reason for the lack of agreement on the role and importance of language in intercultural competence stems from the fact that the concept has been researched by scholars from many disciplines, some of which do not focus on language.

It is important to situate language competence in a model of intercultural competence for staff working for homeless charities. Whilst this does not guarantee that they will develop intercultural competence, an explicit focus on their language usage, both verbal and non-verbal, when interacting with a customer from another culture can only aid in the provision of an effective service. Indeed, during discussions in the interviews⁶⁴ and training session One, staff highlighted a number of components related to language which were problematic for them, and which can be addressed in intercultural competence training. These were gaining the ability to monitor language complexity; an ability to adapt non-verbal communication, tone and speed of delivery of voice to the level of the customer; knowledge of Hiberno English usage⁶⁵; knowledge of difficult jargon and metalanguage centred on homelessness. These features are in line with one of the definitions of intercultural competence present in round two⁶⁶ of Deardorff’s Delphi study namely that it is an “[a]bility to use one’s own language in an appropriate (modified) manner when interacting with non-native speakers of one’s language” (2004, p.285). They are also similar to one of Imahori and Lanigan’s (1989) variables- speech accommodation.

⁶⁴ This was also highlighted in some of the observations and in the two training sessions.

⁶⁵ As the training took place in Ireland, this knowledge of language use is pertinent. Were the training in Australia, for example, the knowledge of Australian English usage would be important. If it were in Italy, the knowledge of regional dialects would be germane.

⁶⁶ As previously stated in chapter 2, Deardorff engaged in communication with experts in a series of ‘rounds’. After each round the data was analysed and more refined definitions were sent by her to the participants for further consideration.

7.5 Language brokers and interpreters⁶⁷

In all of the interviews, staff pointed out the strategies they used to try to overcome the language barrier. The one most frequently discussed was the use of language brokers or interpreters. Tse (1996, p. 486) defines language brokering as “...interpretation and translation performed in everyday situations by bilinguals who have had no special training”. Much of the literature is centred on children or late teens acting in the capacity of language brokers (Bauer, 2016; Weisskirch, 2018), but the term does not refer exclusively to children. Indeed, in this study the term will not only be used to refer to children, but also emerging adults and adults who are involved in informal interpreting; while the term interpreters refers to professional interpreters.

The first challenge for FI staff relates to the complex and sophisticated nature of interpretation that both adult and child language brokers may be involved in. The extract below typifies the type of interaction that a staff member might experience when working with families who have various degrees of English proficiency:

P26.....but the woman herself spoke French and [inaudible chunk] man was from the Congo he has seven different languages none of them were English unfortunately

P27 [yeah yeah] yeah

[yeah] seven though wow

P26 [yeah] and one of them was French so he's a bit I was able to speak with her in English

P27 [that's] fascinating isn't it?

yeah

P26 [and] she would speak with him in French and then he would speak to his wife in Congolese so this you know this was a long conversation

[very] multilingual yeah

⁶⁷ The participants often use the term translation and interpretation interchangeably in the interview extracts.

P26 yeah yeah because the wife didn't have seven languages she only had Congolese and then [inaudible chunk- one was French and the other???] was English

This extract shows that language brokers might be engaged in a complex and nuanced process of interpretation, which by definition includes a knowledge of at least two languages. As a result, they are in fact very sophisticated interpreters of language. Indeed, there is a great deal of research on the role of language brokers within family units, which supports the belief that they develop multifaceted “metalinguistic and cognitive abilities” (Angelelli, 2017, p. 268). Language brokering is problematic whatever the context, both in terms of the linguistic complexity of interpreting in at least two languages and the possible strains that it puts on relationships (Weisskirch, 2006). Interestingly, nearly all the participants failed to acknowledge the sophisticated, nuanced and problematic nature of language brokering for family members or friends.

7.5.1 Children and emerging adults as language brokers

FI staff referred to a number of situations in which children and emerging adults interpreted for their parents including: support with documentation relating to homelessness, such as Notices to Quit (NTQ); parent-teacher meetings and other matters related to schooling; visits to the doctors; social care needs. In order for effective interpretation to occur, children and adolescents not only require language and cultural competence, but also a good understanding of how state support systems operate in an Irish context. The task of interpreting such complex information may prove very stressful, particularly for those children and emerging adults who may not yet have fully developed sophisticated cognitive or linguistic abilities (Weisskirch, 2010).

The most frequent difficulty mentioned by the participants in relation to child language brokering was the sensitive and inappropriate nature of the content being discussed between the staff member and parent. Some of the staff even go as far as describing such a process as unethical. Many of them expressed an unease when interacting with child

language brokers in a family setting, citing the inappropriate nature of the adult content that was often discussed as the principal cause of this unease⁶⁸:

P27 ... you know they're given more responsibility than I suppose what we'd like

P26 [yeah] and that that goes for all children in any families where there's a language barrier with the [pause] parent. You will often see the child 10, 11, 12, even younger being brought along to things so that the child can maybe try and interpret certain things [inaudible]

P27 [yeah]

P26 [I've] seen it happening I've seen children being taken out of school to be present because mum or dad knows you're coming and they know they're not going to maybe understand something so a ... child might not be sent to school that day

P27 [or] it could even be mum needs to go to the doctor and can't tell the doctor what's wrong you're going to have to come and say mum has a pain in her head something as [inaudible] they kind of become carers in that sense

P52 [really] difficult [inaudible- other??] cases. Like I've had, in the past [inaudible- I had ??] a Romanian family there two years ago and they had [this/his??] boy translated which was you know. You're looking at, kind of, I suppose ethical issues in that literally [inaudible], does this child need to be exposed? There's loads of stuff with landlords, stuff with bills and um the dad was really, I suppose he was quite anxious around their tenancy how long it was for and uh trying to communicate, all this to a little chi, you know he was 13 at the time um

what happens if it then comes to sort of sensitive information you can go so far...[do] do you continue or do you say look we can't talk about this with him here or?

P52 [yeah] I think you just have to kind of judge it for yourself um yeah in that particular case there wasn't any other way around it and it was either we stop working and because you know the family were getting settled in uh there was other things that were coming up... I suppose each case is just so different um

⁶⁸ There are a great deal of similar extracts on this issue which have been included in Appendix L.

These extracts are typical of the participants' views on the use of children as language brokers. As we can see, their main concerns centre on the inappropriate nature of some of the content discussed between staff and their customers, such as sensitive health related issues during visits to the doctor, and the worry for the child's wellbeing in having to carry out such tasks. P27, in her discussion on doctor's visits, saw these children's role as not only that of an interpreter, but also a carer, which she feels puts too much responsibility on children.

A further common concern expressed by the staff was the fact that language brokering was unethical in some instances. However, the parents may not share this view as P52 points out when describing the fact that a Romanian child in a family he was supporting initiated contact with the staff member on more than one occasion, at the request of his parents. Clearly, the staff are involved in a problematic process if child language brokers interpret for their parents. The staff must make the decision about the appropriacy of topics under discussion on a case-by-case basis; they refer to the fact that they may have no choice but involve children at times.

The concerns expressed above have been addressed in previous research on children as language brokers. Studies have focussed on negative and positive effects on children's cognitive and psychological development. A study of adolescents who were acting as language brokers found that it could be burdensome and stressful for them (Kam and Lazarevic, 2014). However, other studies have shown that children and emerging adults who interpret for their parents often develop high self-esteem (Weisskirch, 2006).

Overall, throughout the interviews, staff attempted to be non-judgemental about parental linguistic practices including the use of their children as language brokers. However, at times the staffs' own personal or cultural beliefs in relation to child rearing were highlighted in comments such as those from P18, who sees protecting the child from inappropriate adult content as part of the parental role. Another criticism of parents who rely on their children to interpret for them can be seen in P24's comment about the parent's inability to speak English, which she sees as a "refusal" to learn the language. Such a comment fails to recognise the difficult journey many immigrants undergo in attempting to acculturate to another country, of which learning a language is one element.

There appears to be a tacit understanding amongst staff that in cases where the information is not of a sensitive nature, it might be acceptable to have children interpret for their parents and the staff member. However, in one case P20 thought that children should not be used as interpreters under any circumstance, expressing reservations about the practice:

P20 [and] sometimes I think what actually happens quite a lot is, it's the parents of the family that have the worst English and [inaudible- often/ the option ??] their children can speak quite good English if they've been going to school here and stuff like that. But we can't communicate with a child, like about obviously what's going on in the family they have to be over 18

mmm

P19 [mmm]

P20 [so] but often they would have like a grown up son or daughter or something and that helps a lot

[would would] the families in initially, attempt to use their, I don't mean use, but they would ask their children to translate and then you would try and stop that or?

P20 yeah that's happened

P19 [yeah] depending on the conversation yeah if it's not appropriate for the child

P20 [maybe] a teenager you know they'd say "speak to my son" and he'd be like 14 or something and then I would, I would say "oh look, you know unfortunately I can't I, I have to speak to you" or whatever, so yeah

P19 [I think] sometimes in an emergency situation where it like it might be family need accommodation for that night and you're trying to piece some of it together and like yeah like I if their 9-year-old is talking to you about like you know? And you have to then like find another way, because you know, you're it's not appropriate for that child, but then at the same time that child is in the room and you know? So, it's finding, it, it, it's trying to trying to find the balance um

P20 [mmm]

The filler by P20 at the end of this extract is interesting. On the recording, the intonation clearly indicates an uncertainty, even disagreement with P19s view of the use of child language brokers in certain contexts as being acceptable.

The overriding message from all the staff who took part in the interviews was a concern for the child. In all likelihood, this not only stems from the personal beliefs of the participants, but also from the strict child protection measures and guidelines that FI have incorporated into their procedures and practice. These were “developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the protection and Welfare of Children (2017), and TUSLA’s Child Safeguarding a Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice” (FI, 2020). These policy documents contain a broad range of measures including: “procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/ volunteers of a child availing of FI services; procedures for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm; procedures for reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to TUSLA” (FI, 2020).

Many staff talked about being cognisant of child safety and were aware that the measures listed above gave little leeway in terms of deciding if the content of discussions between staff and customer was appropriate for children to interpret. Inappropriate themes often cited by staff included drug and alcohol use as well as domestic violence.

The final disadvantage to children becoming language brokers mentioned by the staff is the effect on family dynamics:

P49 [that's] very hard as well, like I've [inaudible- watched in/ worked with??] a lot of teenagers translate for their parents. But sometimes of the children, ehm, they can make their parents, they they make fun of their parents, because they can't understand. It is very difficult when it it, it's a really uncomfortable room to be in there when their children are making fun of them, because they can't speak English and that they are there you know and they're just being children. Um, but eh, it looks like I'm part of that kind of process as well and it's it's like very disrespectful, eh, um, so yeah it's just [inaudible] parent [inaudible-step/respect from it]

This extract illustrates the changing nature of the parent-child dynamic. For P49 this generates a negative dynamic, centred on power. Eksner and Orellana (2012, p. 196) point out that child language brokers “occupy shifting positions of authority and power during brokering events”. The teenagers mocking their parents made P49 feel uncomfortable, especially as she appears to suggest that the children are making her complicit in this mockery.

7.5.2 Adults as language brokers

The staff cited many instances where adult family members, friends or community leaders would be present in the family home or would accompany a customer to FI locations in order to interpret for them. In addition, some staff in the coffee shop talked about utilising other willing customers to help interpret:

P14 [em] sometimes they may present with a friend who has fluent in English, em, and that makes obviously our job a lot easier em

P15 [sometimes], we have used customers who would have really good English and also like a good say Polish or something...I know down in EDS⁶⁹ definitely we have used customers um to translate to other like [inaudible] coz there's one customer can like speak five languages or something

P19 [um] or maybe they might be able to get a family or or a family member or friend that might be able to translate...

As we can see from these extracts, many of the customers rely on community social capital networks to support them by interpreting what the FI staff members say. Often the language brokers are friends. One member of staff referred to some Nigerian customers who brought along a person who she surmised was a church leader/ pastor. These brokers make the FI staff member's job “easier” as they are able to convey information to an emergent L2 customer. However, it is worth noting that some of the participants highlighted the problematic nature of such a strategy in that they did not know how well the adult brokers were interpreting. Furthermore, whilst overcoming a language barrier,

⁶⁹ Extended Day Service. Staff collaborate with Merchant's Quay Ireland homeless and drugs service provision, to provide food showers and a place to be in the evening.

this raises questions about whether family members should be interpreting a customer's confidential, personal information and whether such interpreters can actually be impartial (Strang and Ager, 2010).

Staff also referred to other FI customers who were willing to help emergent L2 customers. I witnessed this in one of my observations in the coffee shop, where a Romanian family came in one day for an appointment. They sat at the family tables and a FI staff member was trying to help them by telling them that an interpreter would come soon and asking them if they wanted refreshments. Next to the family were a young couple and a baby:

It is obvious that the three adults are struggling with this. Immediately the FISM⁷⁰ crouches down in front of the younger adult woman and uses her mobile phone to show the time. She deals with the situation very well, modulating tone and pace and the customer eventually understands. The FISM member repeats the offer from tea and coffee plus some cereal and juice. [This basic lexis is difficult for the younger adult whilst the older adults seem to find it impossible to follow what is going on]. At this point, the young man from the young couple at the table next to the family gets up and moves over to begin translating which the FISM utilises very effectively. The FISM waits patiently whilst each sentence is translated.

(Observation 6, Thursday 13th April 2017, Time: 10:30- 11:30, Location: coffee shop)

We can see from this extract that in this instance the customer was happy to help translate for the Romanian family without being asked to. The encounter was effective because of the presence of another customer who could interpret for the Romanian family. The more experienced staff member dealt with the situation very competently, using a number of strategies: a mobile phone app, modulating tone and speed of delivery as well as her language complexity. In addition, the experienced staff member was confident enough to take a step back and only intervene when needed. The interpretation process in this particular case was very smooth. As we can see from the extract involving P47, there is an awareness amongst staff of the multiple languages in which a migrant might have proficiency. Furthermore, there appears to be an enthusiasm amongst the staff to utilize this resource, as they can see the benefits of multilingual practices of some of the customers in interpreting for other customers who struggle with English. This is somewhat

⁷⁰ Focus Ireland Staff member.

at odds with the findings discussed in the literature review in relation to a Spanish residential project for homeless migrants (Dalmau et al., 2017). The study found that staff undervalued the benefits of multilingual practice in interactions and indeed discouraged any language use other than Spanish, French or English. However, as a counterpoint to the advantage of using customers to help interpret, one member of staff did refer to a negative outcome when attempting to involve a polyglot customer:

P14 [um] and sometimes like...someone did suggest that to me one night in EDS and I said ok, and I asked someone and the customer actually got really annoyed and said “no I'm not doing it” like “leave me alone I'm not here to translate”. [Inaudible- I mean so] [laughing] which is completely understandable, do you know what I mean like, and like you know it's not his job to translate

Here we can see the fine line that staff tread in interactions with multilingual customers. Clearly, they see these customers as a resource in terms of on-the-spot interpreting to aid in their attempts to support emergent L2 customers. However, in this case, this particular multilingual customer perceived being asked to interpret for another customer as somewhat exploitative.

7.5.3 Colleagues as language brokers

Another strategy mentioned by the majority of the participants which aids in the effective communication with emerging L2 customers, was the use of other colleagues as language brokers. Some of the Irish staff have a second or third language. In addition, the participants referred to a number of colleagues who were not originally from Ireland and who spoke a number of languages such as Spanish, Polish, Slovakian, and Romanian as a first language. Many of the staff talked about contacting these colleagues to help with translation or interpreting on an ad hoc basis. In general, the international staff were happy to help with this task if they could. An inability to do so often stemmed from the fact that they had duties to perform in their own section, resulting in not having enough time to assist their colleagues. This issue was highlighted by P4 who is from Poland and works in the coffee shop. Nearly all the coffee shop staff mentioned referring Eastern European customers to him, but only if he had the time to help. P4 comments on this difficult

balancing act between the wish to be collegial, and to be able to complete his own tasks in the kitchen:

P4 yeah basically I am the specialist from the language

[Laughter] ok so

P4 that's why I said like use the Google Translate sometimes it just might help a lot you know

right so would they call you out would you come round and then

P4 [yeah]

talk to

P4 it depends because sometimes I just don't have the time because it would be unfair on the on my colleagues in the kitchen to just walk away from and leave my work coz if I have to stop doing something someone have to replace me

P10 when then XXXX sometimes he saw [inaudible chunk] he no time to speak coz he doesn't want to speak Polish

P13 [inaudible chunk]

P12 [sometimes] he he can translate

P13 [yeah] he has his own job to do in the back of the counter [inaudible]

P10 [he] very busy

As we can see from these extracts the ad hoc nature of asking for assistance from members of staff who could act as linguistic or cultural mediators for other staff supporting emerging L2 customers is problematic. Indeed, the participants who discussed this issue and availed of assistance from bilingual staff were cognisant of the time pressures involved in the use of this strategy.

P50, who is Polish, also referred to this dilemma. He was very enthusiastic about supporting his colleagues as a linguistic and cultural intermediary in a more formal way and mentioned his attempts to establish this role within the FI organisation:

P50 [no] I, I, no what I'm saying is, I came with idea that I could offer my service to other teams so that was used on several occasions by doing the translation etc. but never Focus Ireland never establish anything like you know my role between the agencies where I can use my lingual skills... I think I can work out this and that could be you know very interesting and challenging for myself and the challenge is a good place to grow

Clearly, P50 sees this role as benefiting FI as well as catering for his own professional developmental needs. Indeed, it is certainly a suggestion that the organisation might consider. Furthermore, along with P50, existing and future staff who are not originally from Ireland could fulfil roles as cultural ambassadors, informants, or what Jezewski and Sotnik (2001) term 'cultural brokers'. As such, they can either mediate directly with customers who come from a similar cultural background, or act in an advisory capacity for staff who are having difficulties providing an effective service for customers who are culturally diverse. Indeed, there are staff working in FI from Spain, Romania, Poland, and Nigeria who could be established as a 'cultural ambassador' team. Such a team could mediate culturally and linguistically for staff supporting emergent L2 customers on a formal rather than ad hoc basis. An additional solution in relation to the need for internal language and cultural brokers would be to hire more staff from a culturally diverse background. These staff members could receive training in interpreting and mediation skills in order to establish multiple cultural ambassador teams in the various FI locations throughout Ireland. This suggestion aligns with the call for the employment of bi-lingual staff in the social care system in the U.S.A. (Congress, 2005), which was discussed in the literature review. Her rationale for this was that it might address the issue of using children to interpret for their parents in situations where sensitive information was being discussed. One final solution might be setting up interpreter teams of students from Irish universities who could help interpret on a voluntary basis.

7.6 Interpreters

A further solution to the language barrier that staff commented on during the interviews was the use of (professional) interpreters. All those who had used interpreters commented on the benefits of such a service:

Right, so like, you would welcome, I take it it's much easier for you when you have translators?

P19 oh without a doubt

P21 [definitely] yeah

P19 [you] know um coz it's not like, we, we've been in this very room with with families for like two or three hours trying to you know communicate as best we can using you know sign language, to Google Translate, you know, to going off maybe and you know, like, maybe going on a Citizens information website and translating it to Google on Google Translate and then printing it off and bring it down and, do you know, trying to make sense with that way like, you know. Whatever, whatever way we can at the time but, em definitely, when there's interpreter it just makes things so much easier you know it definitely does

While the participants recognised that the length of time it took to complete a task was time-consuming due to the three-way interaction involved, they all said that ultimately it led to a much more efficient use of time. Indeed, I witnessed a four-way telephone conversation between a FI staff member, a Chinese customer with very low English proficiency, an interpreter and an estate agent during one of my participant observations in Sligo. As children were involved, DVAS⁷¹ provided an interpreter to aid the FI staff member in finding a suitable flat for the customer and her children. The first step in this particular interaction involved a telephone call to the interpreter to agree on what would be said to the estate agent. Once everything was agreed, the estate agent was contacted by telephone and a teleconference took place:

...it is clear that the customer's English is quite limited. The FISM had already explained that this would be happening and that the service was provided by DVAS who are willing to provide this service if children are involved. What I am immediately struck by is that both the customer and staff member can speak at their normal speed of delivery and the FISM can use terminology in

⁷¹ Domestic Violence Advocacy Service

the knowledge that the interpreter is at hand. It is an effective process, if a little long, as the FISM tells the interpreter, who then speaks to the customer, the customer then speaks to the interpreter, who then translates this to the FISM and so on. [This is not the first time that I feel that undergraduates at DCU might be able to help out here it is something I need to pursue]. The Chinese customer...has a lovely warm facial expression, despite her problems. The FISM eye contact is very good and she is very patient. The customer has eye contact consistent with Chinese speakers, who will engage but not for the same duration as Irish customers might, the eye contact is shorter with the Chinese customer...As the appointment progresses there is a phone call to the estate agent's once three properties have been identified. The FISM is conscious of the customer's pressing needs in terms of location and type of property a house is the preferred option [I am immediately reminded of the earlier conversation about respect and this is certainly evident here]. As a result, the FISM highlights this pressing need to the estate agent.

(Observation 7, Thursday 13th July, 2017. Time: 10:00- 12:45. Location: Focus Ireland Sligo).

Despite the customer's and FI staff member's inability to find accommodation in this particular interaction, the process itself was conducted in a very effective manner. In this instance, the interpreter was able to interpret the Chinese customer's wishes as well as the information that the estate agent conveyed. It was clear in the observation that the customer was happy with the process and that her wishes were being addressed. Indeed, in the interview with the staff member later in the day, P27 made reference to the substantial progress that she had made with this customer because of the interpreter's contribution:

P27 ...her English has improved a little bit, but not so much that you could have a conversation or do any of the work that needed to be doing. So, like I've met her every week for the last seven weeks and we've gone from point 0 to now having full applications and looking for accommodation and going through finances budgeting looking for new schools. Like, the em, the level of work I've done with that lady, but that, if I didn't have DVAS paying for the interpretation services there we'd still be on point one

The reference to DVAS is interesting. Many of the FI staff who were interviewed talked about the need to establish links with other agencies involved in helping migrants' integration to Irish life. This is necessitated by the organisation's lack of funding for the

acquisition of professional interpreters. Consequently, the majority of staff mentioned that they had established links with not-for-profit organisations such as DVAS, Mendicity, the Simon Community, Crosscare, or state agencies related to homelessness such as county councils or the HSE⁷²; all of which help FI staff with interpreters:

P17 [they] would look at getting an interpreter if need needs be, or, um, work in partnership with another service like Crosscare. That might give us a project where they would have people who'd have, who like, on a Tuesday they have a Romanian clinic where they would have in an interpreter there to speak to families. So, we work with, em, with different communities about trying to find what resources are in community that would best fit them

P18 [mmm]

P17 [um] so that you know in partnership really you can get the outcome for the client

How did you get access to that interpreter?

P21 [that's] through Mendicity

P20 [a] volunteer was it?

P21 um so they're another they're they run a food service up in Island Street I think um so it's another charity organisation and sometimes they will interpret for us um

[and] why do they have access to interpreters and you don't?

P21 they have em Romanian speaking staff... and they come down

The use of the word “partnership” by P17 is salient. Indeed, a number of staff used this term to describe the various collaborations with other homelessness agencies. These alliances were often described as being established on a quid pro quo basis, with some organisations contacting FI to utilise its expertise on homelessness. In addition, staff referred to the strategy of linking customers to community organisations such as Mendicity, which not only provide language supports for the customers, but also aid in

⁷² Health Service Executive.

their ability to build social capital. Partnerships between FI and other homeless and social support agencies are crucial, as they allow the staff to circumnavigate the financial restrictions which prevent them from using professional interpreting agencies.⁷³

Overall, the staff's view of the use of interpreters was overwhelmingly positive. However, a minority pointed out some shortcomings:

P25 [but] I suppose the difference would be you be speaking to for arguments sake I'd be speaking to P24 in English and then you'd be the translator and it would be repeated back then she'd have a conversation so everything was much slower

P24 [yeah] yeah

P25 [and] you were never quite sure if the full message got across and what the comp whether the comprehension of what you were trying to say was and then in in effect the knock on effect is if there was something that was urgent it was delayed that was I the decisions were always delayed so it's as if you were working with another agency or the council or and there we're expecting something back fairly quickly you couldn't guarantee you couldn't guarantee you were getting it back [inaudible]

The concerns expressed about the use of interpreters include the fact that the process was time-consuming. Indeed, the majority of participants mentioned that time pressures were a significant barrier to effective service provision due to the sheer number of customers that FI staff have supported during the homeless crisis, which rose by seven percent between 2016 and 2017 (FI Annual Report, 2017). Because of the significant increase in numbers of homelessness in Ireland in the last decade (CSO, 2019), staff often pointed out that they felt under pressure to complete 'pieces of work' more quickly than in the past. Another issue, which many staff referred to, was that they did not know whether interpreters were accurately translating their messages to the customers.

Finally, P50 highlights the problem of interpreter bias:

P50 ... I couldn't believe what I heard there cos what the client was saying and was coming from translator was completely different. Because the cl eh

⁷³ Please see Appendix M for a list of organisations that staff collaborate with that were mentioned in the interviews.

translator was eh, presenting the client in a different way. For him there was a crim homeless criminal living on the street, so you know his empathy was ah come on [inaudible]. So, on this stage, that was in Criminal Court, I have to [inaudible- stand and?] say listen “excuse me judge this person is not saying what the client is saying,” it was very challenging you know. For someone who's working professionally and getting this money for his job daily, you know. So now I'm thinking about how many court decisions this person eh eh you know uh influence there

His experience centred on a court case that he attended to support one of his Polish customers. P50 knew that the professional interpreter, who was second-generation Polish but a fluent Polish speaker, was unaware of the staff member's Polish heritage and the fact that he was a native speaker of Polish. During the trial, P50 found that the interpreter was consistently misinterpreting the customer's interactions with the court. P50 appears to have wished to disassociate himself from this Polish-speaking interpreter and advocate for his customer to the best of his ability, by taking the difficult step of bringing the inadequate interpretation skills of the interpreter to the Judge's attention.

There is very little research on interpreter bias. Some studies examine bias along ethnic or racial lines in, for example, Japan (Mizuno and Acar, n.d.). The interpreter bias in the case highlighted by P50 might be a form of prejudice in that he disliked the fact that the first-generation Polish man was painting Polish people in a bad light and thus he was disinclined to advocate to the best of his ability for the accused. In addition, by not acting impartially, the interpreter certainly broke one of the key principles in many codes of ethics of translation associations around the world (Phelan et al., 2019). In addition, the Chairperson of the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association pointed out that many of the issues related to poor interpretation skills in Ireland stem from a lack of training and testing (M Phelan, personal communication, 29th April, 2020).

7.7 Translation

An interesting extract from participant 27 shows the complex and the interwoven nature of the role of interpreters who can translate the linguistically complex content of documentation prevalent in the homeless services:

P27...the consents that we have to say that we can record information we can store information we can use the PASS⁷⁴ system, they're all in English. So we're just, you know you, maybe using an interpreter to do it whatever, but that's physical paperwork no more than the one you have there in front of them you know the they're agreeing. But how how much do they fully consent? Are they fully aware of what's, of what you're saying to them you know? Em, that's something, now I know like em, in in the family team where I worked in in Dublin we would have workers, some of the workers are Polish some of them are Latvian and in Dublin there'd be a good mix of them. So, if you ever had any concerns up there you could ring one of the workers and say "could you have this conversation on the phone with this person just to make sure?" But I think it'd be great if that could be even more streamlined, even something as simple as, why don't we have them consent forms in different, you know, in different em languages

This extract summarises most of the difficulties staff face in terms of the language barrier as well as the strategies they utilize to overcome this. The main worry for P27 revolves around whether or not customers fully understand what they are consenting to when they sign such forms, given the complex information contained in documentation associated with homeless care provision. By consenting, customers agree to have their personal details entered into the PASS system. Notions of privacy are clearly a worry for the staff who thought that the best way to explain the rationale for the PASS system was by using an interpreter. In P27's case, she refers to the use of bilingual colleagues as interpreters on an ad hoc basis.

In addition to the use of interpreters, some staff mentioned the importance of translating commonly referenced documentation such as menus and information on food products used in the coffee shop. Of course, such an action would have financial implications, but this was not acknowledged by any of the staff who made this recommendation.

7.7.1 Google Translate

The majority of the staff who interacted face to face with customers and had access to mobile phones or laptops used Google Translate:

⁷⁴ The Pathway Accommodation and Support System (PASS) is an online, shared system utilised by every homeless service provider and all local authorities in Ireland (<https://www.homelessdublin.ie/info/pass>).

P21 [yeah] Goo I mean Google Translate is probably one of the best supports that we have outside of trying to get other like we don't really have access to funded interpreter services um and at the moment we would have a lot of families particularly that are accessing emergency accommodation em Romanian families that don't have any English

Other strategies that were implemented in the communication process with emergent L2 customers included the use of Google maps, Google Street View and a language app (the group who mentioned this strategy could not recall the name of this App).

However, it is also important to highlight the staff's awareness of the shortcomings of Google Translate. Some referred to the fact that it is unreliable and inaccurate when they attempt to translate complex ideas. In addition, the process of typing in complex sentences and checking them for accuracy is time-consuming:

P51...um Google Translate ehm I've only recently had to ever use it with someone and it's only come to my attention that it's not the most reliable

P52 [would be] great, how to find a way around it. I've used, like usually what I would do, is um, it hasn't worked out too well. I've done the you know, Google Google Translate. And you know, I've literally typed out the pieces [inaudible] and brought it out, but there are, the Google Translates it's very different it just hasn't it hasn't worked and it was only through showing. Em, one of the girls who shares the office on a different team XXXX, she was able to tell that it didn't make sense

P18 ...so that's. But communication does continue to be an issue. And even trying to use Google Translate. Because for example, on the coffee shop floor, if we're extremely busy down there you you can't get the time to go onto the laptop [laughs] and start to Google Translate. So, there are a lot of barriers as well, that come up. That's more so to do with how many people are coming in to the coffee shop or the EDS, whereas I think the A & I team have a little bit more flexibility. Sometimes to have that time alone with a family to use tools like that

P2 I think it's a mix between a lack of time and space and then that's the barrier. If you could sit down, and you had the time, and you can go on your

phone and had an app and stuff and you would you'd be able to figure out you [inaudible] a lack of time

7.8 Summary of chapter

This chapter has focused on the language competence of staff, customers and all other actors involved in the provision of effective and appropriate service for people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

The biggest challenge for FI staff was overcoming the language barrier between them and customers who do not speak English as a first language and to explain the many detailed and complex documents related to homelessness to emerging L2 customers. In the interviews discussions centred on a number of solutions which could overcome this language barrier. The first was the strategy of using children as language brokers, mainly contested due to the inappropriate adult content that some of the children may be asked to interpret for their parents and FI staff members.

A much more acceptable solution for staff was the use of adults as language brokers, or professional interpreters to aid in interactions with emerging L2 customers. However, these solutions were also found to be potentially problematic. Staff highlighted concerns about privacy and whether language brokers were interpreting accurately in interactions between customer and staff member and about the translation of written texts for emerging L2 customers. Some respondents also questioned the capabilities of some professional interpreters.

The findings suggest that there is a need for an explicit focus on language competence in any context-specific model of intercultural competence devised for not-for-profit homeless agency staff, as well as training in this component of intercultural competence, which the next chapter will discuss.

CHAPTER 8: INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE TRAINING FOR FI STAFF

8. Introduction

The final phase of this study involved the design, delivery and analysis of an intercultural competence training programme for the staff of FI. In the first part of this chapter, a model of intercultural competence for not-for-profit homeless service providers is posited, based on the findings and analysis presented in the previous four chapters as well as on the comments in the sessions and feedback from trainees about the effectiveness of the training programme. The next section will examine the design and delivery of two intercultural competence training sessions for FI staff, which were based on this model. Finally, the chapter examines the effectiveness of this training by analysing trainee satisfaction feedback forms that all course participants were asked to complete.

8.1 A Proposed Model of Intercultural Competence for Staff Working in Homeless Not-for-Profit Organisations

The model presented in this section is a result of the analysis of findings generated from ethnographically based research incorporating participant observations and interviews conducted in a not-for-profit homeless service provider in the Republic of Ireland. Arasaratnam (2016) points out that, to date, the majority of research on intercultural competence has been conducted in relation to study abroad students, language teaching, business professionals, medical practitioners and expatriates. Social work could also be added to this list. This research has been disseminated largely through the medium of academic journals and monographs. She believes that other areas of knowledge such as work conducted by aid agencies or not-for-profit organisations who “engage in authentic and affirming intercultural communication,”⁷⁵ may be fruitful in furthering an understanding of intercultural competence. This model addresses this gap, particularly in relation to intercultural competence in the not-for-profit homeless sector. Moreover,

⁷⁵ This is from the Oxford Research Encyclopaedia on communication online which does not have page numbers. DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.68.

while it was applied to an Irish homeless organisation, the model can be developed for, and adapted to other areas of the not-for-profit sector.

The following model is based on the Cognitive, Affective, Behavioural (CAB) paradigm (Hammer, 2015a). This non-hierarchical, integrative, compositional model includes components of knowledge, skills, attitudes and language competence that staff in the not-for-profit homeless sector require in order to support clients from culturally diverse backgrounds. The components stem from analysis of findings from the participant observations and interviews and from discussions with participants in the training sessions. Many of these are featured in other culture-general and culture-specific models of intercultural competence. This is not a two-way model and it is conceptualised solely for the service provider, not the recipient. Indeed, the client may only interact with the service provider on one occasion. Therefore, the onus to develop intercultural competence is on the service provider, so that they may support the culturally diverse client/customer in an appropriate and effective manner.

This model contains a language competence component. In many intercultural competence models which follow the CAB paradigm, language competence is subsumed under the skills component (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Spitzberg, 1997). However, the present model is based on the analysis of findings from FI staff who gave prominence to language competence when discussing the barriers they face in interactions with culturally diverse customers. This is not to say that the development of language competence skills is more important than that of the other three components.

This model has no starting point. Instead, it is suggested that an individual undergoes an iterative back and forth process between the four main components of intercultural competence: knowledge, skills, attitudes and language competence.

8.1.1 Knowledge component

Understanding different worldviews

In order to support a client/customer effectively and appropriately, service providers should have an understanding of not only the various beliefs, values and practices of the

people from different cultural orientations with whom they interact, but also of their own worldview.

Knowledge of different family structures, gender roles, power dynamics

Many of the staff remarked that at times, supporting families from culturally diverse backgrounds could be difficult. In particular, some families tended to possess different cultural attitudes towards the family structure in which the patriarch makes the big decisions and gender roles are clearly divided whereby women tended to be prominent in caretaking and hospitality roles. Thus, it is necessary for staff to gain an understanding not only of the different family structures that they may encounter, but also of the decision-making process between male and female partners, which may in fact be different when staff are not present. Furthermore, it is also important for staff to avoid stereotyping or essentialising family structures.

Knowledge of different cultural views towards charitable support

This knowledge component refers to the different views that some culturally diverse clients/customers may hold with regards to seeking homeless provision support from not-for-profit homeless service providers. The component is not present in culture-general intercultural competence models. It was added following discussions in the training session with FI staff members. Specifically, this knowledge relates to how an individual may react to such support. In some cultures, seeking assistance may be seen as a loss of face, and therefore staff will need knowledge of typical face-saving techniques in intercultural (conflict) encounters, such as the promotion of self-face, which describes “the protective concern for one’s own image when one’s own face is threatened in the conflict situation” (Ting-Toomey and Takai, 2006, p. 701).

Knowledge of discrimination, prejudice, racism, stereotyping, othering and microaggressions

Staff must gain knowledge of discrimination, prejudice, racism, stereotyping, othering and microaggressions in the wider world in order to understand the types of discrimination clients/customers face at individual (e.g. between their neighbours) and at societal level (e.g. from local authorities). This knowledge can be acquired through intercultural training which focuses on social cognition, in particular social categorisation

and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). This focus can lead to an awareness by support workers (if they are not already aware) that categorising people is a natural process. However, there are also dangers in essentialising groups of people. As Holmes (2012, p. 468) points out:

... the cognitive activities of categorisation and generalisation ... are an important way of making sense of the world around us. Although such categorizations are useful as sense-making strategies for human behavior, if unchecked, they can lead to more extreme understandings of cultural difference, such as ethnocentrism, stereotyping, and prejudice- the roots of racism.

Thus, training in social cognition must be taught in tandem with a focus on racism, prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination, in order to demonstrate the harm that categorising people can sometimes do. Knowledge of how these issues might be combatted is also required.

8.1.2 Skills component

Ability to establish and maintain relationships

Deardorff (2010) points out that most westernised concepts of intercultural competence are viewed from an individualistic standpoint. However, other non-western culturally diverse groups may value a collective view of culture. A central component of this collective view is the necessity of building and maintaining relationships with individuals that one interacts with on a regular basis. This component is vital in professions where service providers offer support for clients such as in the case of FI. Relationship building is especially important in long-term support contexts where service providers might support customers/clients over a number of months, if not years. This component was added following feedback from trainees after each training session. Staff pointed to the requirement for building relationships with the customers that they support. A full discussion of feedback comments occurs later in the chapter.

Ability to establish trust

Staff saw the establishment and maintenance of trust as a key component in achieving an effective and appropriate service for customers. The components of trust and relationship building are interrelated. By building and maintaining good relationships in their support

of customers/clients, service providers in turn can also develop trust within this relationship. These components can be developed if the service provider actively listens to their client/customer and is open and interested in them.

8.1.3 Attitude component

Respect

Respect is a core value for FI staff and an important variable for other professions related to service provision for vulnerable groups including social workers, medical practitioners, caregivers and educationalists.⁷⁶ By demonstrating respect towards customers' values, behaviours beliefs, worldviews, it may be possible to establish trust and develop a positive relationship between customer/client and staff member/professional. This can be accomplished by developing an ethnorelative viewpoint towards culturally diverse groups. However, this is by no means a straightforward process and trust can only be achieved if respect is seen as a two-way process, which is somewhat problematic because of the current setting in which this study is set. As previously discussed, in this setting the onus to develop intercultural competence is on the support worker.⁷⁷ If a staff member feels disrespected by a customer in an interaction, they need to know how to react to this and how to employ strategies to address this. Intercultural competence training should help staff navigate situations such as these, where they feel they are not respected.

Openness and tolerance of difference

A service provider for the homeless can become more open to difference and tolerant of varying cultural practices by developing an ethnorelative view towards the values of others. This does not necessarily mean that a staff member should accept all cultural practices without question. Indeed, if staff view some of these practices negatively, then it might even be necessary to challenge them. This was seen in some FI staff member's attempts to modify the practice of child caretaking practices, common in Nigerian culture(s). In addition to developing openness and tolerance, homeless service providers must also develop a critical attitude or what Byram (1997) refers to as "savoir s'engager"

⁷⁶ Many more professions can be added to this list.

⁷⁷ As previously discussed in some of the sections of FI such as the coffee shop or A & I. staff might only interact with customers on one or two occasions.

in his model of intercultural competence which was discussed earlier in the literature review. Thus, service providers should interrogate both others' and their own worldviews, in order to arrive at a balanced opinion about the appositeness of certain cultural practices.

Support

Service providers in the homeless sector need to develop their ability to be supportive towards all their customers. They can achieve this by actively listening to what their customers/clients have to say and by developing their communication strategies. By overcoming the language barrier, staff can be more supportive towards their customers/clients.

Empathy

Empathy is vital in the provision of an effective and appropriate service, as shown by previous research (Arasaratnam and Doerfel, 2005; Deardorff, 2006). This can be developed by adopting an ethnorelative as opposed to an ethnocentric position.

Ability to withhold judgement

One way of adopting an ethnorelative view of another's cultural behaviour, values and beliefs is to approach interactions with culturally diverse customers in a non-judgmental fashion.

Flexibility

If staff can develop flexibility in their support of culturally diverse clients, they will be able to provide an effective service for them. Flexibility pertains to an individual's attitude, skills and language use.

8.1.4 Language competence component

Staff need to be competent in communicating effectively and appropriately with their clients/customers by focusing on "the content and the form of communication" which "includes both the verbal and nonverbal aspects" of communication (Lim and Griffith, 2016, p. 1031). In order to develop language competence, individuals must be:

Adaptable

Service providers need to be adaptable in the ways in which they convey messages when communicating with an interlocutor from a culturally diverse background. This applies to both verbal and non-verbal communication. In order to develop this competence, the service provider must be mindful of the potential for misunderstandings or miscommunication while supporting their customer/client. Service providers need to be adaptable in three ways:

The ability to adapt language complexity

Service providers need to monitor their language output and check the customer has understood. A breakdown in communication may occur if the host member (in this case the service provider) uses language which is too complex and above the language proficiency of the customer. One technique that the service provider can employ is to check understanding, primarily through the use of yes/no questions.

The ability to adapt/moderate speed of delivery (of the message) and tone of voice

Another reason for a breakdown in communication is that the service provider may not be mindful of their speed of delivery, or their tone of voice. Therefore, the staff member/professional should moderate their speed of delivery, but at the same time, they should attempt to speak as naturally as possible.

The ability to adopt different non-verbal communication styles

Successful communication depends on interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds understanding both the verbal and non-verbal message being conveyed. Service providers should have knowledge of different non-verbal behavioural styles as well as an ability to adjust this non-verbal message appropriately during an intercultural encounter.

Knowledge of Regional English usage

The service provider should have a knowledge of her/his own regional dialect, sociolect or use of slang. Within the context of the current study, service providers should monitor

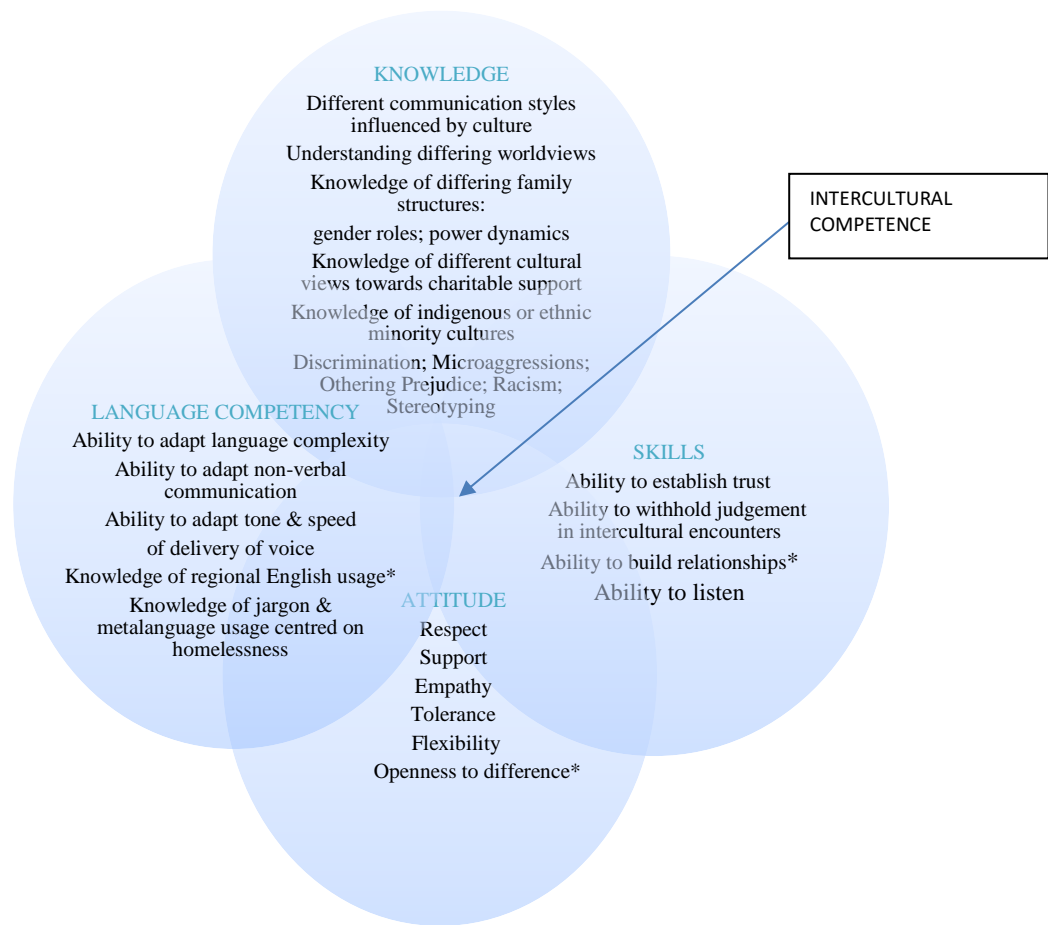
their use of Hiberno English, particularly in initial encounters with international customers, especially if those customers are newcomers to the Republic of Ireland.

This component was added, following feedback from the staff, after the two training sessions.

Knowledge of difficulty in understanding jargon and metalanguage used in homeless care provision

Similar to monitoring dialect or slang output, a service provider should be mindful not to use slang or jargon associated with homelessness or other fields that a layperson would have difficulty deciphering.

As we saw in the literature review, the acquisition of intercultural competence is an iterative process that is characterised by a constant state of becoming (Fantini, 2000). It requires an individual to develop the ability to be reflexive in their approach to service provision. This means that an individual should be involved in a constant process of reviewing their knowledge, which in turn leads to a refinement of their skills, which then may have an effect on his/her attitude towards others who are culturally diverse. The acquisition of intercultural competence is achieved by intercultural contact and education. However, it is also important to note that for some individuals, experience of these two methods of acquisition does not necessarily lead to the development of intercultural competence (Arasaratnam, 2016).



Components marked * were added as a result of discussions during training and feedback from staff on the sessions training sessions

Figure 20 A model of intercultural competence for staff in homeless not-for-profit provision

8.2 Theory of Intercultural Training

Before trainers can begin to design intercultural competence training programmes, they must situate this training within an appropriate theoretical framework. There have been a number of periodic reviews (Bhawuk and Brislin, 2000) and handbooks (Landis, Bennett and Bennett, 2004; Landis and Bhawuk 2020) on intercultural training. Landis and Bhawuk (2020) point out that from its inception, the field of intercultural training has been based on theory and that “it offers an opportunity to researchers and professionals to provide a systematic approach to developing, implementing, and evaluating intercultural training programmes” (p. 2). This section therefore focuses on the development of a systematic approach to the design and delivery of a two-session

intercultural competence training programme based on the model of intercultural competence for not-for-profit homeless service providers in Ireland, posited earlier in the chapter. The focus will then shift to a discussion on the effectiveness of the two four-hour long training sessions based on feedback evaluation forms completed by the trainees.

8.2.1 Theoretical models of intercultural training

Bhawuk (1998) posits a four-step model of intercultural competence, which moves participants through four stages of competency from layperson to advanced expert. In addition, he suggests appropriate training techniques for these stages.

According to Bhawuk, a layperson is an individual with no knowledge of other cultures who possesses unconscious incompetence. A novice, who is delineated as possessing conscious incompetence, is someone who has undergone some form of culture-general and culture-specific training, behaviour modification training, theory-based training and cross-cultural expertise training. Based on this training, a novice has acquired knowledge of some cultures and has developed skills so that they can interact with someone from another culture. An expert is an individual who has experienced theoretical training and has moved to the conscious competence stage. Consequently, this person has knowledge of the reasons for the behaviour of people from other diverse cultures. Finally, an advanced expert becomes unconsciously competent when s/he acquires knowledge and skills which allow them to interact with someone from another culture in an appropriate and effective manner.

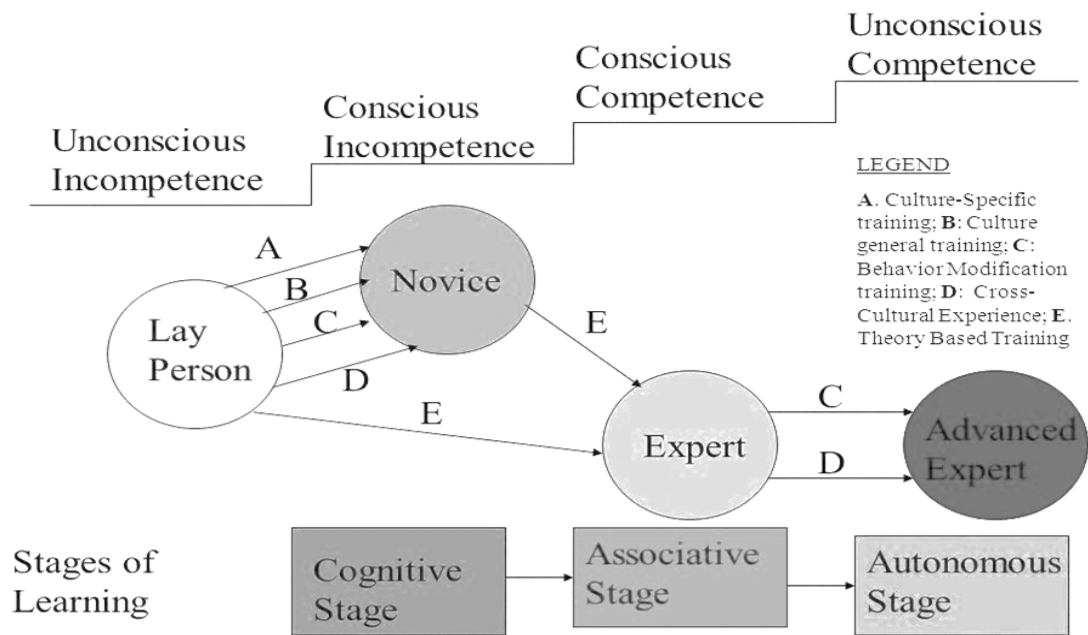


Figure 21 A model of intercultural expertise development (Bhawuk, 1998, p. 637)

In their analysis of Bhawuk's model, Landis and Bhawuk (2020, p. 16) point out that it posits that "intercultural training which incorporates culture theory will make a person an expert, whereas training that does not use theory will only result in novices." They also maintain that participants must also experience behavioural training if they wish to become an advanced expert. An individual is delineated as an advanced expert when their interaction and behaviour towards a culturally diverse person becomes habitual in nature.

Gudykunst, Guzley and Bhagat (1996) proposed a basic typology of intercultural training, using didactic or experiential learning, culture-general and culture-specific content⁷⁸. A didactic mode of learning involves the use of lectures, discussions, videotapes and critical incidents, whereas experiential learning is based on participatory games and role-plays, which will lead to an analysis of intercultural situations by the participants who have taken part in these games or role-plays. Culture-general content provides trainees with knowledge, skills and attitudes that they can apply to all cultures and culture-specific

⁷⁸ Although this typology is over two decades old, it continues to be widely cited in the field of intercultural training.

content provides trainees with knowledge, skills and attitudes that is applicable to a specific culturally diverse group.

Meanwhile, Cushner and Brislin (1996)⁷⁹ have developed a framework for cross-cultural interactions known as a Cross Cultural Assimilator. This training also includes the use of critical incidents. The more critical incidents trainees read and receive feedback on, the better they will understand the subjective culture of the target language group. Participants read the incidents and then discuss possible solutions to the problem stated. The following is an example of one such incident:

Kiss Away

James, an American student, met Zhiang, a recently arrived visitor from the People's Republic of China, and they decided to lunch together in the university cafeteria. On their way, they encountered James's girlfriend, Carol, who was on her way to a dance class. James and Carol carried on a lively, intimate conversation, virtually ignoring Zhiang, who followed behind them. When they reached the cafeteria, Carol said she had to go and James embraced her and gave her a long and passionate kiss. Zhiang turned away and then walked off toward the cafeteria, James looked up, saw that Zhiang had left, and looked puzzled. "Hey," he called, "wait for me!" Zhiang stopped, looked down, and said nothing, and then continued on by himself. James shrugged his shoulders and went off to eat by himself.

How would you explain Zhiang's behavior to James?

1. Zhiang was shocked by the display of physical affection between James and Carol.
2. Zhiang was offended by the manner in which James and Carol excluded him from their conversation.
3. Zhiang was annoyed by having to wait around while James chatted with his girlfriend.
4. Zhiang felt it appropriate to give James and Carol some privacy, so he went ahead to wait for James in the cafeteria.

The discussions of these alternative explanations begin on page 105.

Figure 22 Example of a critical incident taken from (Cushner & Brislin 1996, p. 83)

⁷⁹ This is a seminal and often cited technique amongst intercultural training scholars.

The authors maintain that the more understanding a trainee has of the target culture, the more self-confident s/he becomes, which in turn increases motivation to continue to develop their understanding of different cultures. They refer to this approach as ‘attribution training’, whereby learners make “isomorphic attributions” (ibid, p. 13) in order to develop an insider’s perspective on the target culture. This training is based on both an etic (culture-general) and emic (culture-specific) view of culture. They recommend that attribution training should be used in conjunction with other types of training, for example, experiential training such as role-plays. By using these incidents, a trainer is able to concentrate on certain themes such as: feelings (anxiety, disconfirmed expectations, ambiguity, and so forth); knowledge areas (work, time hierarchy relationships); and bases of cultural differences (in-group, out-group, value clashes).

Finally, Landis and Bhawuk (2020) propose a theoretical framework for the development of intercultural training programmes. In this model, the outer layers of knowledge are needed by individuals for effective interaction in the new culture, or when interacting with someone who is ‘Other’. These layers incorporate country-specific knowledge (national culture material and industry specific knowledge); and knowledge of organizational culture (strategies and structures). The core layer incorporates culture-general knowledge, which includes a basic knowledge of the processes of intercultural learning, a socio political socio-economic framework knowledge, a knowledge of self-preservation issues on the part of the individual, and a knowledge of theories of culture. The development of these core layers will aid an individual’s effectiveness in intercultural encounters. Based on this framework, trainers are able to design and deliver an effective training programme specific to participants’ needs.

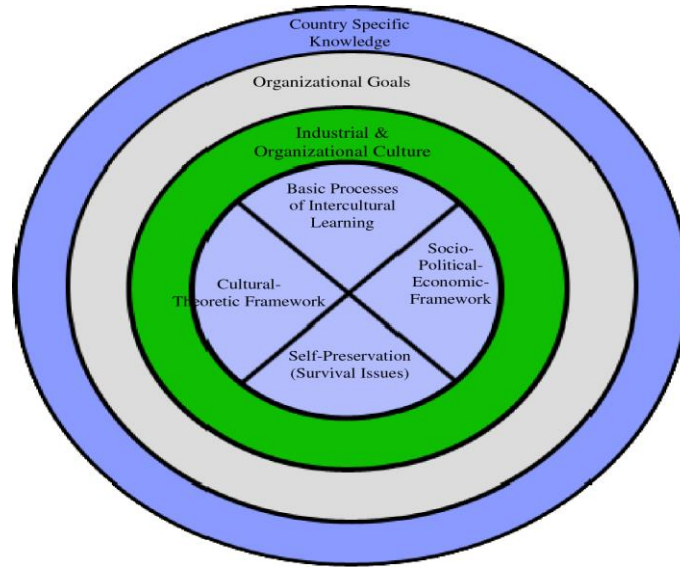


Figure 23 A multilevel framework for intercultural training programmes (Landis and Bhawuk, 2020)

8.2.2 The importance of developing a systematic approach to training

Whatever form of training is opted for, a trainer should be systematic in their approach to the design and delivery of intercultural training sessions. Buckley and Caple (2007) suggest that trainers apply a broad four-stage systematic approach to training, which is illustrated below. They also point out that such a model can be tailored to suit individual needs. For the purpose of my study, I have adapted the model to take account of an iterative approach to my training design whereby evaluation and assessment of the effectiveness of Training session One informs the design of Training session Two. Thus, in relation to this particular study, training becomes a cyclical, context-specific process of design and delivery (see figure below).

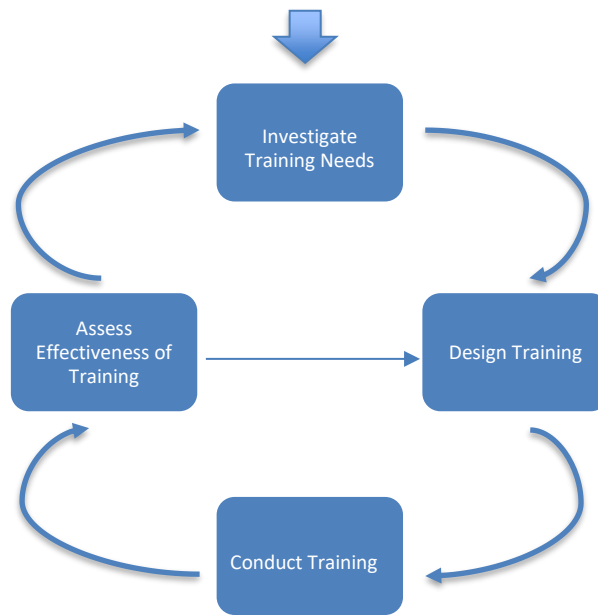


Figure 24 A Basic Model of a Systematic Approach to Training: Adapted from (Buckley and Caple, 2007, p. 21)

In terms of the training design, one of the first decisions a trainer needs to make concerns the methods that should be selected for programme. In a comprehensive analysis of methods of intercultural training, Fowler and Blohm (2004) identify and analyse twenty of the most frequently used didactic or experiential methods. They are: lecture, written materials, computer based training, film, self-assessment, case studies, critical incidents, simulations and games, role play, culture contrast, culture sensitizer, culture analysis, cross cultural dialogues, area studies, immersion, exercises, visual imagery and art and culture. The authors also provide a summary chart on each method in terms of the component the method helps to develop, the type of learner it suits and whether it is applicable to group or individual work (see Appendix I).

8.2.3 Cultures of learning and learning styles

Before a final decision is made regarding the most appropriate methods which can be used to implement content, the trainer must consider trainees' cultures of learning (Jin and Cortazzi, 2006) and individual learning styles (Kolb, 1984; Honey and Mumford 2006). In a comparison study of western and Chinese learning styles, Jin and Cortazzi

(2006, p. 9) “use the notion of a ‘culture of learning’ to describe taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about how to teach or learn successfully.” For example, the stereotype of a Chinese learner is that they are comfortable with didactic mode of learning whereas the western stereotype is that learners enjoy more interactive or experiential modes of learning.

Learning styles are “the inherent preferences of individuals for how they engage in the learning process” (Oxford and Earnham, cited in De Capa & Wintergerst, 2005, P.2). Kolb’s (1984)⁸⁰ seminal work proposes an Experiential Learning Theory in which he posits a four-stage learning cycle. The four stages of learning are Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation and Active Experimentation. Kolb suggests that learning is successful if the learner experiences all four stages. Concrete experience relates to a learner who encounters new experiences. Next, the learner should reflect on their experience. Then, they should conceptualize these experiences and reflections into testable theories. Finally, once this knowledge has been acquired, learners move on to actively experiment with the new knowledge to see if it is applicable in different contexts. Kolb points out that effective learning is seen to occur only when an individual can perform all four stages successfully.

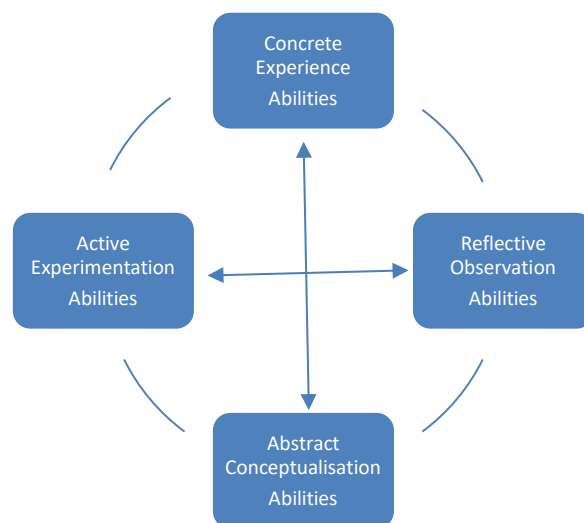


Figure 25 Kolb's learning cycle (1984)

⁸⁰ This framework is still used frequently in current studies.

Kolb (1984) believes that in order to pass through these four stages successfully, a learner must develop four learning styles: assimilating, diverging, converging and accommodating. Assimilators prefer to deal with theories and concepts. Divergent learners prefer observing rather than doing. Convergent learners like to apply ideas to find practical solutions. Accommodative learners learn through experience and problem solving.

Another seminal work on learning styles is from Honey and Mumford (1982⁸¹; 2006) who identified four general learning styles. Activists are learners who prefer experiential learning and tasks completed in pairs or groups. Reflectors like to analyse and think before contributing. Theorists favour clear structured input with time to analyse material. Pragmatists prefer to practice and experiment with what they have learnt.

Both Kolb (1984) and Honey and Mumford (1982; 2006) point out that trainers/teachers should attempt to cater for these different learning styles in the design and delivery of training sessions. Furthermore, they should encourage learners to develop multiple learning styles throughout training sessions.

8.3 Intercultural competence training programmes in context

There are a multitude of intercultural competence training courses for specific contexts. Courses exist in the field of nursing (Brathwaite, 2005), medicine (Rosenburg et al., 2006), child health practice (Webb and Sergison, 2003), and social work (Williams, 2005) amongst many others. In an Irish context, intercultural training has been utilised in the field of health and social care education (Joy and Nolan, 2016), teaching English as a second or other language (Nagy, 2018) and refugee/asylum seeker integration (Daniels, 2018), to name a few. However, currently there is no intercultural competence training for not-for-profit homeless sector service providers working in Ireland, who wish to support customers from culturally diverse backgrounds. This training programme described below bridges this gap.

⁸¹ Their work is seminal in the field of learning styles and still frequently applied today.

8.4 Training programme overview

Trainers who deliver intercultural training need to be cognisant of a number of important questions before the design and delivery of an intercultural training programme. Lázár, et al. (2007) propose the following set of questions to consider: Who will be the participants of the workshop or course? Why do you hold this workshop? What will you teach? How will you do the training? These questions were useful in the design and delivery of two intercultural competence training session sessions to FI staff which will be discussed in the next section (please see Appendix N for a full description of each question).

8.4.1 Training session One and Two

Who will be the participants of the workshop or course?

The workshops were voluntary and were open to all frontline staff who support customers. Out of the seventy participants who took part in the study, fifty-five attended at least one of the training session, and twenty-one staff members took part in the interviews and the two training sessions (see Appendix J for participation grid). All participants in the training sessions completed the feedback form at the end of Training session One. However, only 24 out of 31 completed the feedback form from Training session Two.⁸²

Why do you hold this workshop?

As previously stated, the rationale for holding the workshop initially came from the head of HR, who had been receiving inquiries from staff about the possibility of training on cultural diversity, due to the increase in numbers of customers who did not originate from Ireland.

Trainee needs were collected in a three-fold process through observations, interviews and analysis of interviews from which an intercultural competence model was then proposed; currently this process and resulting model form the basis of the first two four-hour training sessions.

⁸² Many staff left three of the training session early as they had to catch trains to Sligo, Waterford and Cork. They promised to forward forms but not all did.

What will you teach?

At the end of each interview, I allocated time to ask the participants what they thought should be included in an intercultural competence training programme. As we can see from the table below, their initial responses centred on the knowledge component of intercultural competence, with many of the staff wishing to know more about the different value orientations of the groups that they support. Additionally, many staff also wanted to know how they might overcome the language barrier during intercultural encounters.

The table below illustrates the variety of topics referred to in the discussion on intercultural competence training from the interviews:

Staff intercultural training needs	No. of Interviews	Frequency
Appropriacy	1	2
Awareness training	6	8
Communication	3	4
Contact with different groups: Travellers, Africans etc.	2	2
Different legal requirements	2	2
Food	1	1
Gender differences	3	3
Knowledge	14	30
Language barrier	4	6
No need staff already have empathy	2	4
Non-verbal communication	1	2
Online material	1	1
Power and vulnerability	1	1

Racism training	4	5
Reflective work	2	3
Similarities predominantly	1	2
Skills	2	3
Stereotyping	1	1
Tools	1	1
Travellers	1	1
Training staff receive	7	2

Table 25 Topics that staff requested for intercultural competence training sessions

In conjunction with Focus Ireland HR staff, a decision was made to deliver two four-hour training sessions. I decided to incorporate both culture-general and culture-specific activities with the aim to move from general to specific over the two sessions as illustrated in figure 25.

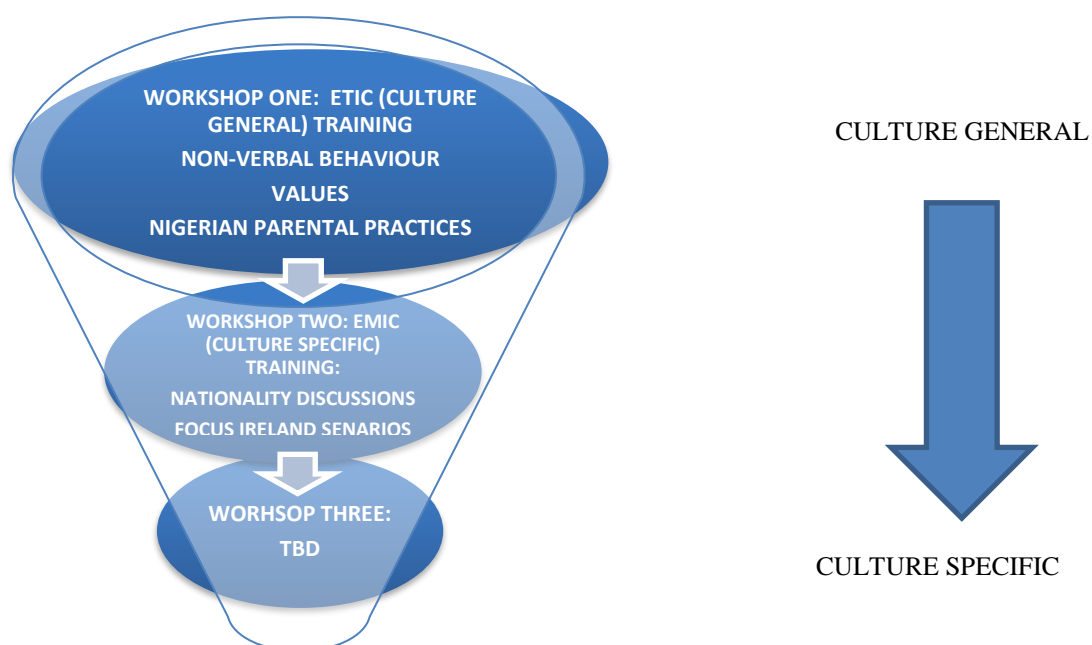


Figure 26 Intercultural Competence Training Process for Not-for-Profit Homeless Service Providers

The aims and objectives of the first training session were formulated from information obtained from the participant observations and interviews of FI staff. Once these aims and objectives were articulated, a training programme for two four-hour sessions was designed based on the theories of intercultural training and intercultural competence discussed above.

Table 26 Intercultural Competence Training Programme: Sessions One and Two

Training Session One

Aims					
<p>By the end of this session, you will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed greater knowledge of issues around intercultural communication • Acquired some knowledge and skills in relation to the development of intercultural competence • Have begun to explore the attitudes required in order to develop intercultural competence • Gained or enhance existing knowledge and skills related to intercultural competence in order to support customers who do not originate from Ireland in an appropriate, effective and respectful manner 					
Objectives					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the concept of intercultural communication and intercultural competence when interacting with someone who has a different nationality to you • To analyse different non-verbal behaviour/communication styles and understand proxemic, haptic and oculesic communication • To explore one's own value dimensions and those of some of the customers you have encountered • To analyse and discuss Nigerian (culture specific) values and recommended courses of action to issues highlighted in the scenarios 					
Time	Session	Training technique	Learning objective	Theory/ concept	Component
9:00-9:30	Class discussion pairs on role of intercultural competence with focus on	Experiential: Physical activity (version of a role play)	To analyse different non-verbal behaviour/communication styles and understand proxemic, haptic and oculesic communication	Non-verbal behaviour: Oculesics and Proxemics	K, S

	body bubbles and unusual eye contact during the task Group feedback				
9:30-10:00	Introduction and Overview	Didactic		Definition of intercultural competence	K
10:00-11:15	Discussion/brainstorm Irish values and customers' values Presentation/feedback Input : value dimensions	Didactic	To explore one's own value dimensions and those of some of the customers you have encountered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture specific- Irish values • Culture- general value dimensions Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1996)⁸³ 	K
11:15-11:30	Coffee break				

⁸³ Trainers should be mindful of the fact that a focus on cultural value dimensions in an intercultural competence training course could lead to, if not handled carefully, essentialising or stereotyping of cultures (Fischer, 2011; Morris, 2014).

11:30-12:45	Application of value dimensions to Nigerian family	Didactic: Scenarios/ problem solving task	To analyse and discuss Nigerian (culture specific) values and recommended courses of action to issues highlighted in the scenarios	Child rearing practices, discipline of children Collectivist and polymatric family structure (Van Ijzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg and Sagi-Schwartz, 2013)	K, S, A
12:45-13:00	Feedback/ staff evaluation of sessions				

K= Knowledge, S= Skills, A= Attitude, LC = Language Competence

Training session Two

Aims					
<p>By the end of the session, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have enhanced your knowledge and skills in intercultural competence • be able to apply this knowledge and skills to a problematic encounter • be more aware of support (i.e. toolkits) that can aid in your encounters with customers who are not originally from Ireland • gain or enhance existing knowledge and skills related to intercultural competence in order to support customers who do not originate from Ireland in an appropriate, effective and respectful manner 					
Objectives					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gain knowledge of specific cultures • To develop a knowledge of these cultures in relation to: family structure; decision making within the family; religious beliefs; identity/ethnicity and gender roles • To apply the Culturagram to a case vignette • To understand and develop skills in order to communicate with customers with low level proficiency in English 					
Time	Session	Training technique	Learning objective	Theory/concept	Component
9:00-9:20	Revision of topics covered in last session Terms and concepts	Didactic: Sorting task	To review intercultural competence and components	NVB: Oculistics and Proxemics Intercultural competence: knowledge, attitudes, skills, value dimensions	K, S, A
9:20-9:30	Introduction and Overview	Didactic			
9:30-11:00	Discussion of specific cultures: Travellers and Roma, Somali, Polish, Bangladeshi cultures	Didactic	To gain knowledge of specific cultures	Culture specific- Irish and customer values, norms, behaviour and beliefs Collective and individualistic culture clashes	K

	Irish Travellers	Didactic: Trainer input			
11:00-11:15	Coffee break				
11:15-12:00	Pairwork on scenarios from FI staff interviews Feedback on task class discussion	Experiential: Scenarios/ critical incidents	To develop a knowledge of these cultures in relation to: family structure; decision making within the family; religious beliefs; identity/ethnicity and gender roles To apply knowledge and skills to specific situations	Polymatric cultures (Van Ijzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg and Sagi-Schwartz, 2013) Communication styles Family structures/ decision making Prejudice/ prejudice talk/stereotyping Gender dynamics Face work/ conflict management between interlocutors with different worldviews (Ting-Toomey & Takai, 2006)	K, S, A
12:00-12:20	Analysis of individual family structure	Didactic		Culturagram (Congress, 2005)	K
12:20-12:45	Tips for language use when interacting with customers with low levels of English	Didactic	To understand and develop skills in order to communicate with customers with low level proficiency in English	Checking understanding- use of yes/ no questions	K, LC
12:45-13:00	Feedback/ staff evaluation of sessions				

K= Knowledge, S= Skills, A= Attitude, LC = Language Competence

How will you do the training?

As we can see from the programme above, staff underwent two four-hour training sessions. They were all delivered by me and involved a number of different task types: categorization tasks; pair, small group and whole group discussion; listing/brainstorming tasks; and problem solving based on scenarios/critical incidents. There was a gap of approximately three months between Training session One and Training session Two. The reason for this was that it was hoped that staff would be able to implement some of the knowledge and skills acquired in Training session One in their daily routines. It was also hoped that they would be able to draw on those experiences in discussions in Training session Two. At the end of Training session One, I asked staff if they could keep a reflective intercultural communication journal, which would highlight some of the issues they encountered between Training session One and Two. Unfortunately, because of work commitments, none of the staff felt able to commit to this task.

8.5 Evaluation of training programme through feedback forms

The effectiveness of training was gauged by the feedback forms, which were analysed thematically in order to identify key terms or phrases (codes) from both evaluation forms from which key themes were identified (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

8.5.1 Trainee feedback

As previously stated, participant evaluation of the training session modules was conducted through a post-training evaluation feedback form, which participants completed at the end of each session. The form used in Training session One was a document devised by Focus Ireland, which is used by the organisation for all training sessions delivered to staff members. Consequently, I chose to use this form to avoid duplication, as participants had to complete the FI feedback form for Human Resources. The feedback form consists of eight open-ended questions (Appendix K).

All staff completed the form for Training session One. I then chose to adapt the original questionnaire for the second session, as I wanted to include a number of questions that focused on the effectiveness of intercultural competence training from both sessions. To this end, I included Likert scale questions in an effort to elicit trainee satisfaction on the intercultural competence training participants they received in both sessions (Appendix K).

8.5.2 Feedback from Training session One and Two

In question one, staff were asked what they liked best about the intercultural competence training they had received. This raised a number of important points in relation to both training sessions. Trainees liked the dynamics of the training session as they were given opportunities to discuss issues in pairs, groups and whole class formations. They also appreciated the fact that the content was specific to their work, as opposed to generic:

1. What did you like best about the course?

Training session One:

Interactive engaging exercises. Lots of discussion between trainer and group and amongst participants.

Practical drawing on our experiences and challenges.

Very interactive, very informative and training was based on our previous interviews with the trainer. Trainer was very knowledgeable about different cultures. Practical examples were good.

Examples from specific cultures. There were some good in-depth examples from Nigeria that were great. It is a complex culture that a want to be sensitive to when I'm talking to people from there.

I liked the practical work and task section on Nigerian values last section allowed me to look at the impact different cultural norms have in an Irish setting.

Training session Two

Very relevant and necessary training.

The structure and quality of the information combined with the delivery. This I felt led to a greater ability to understand, and then in turn use this in your practice environment.

Use of scenarios. Information sharing from other colleagues Martin is insightful and so keeps the course interesting. He allows for good interaction and sharing of information.

The discussion of staffs experiences in dealing with people from different cultures.

I liked the real examples used. It made the information provided easier to apply to everyday life.

Opportunities to explore specific work situations/ challenges.

Advice and strategies on how to deal with cultural difference and language issues also very helpful.

I liked learning about specific cultures. I also liked learning practical skills for speaking with people with a low level of English.

The majority of trainees stated that they liked the interactive nature of both training sessions. The tasks and content were relevant to their duties and resulted in high motivation to discuss issues around the values and behavioural norms of their culturally diverse customers, as well as non-verbal communication styles, and the different family structures they encountered when carrying out their duties. Staff appreciated context-specific information which applied directly to their work. The fact that the trainees found the Nigerian family structure content and the scenarios activity in Training session Two useful highlights the effectiveness of the use of ethnographic techniques such as observation and interviews in order to generate real-life content that can be utilized in intercultural competence training.

Similar to Training session One, staff also referred frequently to the use of ‘real-life’ examples relevant to their workplace duties. In part, this was linked to the scenarios task that trainees completed, which they found extremely useful. The information contained in these scenarios came exclusively from the participant observations, or issues discussed by FI staff in the interviews. Later in the feedback form, trainees were asked to rate the usefulness of the scenarios task:

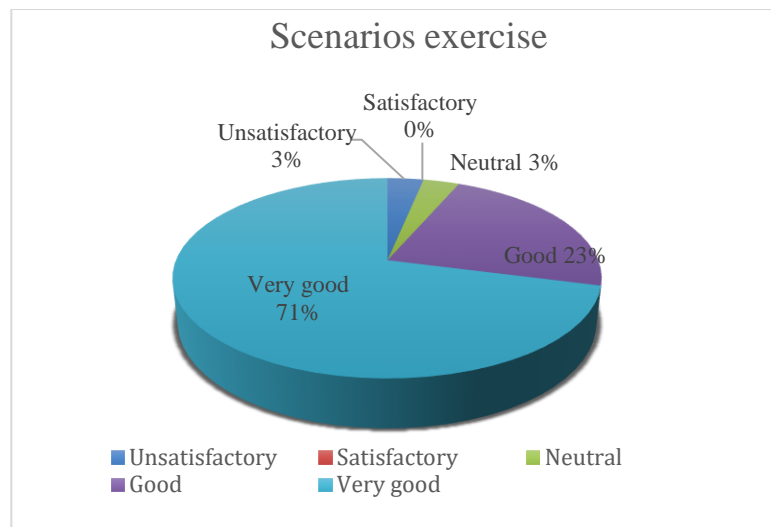


Figure 27 Trainees' views on the scenario task

Trainees also added comments such as the one below which reinforce how useful they found discussing the various situations which came directly from their own colleagues' experiences of intercultural encounters:

Useful, as it gave us examples that is (sic) relevant to our work and (the) group demonstrated solutions and similar concerns. We don't always have answers ourselves.

Comments from Training session Two above show that trainees not only continued to highlight the importance of the acquisition of the knowledge component of intercultural competence, they also began to comment more frequently on the skills component. In particular, they highlighted the importance of developing effective communication skills with customers who are improving their English language abilities. In other words, not only is the knowledge component important in providing an understanding of why a customer behaves as s/he does in an intercultural encounter, the trainees also see the importance of improving the skills to overcome any misunderstandings or miscommunication that might occur in these encounters.

Finally, many staff pointed to the usefulness of the scenarios task as it allowed the groups to share solutions with each other based on their experiences. In other words, they saw this as an opportunity to not only pool their knowledge about how to deal

with potential problems related to supporting culturally diverse customers but also to share experiences with colleagues from other Focus Ireland locations.

In question two, trainees were asked to comment on what they liked least in each training session. Overall, they were extremely happy with the content in session One. However, staff commented on the issue of time which centred on two aspects. Firstly, trainees would have liked the training session to be longer. Secondly, some of them thought that parts of the training were a little rushed at times. In addition, some would have liked a greater focus on “knowledge” in terms of a culture-specific focus on different nationalities:

2. What did you like least about the training?

Training session One:

Maybe a bit longer to allow for discussion.

Would have liked more time and possibly videos was interested in hearing more with a view to improving practice.

Little bit rushed.

Focus should be on Algerians Pakistan Syrians European Polish etc.

Some of the theory.

Training session Two:

Not enough time for discussions.

Too short.

It felt a bit rushed (more time could have been good). However, people arrived late due to weather/traffic.

The duration between both sessions. Too spaced out.

The attitude, knowledge and skills piece at the start was helpful to simulate thinking but took too long. Cultural profiles great idea but information in the profiles (were) too generic, didn't feel it gave much novel information.

As we can see from the comments above from both training sessions, the issue of whether the gap between training sessions was appropriate remains unclear with the majority of staff not commenting on this. Consequently, feedback was inconclusive as to whether having such a gap contributes to greater intercultural competence, or whether it is just as beneficial to combine both training sessions into a day's training.

Significantly, only one trainee commented negatively in relation to the focus on theory in the first training session. It could be argued, therefore, that this reinforces the belief that the inclusion of theories or concepts related to intercultural competence helps trainees to frame their understanding of cultural difference demonstrated by some of their international customers in intercultural encounters. This aligns with the views of intercultural training scholars about the importance of the incorporation of intercultural theory into any training programme (Bhawuk, 1998; Landis and Bhawuk, 2020).

In terms of content, after Training session One some trainees said that they would have preferred more focus on specific countries such as Poland or Pakistan. This view was also expressed in the feedback form that they had to complete later. Some respondents requested information sheets which would include facts on specific nationalities who they support. Such a focus often deals with "big C culture" or the four Fs approach to intercultural knowledge- statistical facts, festivals, folklore and food (Kramsch, 1991). At the same time however, some trainees saw the inclusion of information of "big C" culture facts as problematic, seeing such material as too generic. This demonstrates that some staff were either moving towards becoming intercultural experts or were in fact already at this stage of competency. The respondent who commented on the cultural profiles above could be described as an expert because while acknowledging the usefulness of country-specific profiles as an awareness-raising tool, he/she also saw how such content could lead to stereotyping and essentialising of cultural behaviours, values or norms.

In question three, trainees were asked to comment on what they had learnt in each session. After Training session One, staff commented on the efficacy of acquiring knowledge of value dimensions. They also pointed out the importance of avoiding ethnocentric viewpoints which could lead to judgmental views of customers' values,

norms and behaviours. Comments were made regarding having a better understanding of the cross-cultural adaptation experiences that newcomers might face when locating to a new country. Trainees also focused on the importance of appropriate and effective communication during intercultural encounters. They commented on being able to build better relationships with the families they support:

3. What did you learn from the training?

Training session One:

I have learnt a greater knowledge of intercultural competence and some misconceptions I would have had around non-verbal communication.

I liked putting a framework around values as a way of understanding cultural difference.

Learnt introductory concepts which give a language to the issues.

Really informative and interesting. Gave me a chance to look at what knowledge and understanding I have as well as get completely new information. Loved the discussion around Hofstede and how we as a society fit into the scale.

It helped me to get my mind in the zone of really appreciating that we do all come from a very specific viewpoint and that it is so important to try not to be ethnocentric if we are really going to be non-judgmental in our work.

Lots of new knowledge about different cultural norms and value systems. International ways to manage differences respectfully. How to use the knowledge within the workplace. What my own values and norms are. My level of knowledge and how to be more aware how my own values and norms can impact my work.

It opened up about how our value system could make us more judgmental, even though the other person's value system is just as important to them.

How we as a society are and how it must be to come from a completely different culture and have to adapt to ours.

Training session Two:

It made me more aware that the language I use and how I express what I'm trying to communicate... and the importance of checking understanding.

Information/ general knowledge. But also the small things such as checking understanding and how it is important.

Ways to deal with and adjust my behaviour around other cultures that would influence my relationship and work with clients.

Different aspects of different cultures, family make up, beliefs, religion.

Culturagram to use for families I'm working with.

How to communicate more appropriately with folks from other backgrounds.

My own values Irish values and how they can cause issues when working with people from various cultures. Awareness on my own style of working.

I suppose it's how my experience has been enriched in an effortless way by my interactions and relationships with customers.

The comments above suggest that trainees welcomed the focus on the cultural value dimensions in highlighting the importance of understanding their (Irish) values and how these compare with those of other countries, especially those that their customers are from (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005). In addition, some staff members pointed out the importance of acquiring terminology that they could apply to the different values, norms and behaviours of the culturally diverse customers whom they support, as it helped to “give a language” to the issues that staff experience in intercultural encounters. It is not surprising that staff remarked on the knowledge component of intercultural competence, particularly in Training session One, as most of this first training session focused on knowledge acquisition. After Training session Two, respondents gave more detailed descriptions on the nature of the knowledge that they

had learnt. In particular, the majority of staff pointed to the importance of acquiring knowledge of the value dimensions and the role of non-verbal communication in intercultural encounters. Interestingly, some trainees commented on the fact that this greater understanding can then be applied to workplace encounters with international customers, allowing for a more respectful interaction with customers.

While staff welcomed the focus on knowledge acquisition, comments from trainees after Training session Two indicated a shift in emphasis from the importance of acquiring the knowledge component of intercultural competence, towards the importance of developing better communication skills in order to support international customers. In particular, many of the trainees referred to the value of developing their communication style to facilitate appropriate and effective interactions with culturally diverse customers. Many of the participants liked the session on how to communicate with customers who are developing their English language, specifically commenting on the section in which they learnt the skill of checking understanding.

In addition, some trainee comments centred on the fact that by acquiring knowledge of cultural difference in relation to values and different non-verbal behaviour styles, they will in turn develop skills to allow them to “manage” intercultural encounters more effectively and appropriately. This could indicate that some staff are developing sophisticated levels of intercultural competence as they can see the interconnected nature of the components. This is also evident in some of the trainees’ comments expressing how the acquisition of knowledge is important as it helps them to understand the cross-cultural adaptation process that some of their customers are experiencing in their relocation to Ireland. We will return to the interconnected nature of the components later in the chapter.

The trainees also liked the focus on different family structures. They pointed to the benefit that the training provided in terms of developing better relationships with the individuals and families whom they support. In fact, many staff referred to this skills component, both in the training sessions and feedback, as being a very important component in these sessions. Given the significance, it was added to the skills

dimension of the intercultural competence model for not-for-profit staff in the homeless sector.

In relation to supporting families who have relocated to Ireland, nearly all the trainees commented on the usefulness of the culturagram (Congress, 2005). This view is supported in the feedback form when trainees were asked to indicate how useful some of the tasks and frameworks were. In relation to the culturagram staff remarked:

Amazing- will adopt into support plans for families housed in long-term (accommodation) to get a better history, context and plan.

This is extremely useful. I think I will use this culturagram going forward. Would have loved to have this a number of years ago.

The majority of trainees thought that the culturagram was very good, as it allowed them to develop a detailed picture of individual family structures, which will then help the staff to support these families more effectively:

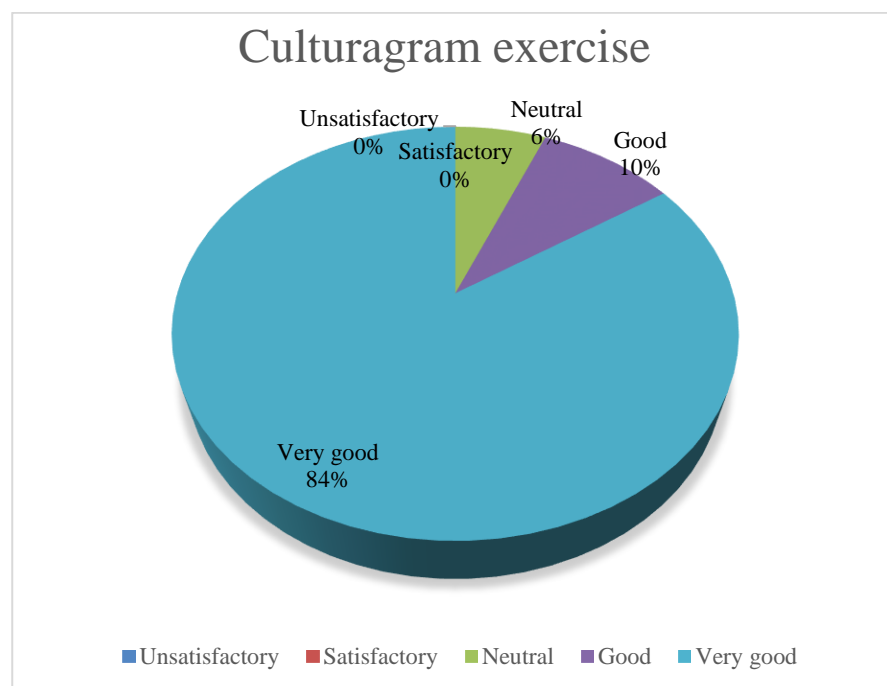


Figure 28 Trainees' views of Culturagram task

This finding suggests that the Culturagram is not only useful in social work and social care settings; it is also a useful application in the field of homeless service provision.

In question five, trainees were asked to say how they would incorporate the training into everyday work practices. In the main, comments referred to the training being useful in their daily practices, such as conducting home visits. Other comments highlight the value of the training in terms of developing ethnorelative viewpoints and the importance of being culturally sensitive towards their customers:

5. How will you incorporate this training into your daily work practice?

Training session One:

Being more aware and conscious of intercultural behaviours and values asking more questions on other cultural experiences.

I regularly visit migrant families in their home and I hope this training will help me to be more culturally sensitive when visiting them.

I'm going to remind myself sometimes my views are simply ethnocentric. They don't reflect the lives of millions of people. That doesn't make me or them right or wrong necessarily, but meeting someone in a space of accepting that we are different.

Training session Two:

Use this training to be more culturally sensitive in my daily work practice. I will have greater awareness of the cultural reasons for certain client behaviours and can adapt the way I work/ interact with them appropriately.

Being culturally sensitive and adjusting my behaviour to suit a situation.

I think it can be incorporated when we carry out home visits. I now have more of an understanding of why people may act in a particular way.

Better work practice and hopefully better advice and understanding for service users.

I will be more aware when working with families of different cultures and be more conscious of language and words that I use.

Hopefully be more aware of difficulties in different cultures, feel confident when working with people from different cultures.

How to communicate with persons with low-level English the culturagram will change how I work and build a profile of my clients.

I will be more open-minded in relation to cultural difference and how they (customers) can be perceived.

I will be more respectful of cultural differences and will not assume that all our customers should adapt to our style of communication.

Intercultural training is part of daily work, from colleagues of different cultures to the customers I work with. I think it's then for me to introduce that learning and practice to other staff, customers, family and friends.

From the trainee comments above, we can see that many staff are beginning to develop more sophisticated and complex levels of intercultural competence. As previously mentioned, when asked about what they had learnt, participants primarily viewed the training as leading to the development of intercultural awareness, which aids them in understanding cultural difference within intercultural encounters, and the importance of not viewing another's behaviour from an ethnocentric standpoint. When asked about the application of training to the workplace, trainees frequently commented on the interconnected nature of the knowledge, skills, language and attitude components of intercultural competence. The first few comments from Training session Two point to the importance of developing greater awareness or sensitivity which in turn will lead to staff developing skills such as the ability to adapt or adjust behaviour, so that they may effectively support international customers. Some of the trainees believe they are now better equipped to communicate with international customers as the training has allowed them to start developing language competency skills such as moderating speed of voice and complexity of their language use, as well as developing the ability to

check understanding. Staff also pointed out that the training has shown them the importance of developing attitudes such as open-mindedness and respect in order to become more interculturally competent.

Question six asked trainees to comment on the benefits of intercultural competence training in relation to their job. Overall, by the end of the sessions, staff thought that the training benefitted them in terms of improved communication with international customers. They also highlighted some personal benefits. Interestingly, some of the trainees highlighted the benefits of intercultural competence training beyond the workplace setting:

6. What benefits to your work practice do you hope will result from this training?

Training session One:

Improved communication and outcomes for my customers.

It is potentially massive due to the increased number of different Nations presenting to the service.

More professional and provide a better quality of serviced while studying More understanding of the reasons e.g. lack of eye contact is respect not disinterest.

Offering more respect when it comes to other cultures and better communication both verbal and non-verbal.

More responsive to customers and hopefully more understanding.

I hope it will help me to make better connections with families that have different cultural values to mine.

It is my hope it will increase relationship building and help avoid incidents.

I hope my families will feel I respect the cultural values more and that I can try to break through our cultural difference.

I hope to be more open-minded and mindful of my customer's beliefs.

Being mindful of group dynamics and powers within families.

Be a better supervisor policy and practice [sic] development reflective practice enhanced.

Training session Two:

It will help me to be open minded.

Open mind towards cultural difference.

To be more patient and understanding with other cultures.

I hope it will allow me to improve my cultural competence particularly when considering the needs of clients.

More sensitive to cultural needs.

I hope I will be able to communicate better, to build relationships with customers from other cultures now that I am more aware of intercultural (competence).

Confidence in having open conversations with customers about cultural experiences and the journey to our country.

Integration of non-Irish families to Irish society.

A great benefit to myself and all staff members and service users and Ireland continues to evolve into a multicultural country. This training is very necessary and progressive to avoid and prevent future social issues and possible exclusion.

The comments above suggest that after the first session the majority of trainees identified improved communication not only between staff members and international customers but also between colleagues as the main benefit of the first training session. In addition, staff pointed to the importance of developing an open-minded attitude to customers who are different from them culturally. After Training session Two, staff continued to see the importance of being open-minded, but interestingly we can see other attitudes being mentioned by the end of this session, such as the importance of empathy and patience. These comments suggest that while it may not be possible to ‘teach’ attitudes, intercultural competence training might lead to participants thinking about the development of traits that will improve their interactions in intercultural encounters.

In comments after Training session Two, the participants also thought that the training would lead to an improvement in their relationships with their other customers. A number of participants see relationship building (between staff member and customer) as an important skill of intercultural competence. This finding aligns with Deardorff's (2010) view that this is one of the key intercultural competence components, especially amongst non-western groups. Interestingly, one of the trainees pointed to the improved confidence they had gained in relation to being able to ask customers about their journeys to Ireland, which implies that the trainee saw a benefit in discussing personal life stories. Interestingly, the topic of relationship building did not arise in the interviews, but it was a frequent discussion point in the training sessions, particularly in the second one, as participants saw the efficacy in developing this skill. As a result of this issue being raised by trainees so frequently in both the training sessions and the feedback evaluation forms, the component has been added to the skills section of the intercultural competence model for service providers in the not-for-profit homeless sector.

Another interesting reflection concerned the benefits that the training might have beyond the workplace setting, highlighting its possible societal benefits. This also suggests that some of the trainees are beginning to develop a sophisticated and very well-developed intercultural competence. They see the development of their knowledge, skills, attitude and language components of intercultural competence, as not only benefiting customers in their face-face interactions but also in terms of customers' overall integration into Irish society. This is certainly an avenue worth exploring in any future training of FI staff.

The final question related to the quality of the trainer delivering the course. Trainees remarked upon the nature of tasks and interaction patterns as well as the benefit of having a trainer who had detailed knowledge of their day-to-day routines:

7. How would you rate the quality of the training delivery? Please briefly explain:

Training session One

9/10, 10/10.

Excellent trainer lots of examples and was very knowledgeable lots of time to discuss and explore the content.

Training session Two:

Excellent.

10/10.

Great. Spread over time was beneficial.

Very good, explained clearly and was very interactive.

Excellent facilitator and training delivered at a good pace with lots of discussion opportunities, group work and reflection.

Trainer had experience of our work which helps enormously. It can be difficult to engage in training where there isn't respect of knowledge of our roles beyond a broad idea of same.

Excellent delivery. Very knowledgeable instructor and interactive training. Trainer is open to different ideas. He expects that some information is possibly too general.

It allowed me to have an understanding of the appropriate treatment of people with regards to their culture and values we need to be an inclusive organisation.

Very good, one of the most useful trainings I have done. Wish I had done it years ago. I would have considered my outlook and knowledge as medium prior to training, but not only opened more knowledge and information, but a way to practice and think about future interactions more.

The comments from both training sessions, suggest that staff value a trainer who is knowledgeable and allows for participation. This means that the approach of using a mixture of didactic, experiential and interactive training methods was useful for this particular group of trainees as it suited their learning styles. Even more importantly, the final comment highlights the significance of trainers including content that is

relevant and specific to trainee's daily workplace practices. Once again, this shows the benefit of adopting an ethnographic approach to intercultural competence training in order to identify what prospective trainees do on a daily basis. This information can then be incorporated into the content of intercultural training sessions. The result of adopting this approach was that the trainees felt valued in the workshops and were motivated to "engage" with the overall training process.⁸⁴

After Training session Two, staff were also asked to answer a number of five-point Likert scale questions about their views of the training overall. As we can see from the chart on the next page (see table 29 below), the majority of staff either strongly agreed or agreed that they had acquired greater intercultural competence in relation to knowledge and skills after the two training sessions. The majority of staff also thought that intercultural competence training has benefitted their job greatly. Finally, the staff thought that there was a good balance between theory and practice in both training sessions.

⁸⁴ In addition, the adoption of this approach gave me, the trainer, an understanding of what the staff do, as well as providing me with the appropriate lexis to use during discussions with the groups during the training sessions.

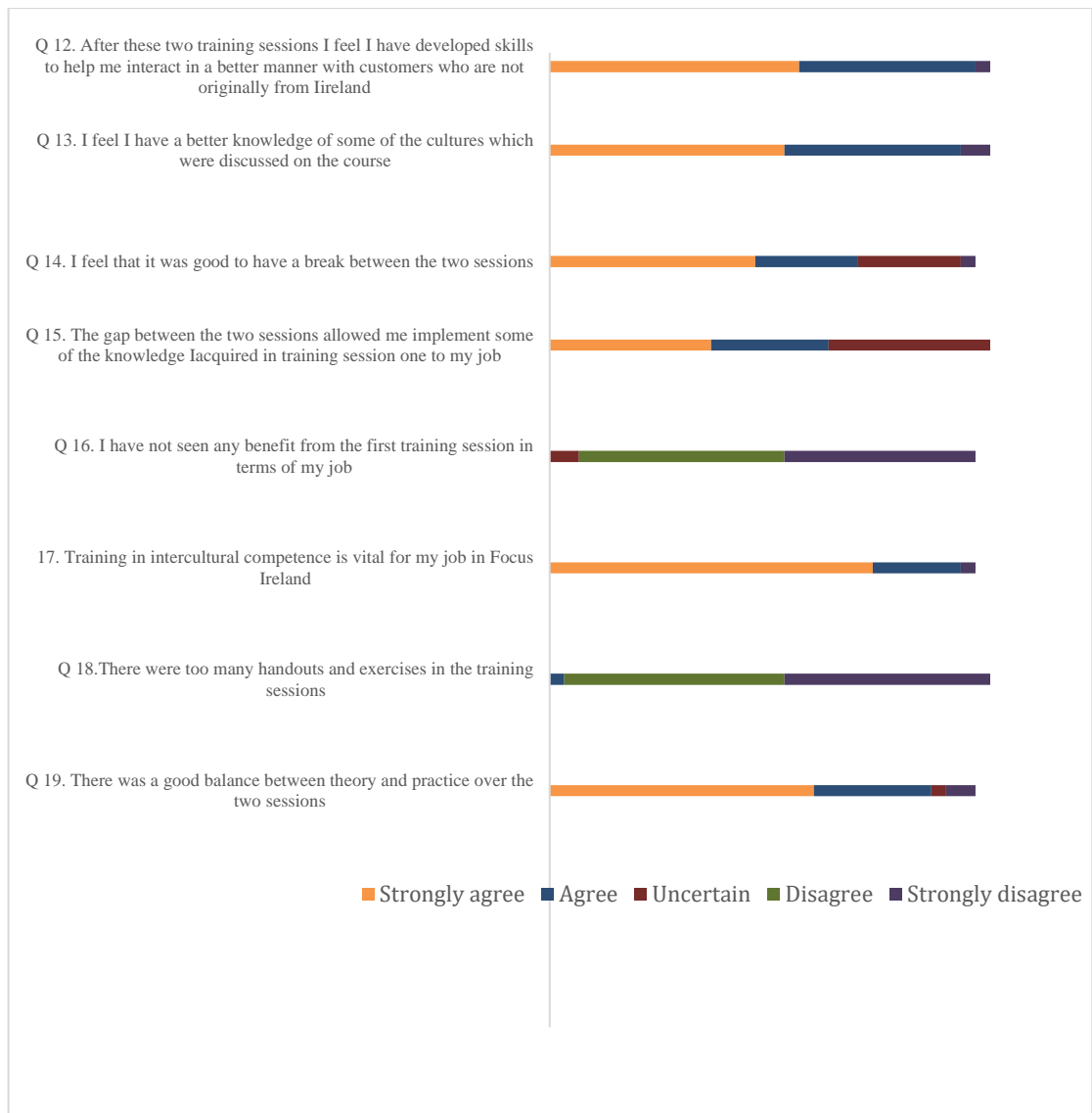


Table 27 Participant views on intercultural competence training sessions

8.5.3 Measurement scales

In addition to the feedback evaluation forms that I used to elicit trainees' overall views on the training programme and their assessment of their development of intercultural competence over the course of the two sessions, I also asked participants to complete a self-report instrument called the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) questionnaire designed by Ang et al. (2004; 2007). It was administered in order to discover if staff reported any improvements in their levels of intercultural competence. To this end, it was given to participants to complete at the beginning of training session One and again at the end of training session Two. The questionnaire contains twenty questions

which aim to measure metacognitive, cognitive, motivation and behavioural elements of intercultural competence (see table 30).

Intercultural Training Workshop 2 Focus Ireland				Date: _____		
Name: _____						
Participant Number: _____						
<p>Read each statement and select the response that best describes your capabilities. Select the answer that BEST describes you AS YOU REALLY ARE (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)</p>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral		Strongly Agree	
<p>_____ 1. I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>_____ 2. I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.</p> <p>_____ 3. I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.</p> <p>_____ 4. I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.</p> <p>_____ 5. I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.</p> <p>_____ 6. I know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages.</p> <p>_____ 7. I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures.</p> <p>_____ 8. I know the marriage systems of other cultures.</p> <p>_____ 9. I know the arts and crafts of other cultures.</p> <p>_____ 10. I know the rules for expressing nonverbal behaviours in other cultures.</p> <p>_____ 11. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.</p> <p>_____ 12. I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.</p> <p>_____ 13. I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.</p> <p>_____ 14. I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.</p> <p>_____ 15. I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture.</p> <p>_____ 16. I change my verbal behaviour (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.</p> <p>_____ 17. I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.</p> <p>_____ 18. I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.</p> <p>_____ 19. I change my nonverbal behaviour when a cross-cultural situation requires it.</p> <p>_____ 20. I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.</p>						
<p>© Cultural Intelligence Center 2005. Used by permission of the Cultural Intelligence Center. Note: Use of this scale granted to academic researchers for research purposes only. For information on using the scale for purposes other than academic research (e.g., consultants and non-academic organizations), please send an email to cquery@culturalq.com. The Chinese version of the scales is available on the MOR website.</p>						

Table 28 Cultural Intelligence scale (CQS) questionnaire (Ang et al., 2004)

8.5.3.1 Limitation of measurement scales

In their review of reviews of cultural competence training courses, Truong et al. (2014) found that many of the measurement devices used to evaluate the effectiveness of intercultural training programmes relied on self-reports and, therefore, were subjective in nature. In addition, Bowen (2008) is critical of self-assessment reporting for a number of reasons such as respondents lacking a desired level of cultural awareness and the fact that the answers may be biased because respondents may wish to give socially desirable responses.

Borghetti (2017) argues against the notion of any assessment of intercultural competence at all on ethical grounds, mainly in relation to the potential for a tester to abuse their power. She also questions the validity of some of the tests used.

Nevertheless, despite these valid criticisms, the twenty-question CQS scale (Ang et al., 2007) was utilised as it is a pre-existing assessment tool that has already been tested empirically and could be easily administered, within the timeframe of the current study. In addition, alternative tools used to gather information for evaluation purposes such as portfolios, cultural assimilators and reflective journals were not practical for this cohort of participants.

8.5.3.2 Findings

Overall, the trainees' scores after the second training sessions indicated moderate to good improvement in intercultural competence across the four variables listed previously (see figure below). In particular, the majority of staff who completed the questionnaires indicated improved abilities in non-verbal communication skills along with a greater understanding of the importance of adapting one's speed of delivery and the acquisition of techniques to simplifying verbal messages when communicating with customers with low levels of English proficiency.

Figure X: Percentage of participants who showed signs of improvement, disimprovement or remained neutral in relation to intercultural competence

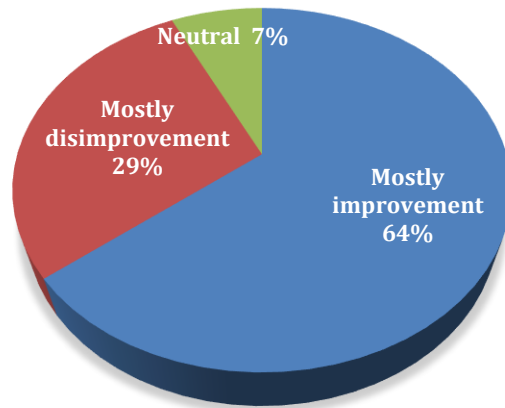


Figure 29 Percentage of improvement in intercultural competence after training

8.6 Limitations

The intercultural competence model and the training process described above have some limitations:

- Currently, this model has only been tested on one not-for-profit homeless service provider in Ireland. There needs to be further testing, both in an Irish context, and beyond.
- To date, training evaluation relies heavily on self-report and self-evaluation. Further ethnographic research, particularly through the use of observation of those who have undergone training, is required in the next phase, in order to see if the training has developed FI staff members' intercultural competence.
- Further experiential learning should be incorporated into future training sessions. To date, many of the methods implemented in the two training sessions were didactic. Some experiential methods were used such as the scenarios task and the physical activity.

- The training so far has relied solely on face-to-face interaction. It will be necessary to explore the efficacy of a provision of training through other learning platforms. This is even more important since the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic, as there is a strong likelihood that future FI training may be delivered online, or in a blended learning style of delivery. Other areas of modality worth exploring could be social media or the use of Personal Learning Environments (PLE) which were discussed in the review of literature.
- To date, there has been no use of behavioural modification training. Activities that could be incorporated into an intercultural competence training programme include “Barnga” which is a simulation game focusing on cultural clashes (Thiagarajan and Thiagarajan, 2006).

8.7 Summary of chapter

This chapter has examined the design and delivery of a two-session intercultural competence training programme to FI staff members. The first part of this chapter described an intercultural competence model which has been designed for service providers in the not-for-profit homeless sector in the Republic of Ireland. It was designed based on the findings in the previous chapters and was modified after feedback from staff who attended the training sessions. While the model requires further testing, it is my contention that it can be easily adapted and applied to other service providers in the homeless sector in Ireland and, with some modifications to take local elements into account, other regions. In addition, the model could be adapted and applied to other sectors that deal with vulnerable cultural populations such as refugees, migrants and undocumented migrants.

The second part of this chapter concerned the design and delivery of a training programme based on the intercultural competence model. Evaluation on the effectiveness of this training programme was based on feedback from trainees about both training sessions. In relation to the design of the programme, many of the staff expressed appreciation at being able to discuss what they termed ‘real-life’ tasks. This material was generated from information gathered from the participant observations

and interviews. Furthermore, the use of both culture-general and culture-specific material as well as the incorporation of frameworks from social work such as the culturagram (Congress, 2005) were useful in developing the participants' intercultural competence. Similarly to the model, the training programme could be adapted for homeless sector service providers and for staff in other organisations who support vulnerable populations, both in Ireland and elsewhere.

Other feedback from the participants suggest that, overall, they were extremely happy with the training. Findings suggest that some staff developed a more sophisticated and complex level of intercultural competence as a result of attending the sessions, with evidence to indicate that some of them had moved from conscious incompetence to a state of conscious competence (Bhawuk, 1998). Indeed, by the end of the training programme, some of the participants saw the interconnected nature of the four components of competence: knowledge, skills, language and attitude, and believed that the training would allow them to build better relationships with their customers. In other words, they now feel better equipped to interact with culturally diverse customers and support them in an effective and appropriate manner. However, through the benefit of training they are also cognisant of the fact that this development is ongoing.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate the challenges that FI staff face in supporting customers who are culturally diverse. The rationale behind this study was the increased number of individuals from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds accessing the services of this not-for-profit homeless service provider in the past number of years as a result of increased immigration to Ireland since the mid-2000s. Specifically, this dissertation is founded on an ethnographic study, which involved participant observations and eighteen group interviews (in which fifty-three FI staff members took part). The analysis of the findings of this study led to the design of an intercultural competence training programme delivered to fifty-six FI staff.

Firstly, this chapter reviews the previous chapters and summarises the findings. Next, I will reflect on the overall research process, examining in particular my own experiences in relation to the ethnographic approach. Following this, I will discuss the limitations to the study. Finally, I will suggest future areas of research.

9.2 Review of chapters

Chapter one introduced the study by stating the research questions and describing the role of FI in the overall context of homelessness in the Republic of Ireland, through an examination of the different support measures that FI provides for its customers.

Chapter two contextualised the concept of intercultural competence through a review of existing literature from the fields of communication studies, intercultural studies, language teaching, education, social work and health. All of the models cited in this chapter are useful in the conceptualisation of the key variables of intercultural competence, but their efficacy depends on the context in which they are applied. Consequently, intercultural competence models from the fields of social work and health care were particularly appropriate for this study, as they could be applied easily to the day-to-day duties of staff working for a not-for-profit homeless organisation such as FI.

The next chapter examined the methodology utilised in the study. It explained the qualitative approach taken and the rationale behind the use of ethnography, in particular participant observations and interviews as data gathering methods. The second half of this chapter explored the inductive analysis of data and detailed the different stages of TA. The use of ethnography proved to be very effective. For instance, by conducting observations, I gained excellent insight into the day-to-day interactions between FI staff members and their customers. The interviews provided me with an understanding of the challenges that staff had in providing support to ethnically diverse clientele and of the language used by this particular community of practice (Wenger, 1999). Consequently, I was able to incorporate this information into the design of materials for Training sessions One and Two, resulting in staff being involved in ‘real-life tasks’ which were context-specific rather than generic in nature.

Chapter four, five, six and seven each presented the findings and analysis of the data in relation to the challenges that staff face in supporting culturally diverse customers. By using TA and the software package NVivo, codes were identified and grouped into four themes: staff navigation of space; gender; racism; the language competence of staff, customers and other interlocutors. Findings indicated that staff face challenges related to supporting customers in the semi-public and private spheres, such as understanding the ways customers seek privacy or the varying childrearing practices customers might employ. The results also revealed the difficulty of supporting families with diverse family structures and the manner in which this impacts on decision-making, power relationships and the nurture of children. Staff faced challenges in relation to combating racist behaviour or discrimination on the part of customers themselves, neighbours and private landlords. The results pointed to the need to develop language competence skills in order for staff to overcome the language barrier they often face when interacting with customers who speak English as a second or additional language.

Chapter eight explored the design and delivery of an intercultural competence training programme based on a proposed model of intercultural competence which was posited as a result of the findings of the present research. Analysis of feedback from participants in the second part of the study suggests that a bottom-up ethnographic

approach to the design and delivery of a context-specific, intercultural competence training programme is very effective, as many FI staff developed in their level of intercultural competence in terms of knowledge, skills, language competency and attitudes.

Finally, this chapter contains a number of recommendations that FI as an organisation could consider implementing in order to provide a more effective and appropriate service to culturally diverse customers. Firstly, all FI staff who support customers face to face should be given training in adult literacy tutoring. Secondly, FI should consider the establishment of a team of cultural brokers who could mediate between colleagues and customers who are not proficient in English. This team could also be available to staff in an advisory capacity to aid colleagues who have questions about the cultural practices of a customer(s) originating from particular countries. In addition, FI might consider recruiting more staff who are culturally diverse and who could join this cultural ambassador team. This team should also receive training in interpreting skills. It might be useful for FI to establish links to language departments in Irish universities. These departments might be willing to provide interpreting and translation skills for the organisation on a voluntary basis. The final recommendation involves FI translating key documentation into a variety of languages.

9.3 Researcher reflexivity

During the discussion of ethnography in the methodology chapter, reference was made to the importance of researcher reflexivity throughout the research process. Mason (2018) points out that this process should be continuous and involve not only an interrogation by the researcher of why s/he is investigating the phenomenon, but also an ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the approaches and methods used. In addition, she maintains that researchers should challenge their own assumptions and acknowledge that their own values, beliefs and decision-making have an impact on their research. However, she also acknowledges that this is a very difficult aspect of the research process.

There are a number of positions that a reflexive researcher should consider throughout the research process. They include: gender, race, affiliation, age, sexual orientation,

immigration status, personal experiences, linguistic tradition, beliefs, biases, preferences, theoretical, political and ideological stances and emotional responses to participants (Berger, 2015). Researchers need to deliberate on these positions because any one of them may, at times, impact upon the research methods which have been chosen. In this current study, these considerations were taken into account, aided by the incorporation of reflective comments in my fieldnotes and the use of reflective memos in NVivo.

9.3.1 Beliefs, theoretical and ideological stance

Initially, I was worried about how I might be received by the staff, given that I was entering the field from an academic background with a skill set that might not be immediately apparent to them. From my previous volunteer work with the organisation, I knew that I had a good deal to offer them in terms of my expertise and that they would benefit from intercultural competence training which would lead to an improvement in their abilities to support culturally diverse customers. I was also aware that I needed to establish trust with the staff at the beginning of the process.

This is not to say that staff did not welcome me. In fact, they were extremely welcoming and, during my time with them, they were able to make connections between my fieldwork and what was discussed in the interviews and training sessions. Consequently, my belief that educational institutions should be involved in community engagement whenever possible and that praxis should be included in research projects has been strengthened by the interactions with FI staff in observations and interviews. This is due to the positive effect that training in intercultural competence has had on FI staff members.

This study also follows in the tradition of DCU community engagement projects.⁸⁵ It is my intention to continue to abide by this principle by testing the efficacy of the

⁸⁵ For example, in 2016 DCU became the first Irish university in Ireland to be designated a *University of Sanctuary*. A current ongoing programme within this project is a twelve-week intercultural collaborative storytelling research project, which pairs DCU staff members with refugees and asylum seekers. The purpose of this is to promote cultural interchange, help refugees and asylum seekers integrate into Irish society as well as develop their English language proficiency (Daniels, 2018).

training model in other local community projects that support culturally diverse and vulnerable populations.

9.3.2 Personal experiences

The role of participant observer was new to me and presented some problems at times. The first difficulty concerned the degree of interaction with customers in the coffee shop space. Before entering the field, I was concerned that my presence there might have a negative impact on both the staff members and customers. In fact, the opposite occurred. After initial wariness on the part of customers, they became very welcoming, with some of the older ones chatting to me during my observations. I feel the decision to interact with customers was correct as it created a positive relationship between us. The observations enabled me to interact, albeit very briefly, with some of them on a personal level, which meant I developed some insight into the difficulties that people who are homeless undergo in attempting to secure accommodation. I have also begun to develop some knowledge of how people find themselves in danger of becoming or have become homeless, through first-hand accounts of their circumstances. Consequently, these interactions have been invaluable in enabling me to refer to customers in concrete rather than abstract terms during discussions with staff in the interviews and training sessions. The second problem was more specific. Despite all my preparations before entering the field, I have learnt that while a researcher can try to anticipate possible events in the field, some situations will arise for which s/he is not prepared. In one instance, I encountered an unforeseen difficulty when a customer in the coffee shop asked me for money for a cup of tea. In my preparations for the observations, I had considered a number of points such as what to wear, whether I should eat food, whether I should engage in conversation. I had not thought about what I should do if I was asked for money. In this particular situation, I decided not to give the customer any small change (which went against my natural inclinations). I believed that not only was this probably not part of a participant observer's role, but also I had not asked about FI policy in relation to this issue. In discussion with the team leader after the observation, he confirmed that I had made the correct decision. I have learnt that as a participant observer it is sometimes necessary to make instant decisions which are primarily based on instinct. Moreover, while reflecting on the event as I wrote up

my fieldnotes, I thought that the episode was very interesting in terms of my observer identity in that moment. This interaction with the customer at this time is best understood as occupying a liminal space- in which I was not a member of staff, nor a participant observer, nor a customer.

This feeling re-surfaced during another incident involving a violent encounter between a customer and staff member which I witnessed in one of the observations:

All hell broke loose ‘XXX, leave the floor. XXX leave the floor!’ XXX was screaming. One of the female customers was trying to push past XXX and her colleague. I got a brief glimpse and it was the customer from yesterday who I thought might have been on drugs.

XXX went straight for the door and entered the code for the door to the stairs up to the staffroom. I asked if I should remove myself from the floor, she nodded... all of a sudden, the customer was on us. She had managed to get past the staff who had attempted to block her.

The customer said to XXX, “it’s alright I won’t hit her, I want to talk to her.’ XXX told the customer that she had to leave (I can’t remember her exact words) the hostility by the customer was increasing and she started pointing at XXX and talking about the sanction and being barred and that she had not been talking about drugs to her boyfriend the day before... [I was desperately trying to sum up the situation and trying to decide if I should block the customer if she became physically aggressive towards XXX I was also wondering about whether to go and get XXX and XXX] next thing, they both flew down the stairs...At this point XXX took over and I moved up the stairs. As I was walking upstairs, I heard the customer say “if I don’t get you in here, I’ll get you outside/ out there.”

(Pilot Study Observation 2. Friday, 10th March 2017. Time: 2:30-3:30pm. Location: Coffee shop)

While this event is not directly related to international customers, it was an important episode, as it occurred in the second observation that I conducted and had a major impact on the development of researcher reflexivity on my part. The extract above illustrates how the coffee shop can be a complex space in which staff not only deal with intercultural issues but also with a number of other challenging, stressful and sometimes violent scenarios in their day-to-day job. This situation demonstrated to me that by their very presence during the observation, researchers are active participants in the process, and, occasionally, they may need to make speedy decisions that may

affect a particular situation. Fortunately, the intervention of the project leaders, who expertly diffused the situation, meant that I did not need to make a decision about whether to intervene or not in this particular situation.

9.4 Limitations to study and future research

There are a number of limitations to this study. The decision to omit customers was informed by my research aims, namely to investigate the challenges that staff face in the support of ethnically diverse customers. A further reason was that the customers might only engage with FI staff on one occasion, and therefore may not be able to contribute to the specific discussion of intercultural competence of service providers.

Future research should be conducted on the views of FI customers who are culturally diverse in order to further test the robustness of the intercultural competence model. One possible cohort that may provide useful insights for future research are individuals or families who have just exited homelessness and no longer require long-term, support services, as these families have engaged with FI staff on a long-term basis, and are better placed to discuss their experiences of intercultural contact than customers who have had very limited contact with staff. Consequently, a focus on this cohort would provide a more rounded view of the intercultural competence levels of FI staff, from the perspectives of both staff members and customers.

The second limitation concerns the evaluation of the training programme in terms of its impact on the development of intercultural competence in the staff who attend such training. For this, the study relied mainly on self-reporting techniques. Arasaratnam (2016) points out that as well as using self-reports, it is important to elicit the view of the other in any evaluation of an individual's intercultural competence. She lists techniques that researchers have used that could be incorporated into the evaluation process such as, interviews, portfolios, reflective journals and responses to hypothetical scenarios. However, the use of many of these assessment techniques with the participants in this study was problematic, given the severe time constraints in which they operate. Indeed, as previously stated, when I asked the staff to keep journals of any intercultural interactions they had after Training Session One which could be brought along to Training Session Two for discussion, none of the participants were

able to commit to such a task. Nevertheless, alternative assessment techniques to self-reporting are required in order to broaden the way in which the training programme and the intercultural competence levels of FI staff are evaluated in the future.

While it is my contention that both the posited model of intercultural competence and the training programme that was subsequently designed based on this model can be applied in other not-for-profit settings, further testing is required in order to examine the efficacy of the model in other sites. In terms of the intercultural training programme, further evaluation would contribute to determining its effectiveness as a prototype on which to base future intercultural competence training for homeless service care providers other than FI and not-for-profit organisations who support ethnically diverse vulnerable populations.

The study did not focus extensively on the role of the organisation, in this case FI, on the development of intercultural competence. In hindsight, further focus on staff perceptions on how the organisation enables or hinders staff members' development of intercultural competence would have been useful. While this area was not a particular focus during the interviews, reflecting on organisational factors was used in training session Two as a method of reviewing training session One. At the beginning of this session, participants were given a handout with a number of statements relating to intercultural competence and service provision for culturally diverse customers/clients. They were categorised under the variables, attitudes, knowledge and skills (see Appendix, P). An example of two of the statements are below:

- Developing a policy or philosophy regarding hiring people who are homeless or who have been homeless, and people who represent the cultural diversity of the homeless population.
- Personal commitment to challenging poverty, and changing oppressive and discriminatory institutions, policies and attitudes related to all cultural characteristics.

(Adapted from: McMurray-Avila, 2001)

The participants' task was to decide if the statement was an individual or organisational responsibility (or both). This task provided fruitful discussion between participants on the role of FI in the development of intercultural competence. During post task

feedback, staff highlighted a number of interesting points in relation to organisational intercultural competence, including the importance of FI attempting to effect policy in relation to the treatment of culturally diverse vulnerable groups (external factors), and FI policy on staff recruitment of culturally diverse staff (internal factors).

The role of organisations in the development of intercultural competence among its staff warrants further research. In her editorial on the future research agenda of intercultural competence Deardorff (2015, p. 4), asks the questions “what does it mean to have an interculturally competent organisation?” “What leadership, structures, policies and procedures need to be in place to maximize the diversity of human capital and that enable the organisation to operate both effectively and appropriately within larger contexts?” In order to answer these questions, the use of the task described above can be a good starting point.

A related area of research to consider is the role of interpersonal relationships among FI staff members and how these may influence an individual’s intercultural competence. In other words, if more culturally diverse staff are recruited by FI, would this necessarily lead to improved intercultural competence due to increased intercultural contact?

A further potential area of study is the exploration of the links between an individual’s educational background and their capacity to develop intercultural competence. Many of the FI staff have degrees in social care/ social work or sociology. It was clear from the interviews that while doing these degrees the participants learnt the importance of reflective practice and critical thinking in areas such as racism, discrimination and prejudice, and in the monitoring of their own biases in relation to supporting clients. It would be interesting to explore the staff’s ability to transfer these skills to the development of intercultural competence with the aim of supporting culturally diverse customers. It is certainly an area that warrants further research.

9.5 Contribution to knowledge of intercultural competence

While there are existing training courses which focus on intercultural competence for homeless service providers in the U.S., these are largely based on culture-general models of intercultural competence (Boynton, 2019). As far as I know, this study is the

first of its kind to propose a training model tailored to develop intercultural competence amongst staff in the not-for-profit homeless sector in the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, it is the first study in Ireland that has included context-specific training material which incorporates both culture-general and culture-specific related variables generated by ethnographic research, rather than culture-general variables alone. The latter is the dominant training paradigm in Ireland within other not-for-profit organisations (Immigrant council of Ireland) and social service agencies (HSE). It is my contention, therefore, that the elements of the training programme can be applied to other service providers in the homeless sector in Ireland.

Moreover, both the model and training programme provide a template for other homeless organisations outside Ireland. While some of the elements are specific to the Irish context, it would be possible to adapt them for other homeless organisations. In addition, they could be adapted and applied to other sectors that deal with vulnerable populations who are culturally diverse such as refugees, migrants and undocumented migrants.

A further contribution relates to the field of homelessness studies in the European context. The European Observatory on Homelessness was established by the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) in 1991 in order “to support the production of high quality research on homelessness” (www.feantsa.org). To date, there have not been any studies relating to the development of intercultural competence for service providers who support the culturally diverse homeless population. This study will make a valuable contribution to the knowledge base of those who are affiliated with this association through the future dissemination of findings in the FEANTSA journal and or conference on homelessness.

9.6 Concluding remarks

Overall, this has been an extremely worthwhile experience. I feel that many of the staff are now better equipped to support ethnically and culturally diverse customers as a result of the intercultural competence training they have received. However, I also believe this training must be ongoing, and it is my intention to maintain this

collaboration with FI on two fronts. I plan to continue to train current members of staff in areas of intercultural competence that have not yet been addressed in Training session One and Two, as well as deliver the two training sessions to new staff. It is also my conviction that the blueprint for the design and delivery of intercultural competence training set out in chapter eight can be replicated in other homeless not-for-profit organisations, both in Ireland and, with modifications to take into account the local setting, elsewhere. It can also be used with other charities that support culturally diverse and vulnerable clientele in other sectors.

Research such as the one I conducted highlights how intercultural competence is, or should be, at the core of any set of values of organisations who deal with vulnerable populations such as the homeless whose difficulties may be compounded by cultural misunderstandings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CATEGORIES OF CUSTOMER REFERRED TO BY PARTICIPANTS IN INTERVIEWS IN TERMS OF FREQUENCY

Category	Number of interviews category is mentioned in	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
Irish	17	526	0.48
Traveller	13	512	0.47
Polish	15	340	0.32
African	13	268	0.25
Romanian	13	218	0.21
Nigeria	11	182	0.17
Foreign	10	114	0.10
Somalia	7	76	0.07
Eastern- European	11	46	0.04
Czech	6	33	0.04
Sudan	3	31	0.02
Muslim	6	31	0.03
Chinese	4	29	0.03
Lithuanian	7	25	0.02
Jordan	1	23	0.02
Roma	3	21	0.02
Asian	6	20	0.02
Pakistan	4	20	0.02
Users	3	21	0.02
Congo	2	19	0.02

Nigerians	3	19	0.02
Refugee	4	19	0.02
Cameroon	4	17	0.02
Ethiopia	2	17	0.02
Americans	2	16	0.01
China	3	16	0.01
England	4	15	0.01
Guinea	2	15	0.01
British	1	14	0.01
Europeans	3	14	0.01
Mongolia	1	13	0.01
Syrians	2	13	0.01
Bangladeshi	2	12	0.01
Libya	1	12	0.01
Slovakian	1	12	0.01
Costa Rica	3	3	0.01
Bulgaria	1	1	0.01

**APPENDIX B PROPOSITIONS IN RELATION TO INTERPERSONAL
COMPETENCE IN INTERCULTURAL CONTEXTS
(SPITZBERG, 1997, PP. 381- 390).**

Individual system

1. As communicator motivation increases, communicative competence increases
 - 1a. As communicator confidence increases, communicator motivation increases
 - 1b. As reward-relevant efficacy beliefs increase, communicator motivation increases
 - 1c. As communicator approach dispositions increase, communicator motivation increases.
 - 1d. As the relative cost/benefit ratio of a situation increases, communicator motivation increases.
2. Communicative knowledge increases, communicative competence increases.
 - 2a. As task-relevant procedural knowledge increases, communicator knowledge increases.
 - 2b. As mastery of knowledge-acquisition strategies increases, communicator knowledge increases.
 - 2c. As identity and role diversity increases, communicator knowledge increases.
 - 2d. As knowledge dispositions increase, communicator knowledge increases.
3. As communicator skills increase, communicator competence increases.
 - 3a. As conversational altercentrism increases, communicator skill increases.
 - 3b. As conversational coordination increases, communicator skill increases.
 - 3c. As conversational composure increases, communicator skill increases.
 - 3d. As conversational expressiveness increases, communicator skill increases.
 - 3e. As conversational adaptation increases, communicator skill increases.

Episodic system

4. As Actor's communicative status increases, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases.
 - 4a. As Actor's motivation, knowledge, and skills increase, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases.
 - 4b. As contextual obstruction of Actor's performance increases, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases.
 - 4c. As Actor's receipt of valued outcomes increases, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases.
 - 4d. As Actor's extant-attributed communicative status increases, Co-actor's impression of Actor status increases.
5. Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence is a function of Actor's fulfilment of Co-actor's expectancies.

- 5a. As Actor's fulfilment of positive Co-actor expectancies increases, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases.
- 5b. As Actor's normative violation of Co-actor's negative expectancies increases, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases.
- 5c. As Actor's fulfilment of Co-actor's competence prototype expectancies increases, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases.
- 5d. As Actor's normative reciprocity of positive effect and compensation of negative effect increases, Co-actor's impression of Actor's competence increases.
- 5e. As Actor's normative compensation of power relations increases, the more Co-Actor's Impression of Actor's competence increases.

Relational system

- 6. As mutual fulfilment of autonomy and intimacy needs increases, relational competence increases.
- 7. As mutual attraction increases, relational competence increases.
- 8. As mutual trust increases, relational competence increases.
- 9. As access to social support increases, relational competence increases.
- 10. As relational network integration increases, relational competence increases.

APPENDIX C FULL FIELDNOTES

Observation 1 Pilot study

Thursday 9th March 2017
shop

Time: 10:30 am - 12:30 am Location: Coffee

Abbreviations:

TBT- to be transcribed

CS- Coffee shop

FISM- Focus Ireland Staff member

A & I - Advice and Information (staff) their offices and consultation rooms are on the first floor of the coffee shop.

CAPITAL LETTERS IN BOLD- intercultural terminology relevant for the analysis

Mobile phone transcription on feelings before entering TBT

XXX- names of participants have been removed

Was going to wait outside with what I thought was a group of customers waiting to enter the coffee shop. However, it turns out that they were doing a photo shoot for Focus Ireland for marketing. I saw a member of staff through the window XXXX and he let me in. I have done a workshop with XXX before, he is from Poland. It was nice to see a face I knew. I then met XXX, who I had talked to before; he is part of the catering staff also. We had a cup of tea and a brief chat. XXX left the fishmonger and bread men were delivering. Photo team and other focus Ireland staff (not from coffee shop) were in and out. It appeared to be very busy. XXX told me it was a little busier than normal because of the photo shoot.

XXX returns sits down and then offers to see where XXX is- XXX is the project manager of the CS team and he was going to go through the health and safety training/ check fire with me before I came down. XXX comes back down as XXX and I are talking about the guy outside. He tells me that XXX isn't

there at the moment (it turns out he had to go to a meeting off site) and that XXX his assistant manager would come down to see me in a minute.

Whilst talking to XXX it came up to 10:30 a customer was queuing outside and then he started to bang on the window, he wasn't aggressive but did look a little annoyed. Dressed in runners and a hoody, short black hair. XXX said that he was a little annoyed that C.S hadn't opened up yet hence the banging. Then he said 'he's a nice guy usually good'. Or, 'he's alright usually,' words to that affect. [I must get better at remembering verbatim words that might be important]. ...' it depends on the night he has had last night, it's tough out there'

Then the team from upstairs came down, I said hello and asked if they knew why I was there. They said they did know and we introduced ourselves. There was XXX [I think, I am terrible at remembering names- I must improve. Also XXX there are three XXXs and XXX- immediately I thought how young XXX looked. Not sure if she is Irish originally phenotype and a slight accent but I couldn't work out where from.

Then XXX came down apologising for XXX and being a little late. It struck me how open and friendly ALL the staff were. They were very welcoming also. I had thought that there might be a bit of resistance towards an outsider but not a bit of it. [Maybe they are very used to research or observers or it is just the openness and transparency fostered by staff ethics etc.]

A word on the coffee shop. Whilst waiting for the tea from XXX and during discussion I had a chance to take in my surroundings. It is bright a big window at the front two yellow doors signage clear that it is the Focus Ireland coffee shop- in the heart of Temple bar. Inside it is very bright- Yellow and white walls. There are four/ five tables on right hand side leading up to the kitchen galley. The kitchen counter is next to that scones and some pastry are on the counter. Hot food containers not loaded they are behind the glass counter. Then the wall on the left hand side with a small bench then a door where the toilet is. This is manned and was very busy throughout my stay. Then there is a bench and pew to seat four. Heading back to the front there is a reception counter with computer and phone. Final by the window there is a low small bench which can seat two.

XXXX asks me up to the top offices as we are introducing ourselves her colleagues are starting to lay out sugar bowls on the benches, with some chat. Two more colleagues head towards the door to open up- I don't meet them yet.

It is an old Georgian building I am led up three/ two? Flights of stairs to one of the meeting rooms. I have to go through a health and safety protocol, pretty standard stuff or so I thought. XXX is very welcoming and happy to go through everything with me and answer any questions. I must say it is the first health and safety protocol I have encountered with discussion on sharps/ sharpies (exposed needles) hepatitis B and C vaccinations and need for this possibly paid by VHI and focus Ireland and what to do if physical violence happens on the coffee shop floor. In all problematic cases the best port of call is to remove myself.

I forgot that at the beginning of the health and safety chat XXXX very kindly time is important here I feel with a small overworked team went through the different teams in the coffee shop:

Caterers behind the counter dealing with food

'Door girls' two girls (girls is the term XXXX uses she is older than them and apart from XXXX the coffee shop staff are very young early twenties is my guess. They take names and date of birth of customers coming in for footfall purposes XXXX called it. Role to give sanctions and barring for one day then two and so forth.

Toilet attendance

XXX checking of money credits for customers

One person at reception

Roving member of staff to help out in all areas of floor when needed.

EYE CONTACT and oculesics rolling of eyes/ movement to indicate a [place for a problem was important. AN EXTREMELY Important NON VERBAL CUE IN FOCUS IRELAND. Staff are reminded of its importance each morning to signal any potential problems that may arise.

After my induction XXXX shows her office to me with video cameras console all parts of the CS have video surveillance. Very interesting I asked XXXX when she would realise that trouble might be brewing as there is no sound, she said you get a feeling, I asked if movement a lot of was an indicator she thought that it might be.

We left the office and I went to the toilet whilst there I made a couple of comments on my phone recorder. See transcript below:

TBT

Proxemics- old young and international customers seating arrangements.

XXX was waiting to the side door entrance for staff to the coffee shop and she showed me the code if I needed to remove myself. We headed to the front door to talk to the door staff. My first impression was that the space was already busy. Proxemics was the first NVB/ cue that I noticed. As I walked through the door, I saw two young adult male customers, one guy with a scar on his left cheek. Hoody puffu jacket and baseball cap. I noticed that two women and a man were seated near the door. In the corner one guy I thought he might be newcomer Irish in a bobble hat was talking to a FISM. It appeared very important. The two staff members said hello two XXXX's. I explained why I was there and then I had an opportunity to ask all three of them what I should say if a homeless customer aske who I was. We agreed that I would say I was training to be a volunteer they said customers would be used to that.

I went back inside, got a tea from the counter, and turned to sit down. I wasn't sure where to sit. One older customer had just sat near the toilet entrance. Dressed in jeans jacket carrying a small bag and wearing a flat cap- he looked like any other café customer in any other café. I sat in next to him. There was no conversation save for it's a lovely day to day. He drank his tea and I drank mine. I began to observe the room. I got a sense that people knew I was an outsider, but their eye contact was very fleeing a quick eye contact over to me to check me out and back to their group conversation. Eye contact appears to be the most important NVB amongst customers and then amongst the staff on the floor. I was conscious not to engage in too much. I felt a little bit of tension maybe mainly on my part but I did not feel threatened at any time during my 45 min observation.

I had received a small warning from XXX that one of the customers a young girl called XXX was in the coffee shop and that she has some mental health issues, that I was to be aware of this just in case she started to raise her voice. XXX told me that she was prone to speaking to herself and that I was to be vigilant but not to worry. When I saw her she checked me out briefly and then went back to talking to the group. The guy in the bb cap with scar continued to check me out with extremely brief eye contact movements.

As I began to observe other groups- the gender split was mainly 60/40 men to women or even 70/30. When I started, there were two middle-aged women at the bench nearest the door with their backs next to me. The oldest looking women with her back to me was later at the counter ordering food and she sounded middle class maybe even American I couldn't make it out.

Most of the men were young very young in fact this is what struck me most of them seemed so young- early teens to early twenties. At this stage voice projections were muted [could it be the early morning that led to this??] One guy came in with a sleeping bag and small bag very polite smiling to staff etc. Then another guy came in appears he was friendly with the sleeping bag guy. This second guy was a lot louder I wondered if he was on drugs as he had a bit of a loud slur to his voice. All or most accents seemed to be inner city Dublin or perhaps working class Dublin suburbs I thought maybe Tallaght not north side I thought. At this point, I notice the staff wearing blue rubber gloves medical teams would wear. These must be the gloves XXXX referred to in my health and safety protocol discussion, which are a prevention for HEP B. it strikes me that these are clear identity markers also for the staff which distinguish them from the customers.

XXX was a concern for the staff, there was a great deal of eye contact and I noticed XXXX on the toilet door checking her through eye contact a great deal at times she would whisper to some of the staff something but I couldn't make out what.

[Reflexivity- customers not fitting a stereotype of homeless as the bag lady i.e. people carrying around sleeping bags and bags. One young guy looked like he had come from the gym. Hairs swept back Lycra top and leggings with shorts over that and Nike runners, also a bag over his shoulder. Two of the women have handbags and take out makeup bags at the table].

Mobile phones being charged. There is a great deal of mobile phone use and charging of mobiles in the coffee shop.

XXXX utilises a great deal of eye contact from her position at the toilet entrance. All the FISM on the floor are clearly concerned about XXXX. She also moves from her spot to other staff members on the floor to communicate things, as with the eye contact this is done quickly, their communication system appears to be very effective. There is a sense in the air that something might explode and the staffs are clearly concerned about XXXX'S mental state. XXX

also communicates with the customers a lot they seem to respect her. It looks as if they talk to her the most in my time here. At one point, she comes over to XXX who is becoming quite loud and aggressive on his mobile phone. And XXX asks him to 'be quiet XXX.'

At this point two young women come in they were very young early twenties [I wonder if they are homeless, they look like they are dressed up to go shopping. Am I equating appearance and age with homelessness again? I have to be careful not to stereotype homelessness]

Another woman who is young but has the look about her of a drug user comes in and heads to XXX and his friend, she starts to become a little aggressive with XXX's friend saying 'we didn't know.' She was annoyed because of something, but I couldn't make out what, she was also annoyed about having no credit and her tone of voice was increasing. They then started to leave. Concurrently one of the younger women sat opposite XXXX with tea and a bowl of fruit. XXXX was talkative towards her, but then to herself and then sleeping on the table. I noticed that at the first opportunity when it wasn't too obvious that the woman eating the bowl of fruit moved to the next table. I notice the importance of proxemics in relation to if possible spaces appear to be left around XXXX, which newcomers see very quickly and do not sit opposite her.

As all of this is happening there is an older man in his mid-forties perhaps wearing jeans a dark blue suit jacket and a woolly hat, sitting next to me who is going through some official looking papers. As it is payday for social benefits today, I assume they are something to do with this. He sits with his back to the younger crowd who have grown in number. He does not engage in eye contact and goes about his own business. He too is carrying a small bag after a few minutes he gets up to leave.

As I turn my attention away from him I notice two women talking to XXX. I later find out they are from the housing team and they were there to tell XXX that she had been given sheltered accommodation in the city centre for the night. She didn't change emotions on hearing this and appeared nonplussed. After giving her the news, the two FISMs get up and leave. I watch them go across the road to the other Focus Ireland Building directly opposite the CS.

I go to the front door and remark to the two xxx how busy it is becoming. It is coming up to lunchtime. One of the XXX says 'it's good to be busy it makes the day go by'. As I am, there one of the older guys comes out messing as if to flick

something from the coffee stirrer in his hand. XXX mockingly puts her hands up and he is smiling. He moves to the left hand doorway of the next building where a few of the customers are having a smoke. It is nice and sunny out but cold it likes like the weather might change. Two other FISMs from across the road come across and ask if lunch is ready yet. I look in and it looks like it is starting so as they head in and join the queue I head back in also. As I am doing so, an Arabic man gives his name at the door- XXXX. He looks a little apprehensive as he is heading in. The table I was at is still free and I watch XXXX join the queue behind the two FISMS. As I am beside the counter, I observe his interaction with the canteen staff. The canteen staff are welcoming and patient as he makes his choice. There appears to be no communication difficulties in this transaction. XXX pays his money and sits down at the small table next to me. He does not join any of the other free tables. Two older Irish customers are on the next table less than half a foot away but neither XXXX nor the two men acknowledge each other. They are deep in conversation. [I wonder though is this another grouping to add to age groupings i.e. Ethnicity. I will try to look out for this more as the observations progress]. XXXX quietly goes about eating his food Fish and Mash with no eye contact.

At this point, it is starting to fill up and I decide that it is time to leave. What is more important my observation or making room for a customer to have their dinner? As I get up to leave it has been nearly an hour so all the staff workers are changing spots they do this on the hour. XXXX comes from the front door to swop with XXX on the credit station. I take this opportunity to talk to XXXX about the groupings. She informs me that the customers do form 'cliques' and that if younger customers are talking to the older customers it is usually because they are from the same part of Dublin originally. She also tells me that there is not a great deal of interaction between Irish customers and immigrant customers.

So far, I am struck by age, gender balance, groupings and nationality of these groupings but mostly by the use of eye contact by all concerned in the CS.

As I am getting my coat I talk to XXXX briefly, she is starting her lunch. I ask her if she is the most experienced on the floor she tells me she is but that she has worked for other charities in the sector for a long time. She also informs me that the customers might have been wary of me this is what I tell her I felt - because there are often rumours of undercover guards coming in to the CS

which she says is not true but they are rumours nonetheless. She thinks they might have thought I was a guard because of my height- I am 6 foot Four inches.

Pilot Study Observation 2

Friday 10th March 2017

Time: 2:30-3:30pm

Location: Coffee shop

Arrived at the CS at 2:10pm. Greeted by FISMs at door, they had just taken two names of customers and I entered behind them. I headed to the door to stairs entered the code on the lock and went upstairs. I knocked on XXXX's and XXXX door entered and said hello. They asked me if I found yesterday useful and I said that I had. I told them that XXXX thought that the customers had thought that I might be an undercover guard. [I immediately regretted this because I think that whilst this was light-hearted I feel I should keep everything that is said, confidential] I also mentioned the use of eye contact by the staff which seemed to please XXXX.

I went into the staffroom to hang up my coat and bag. I met XXXX from Nigeria, and had a brief chat [I should find out if XXXX is full time or from an agency, as I want to explore the notion of cultural ambassadors and a diverse staff in terms of ethnicity]. We had a brief chat about Blanchardstown.

I headed downstairs, the CS floor was very quiet about six customers all male. I recognised two customers from the day before. XXXX told me that it was quiet now but that it had been very busy at lunchtime and I had missed the rush. I thought of the calm after the storm. It was really much quieter than yesterday. I went to get a cup of tea from XXXX and had a chat with him, and paid for my tea as well as the three teas I had the day before XXXX said there was no need but I insisted. An older man next to me- Irish customer with a hat and glasses with shades- is asking about dessert. I turned to start to talk to XXXX again who was putting on some more blue gloves when a commotion started at the front door.

All hell broke loose 'XXXX, leave the floor. XXXX leave the floor!' XXXX was screaming. One of the female customers was trying to push past XXXX and her colleague. I got a brief glimpse and it was the customer from yesterday who I thought might have been on drugs, and who was having a bit of an argument

with her boyfriend and one of his friend. She struck me as a little confrontational yesterday.

XXXX went straight for the door with the code to the stairs for the staffroom. I followed and asked the other XXXX if I should remove myself from the floor she nodded, I looked back briefly and XXXX and another colleague were still trying to block the customer with all the strength they had. As I was going through the door with the code, XXXX was standing on the other side and I was in the process of asking if she was ok when the customer was on us she had managed to get past the staff. How did she get in so quickly? I hadn't closed the door quickly enough, she was suddenly upon us. The speed at which it all happened was incredible. This must be so stressful for the staff, never knowing from one moment to the next when something might erupt. XXX and XXX had got between her and XXX and I was standing sideways with my back to the customer. I wanted to block her but make it look like I wasn't [I have to check that it is ok to get involved in terms of fully blocking customers should this happen; it was looking like it might get physical]

The customer to XXXX: 'it's alright I won't hit her I want to talk to XXX,' XXX telling the customer that she had to leave (I can't remember her exact words). The hostility from the customer was increasing, she started pointing at XXXX and talking about the sanction and then baring she had received and that she had not been talking about drugs to her boyfriend the day before. (This must've happened in the afternoon when I left). I was wondering about whether to go and get XXXX and XXXX when next thing they both flew down the stairs XXX said one thing to the customer but I am not sure I think that it had not been her to give the sanction. The customer:' you're always sticking your nose in, I wasn't talking about drugs to XXXX' (??) what I realised was that the customer would most probably have hit XXXX had she not been blocked by XXXX and at this stage XXXX. At this point XXXX took over and I moved up the stairs and XXX stood where I had been facing the customer. As I was standing on the stairs, other staff members came down but did not get directly involved. At this point, I went back to what was being said and I heard the customer say 'if I don't get you in here I'll get you outside/ out there'. Then a moment later XXXX came up stairs she had obviously managed to get up the stairs after being essential trapped for the last two or three minutes. At this point XXXX was trying to calm the customer down and was saying 'if you just let me speak if you just let me speak.' He was very calm and measured, I remember being very impressed with his voculesics particularly loudness of voice and tone. Customer - she's always listening in on our private conversations'....

At this point, I went upstairs with XXXX to the staffroom. I gave her my tea, which I realised I still had in my hand- did I not put that down? How had I not

spilt it were the thoughts flying through my head? 'Come on upstairs and have my tea. I haven't touched it- I said to XXX. We sat in the staffroom for about five minutes and XXX was clearly shaken. She started going through what had just happened, and I was listening to what she was saying and trying not to interrupt (I often think it is good to give someone the space to do this in a situation like this.) whilst I was listening to XXXX, I noticed that XXXX who at this stage had finished his lunch was going through some papers and his mobile phone. What struck me is that he didn't seem to care at all what had just happened and didn't talk to XXXX at all. I was surprised was this jaded indifference or simply not caring about a colleague (be careful with value judgements Martin). At one point I asked her about whether it was Irish customers who were confrontational or the international customers and she told me that she had had a mars bar thrown at her by a Polish customer once. XXXX was clearly still shaken by it all and then started talking about their thought process, she had thought about going out the other main door but then had worried about the fact that the customer's boyfriend was outside. Then somehow, we got talking about her Master's degree that she was starting in September in sociology. I said that she certainly had a great deal of experience more so than someone going straight from undergrad level and that she could probably teach a session on the course herself. At this point XXXX came in.

XXXX asked her if she was ok and proceeded to talk it through. The customer had been moved off the premises by XXXX and the FISMs but not easily XXXX-'she has only just left. XXX said that the guards had come and were going to try and find the customer. But I don't know why. I tried to not talk at this point as it is not my role, only to comment that I thought XXXX was still a bit shaken, XXXX was saying it was great to have the tea. XXXX also mentioned that the customer was obviously 'spiralling' (down) with her drug use. I took it that these outbursts or angry confrontations were increasing. XXXX told XXXX about the threat made by the customer, XXXX asked XXXX if she would like to make a complaint to the guards and XXXX said she would think about it. XXXX said that I had seen something eventful and did I want to go back down stairs and that it was all right to do so. I felt that maybe they wanted to talk about Focus Ireland procedures or privately, I left the two of them, XXXX was still looking at this phone, he still hadn't said anything.

When I got downstairs it was as if nothing had happened the calm after the storm. I went to get another tea= I don't like to sit at the table with nothing. I must get a dinner the next time I thought. I looked at the clock and was staggered to see it had just gone a quarter to three only fifteen minutes had passed evert tying had flown by I thought it was at least half an hour surely. I chatted to XXX about his kids courses at college. Everyone was just getting on as if nothing had happened. This must be routine I thought.

I sat in my usual spot, on the table next to me was the boyfriend of the customer, he was on his mobile phone to her and was very loud as he was yesterday and just like yesterday a staff member came over and said 'is everything ok, XXXX ??' again he lowers his voice. He gets off the phone and says to XXXX who was going back to his office that his girlfriend was coming back to apologise (she never did). XXXX sees me and stops to ask if I was ok I said that I was. I thought about it and I was. Perhaps because I was probably expecting some altercation given the health and safety chat. I looked over to XXXX's friend the man with the beard he didn't look too good and was sweating a great deal I wondered if he was coming down off something. It struck me how each day could be very different for the homeless customers, a very volatile lifestyle with lows very common, I wasn't sure [perhaps I will ask this question in the pilot interview]. As XXXX and his friend were getting ready to leave they were looking at the new sleeping bag that XXXX had, they got it out of its plastic and XXXX said 'it's top of the range' he was delighted with it. It must be a very important possession for the homeless. As he was putting it in the bag his phone rang again and his girlfriend was obviously asking him where he was. He then said "look what you after making me do I have broken the zips on my bag now fuck ya" he hung up the phone. He tried to fix the bag with his friends help. [I imagine a dry sleeping bag is very important. He was fuming. I wondered what would be said when they met up. It struck me that that was he point so much happened out there once the customers leave the coffee shop. Is it a sanctuary for them I wonder?]

When they left the place was quiet again I could hear a man in a woolly hat and beard middle-aged again with a bag next to him talking in an American accent and looking at a brochure one of the FISMs had given him. I couldn't make out what they were saying but after he left the staff member told me that he used to live in Dublin and that he had returned from the US but didn't have anywhere to stay. When she left me she went to the older guy late fifties early sixties who was sitting on his own eating. She crouched down to ask how he was and engaged in a lot of eye contact. I didn't listen and turned slightly to give him privacy. [I thought about eye contact and posture but again, wondered if the staff used the same NVB with international customers especially older men, I am going to ask this in some way in the interview].

When he left two customers old-school hippies came in the man pushing the woman who was in a wheelchair. They looked a lot dirtier than many of the other customers. He ordered the food fish mash and peas and brought over some horse-radish cream for her. I didn't know if they were a couple but I thought they might be.

At this point a man who had been sorting out his credit with XXXX came over to ask for 20 cents, [[I didn't know what to do like earlier I am a participant

observer, but does that mean that I get involved by giving money, my instinct was not to as I thought it might affect my role. Was I right I don't know I will have to read up on this some more]]?

Then a young African woman came in with her baby in a pram, she smiled at everyone, it was really nice to see I don't know why but it was. [[thinking about it now as I am writing up my notes I think that it is because I haven't seen much smiling by customers to date]] then she came towards my table and a staff member said she would get her some food.

Man from the Philippines, he was charging his phone and drinking tea. Another guy asked him for some rizzlas but that was about all the interaction there was.

Young family came in they looked like any family going to a café, the little boy was one and a half - I asked the couple his age and we were playing peekaboo with him again he was beaming and it was great to see. The parents seemed very proud of him and delighted that he was smiling so much. It was really nice to witness this after the aggression of earlier.

I chose then to sit near the front door. As I was doing so the African woman was asked to move to the small bench by the front window, I am sure this was because of the buggy blocking the toilet entrance and also fire exit. But I couldn't help- be thinking that the woman might be feeling excluded, I felt she would have liked to talk to someone. As this was happening one of the young women from yesterday came in, and was looking for a pen she was trying to fill in an application form but I don't know what for. As she was leaving she smiled at me and chatted to one of the FISMs as she was bringing up her tea to the pass. As she was leaving the young couple with the boy were also getting ready to leave. The CS was beginning to thin out as it was now around 3:20pm. Another guy from yesterday came and sat next to me with a tea. He was looking much more dishevelled than yesterday and I wondered what might have happened to him in the day or the night before. He didn't look great. XXXX tapped on the window and I slid by him gazing into his tea and rubbing his face. As I came to the outside door XXXX asked me if I was ok from earlier- the commotion. I said that I was fine. I asked if it often got to that level and she said it can do. I was talking mainly to XXX as I think that XXXX is not too interested in having me there. XXX said that the incident was pretty serious that the customer will be barred for a long time following a debrief at the staff meeting and that if the customer could have that she would have 'reefed her'.

The Nigerian FISM looked very annoyed with the temporary staff member on the toilet door when I came back in I think she hadn't cleaned the toilet from the last visitor. I wondered whether the young temporary worker had much intercultural competence as he said: 'I don't think he likes me.' As I see it, the

Nigerian man views the relationships in work as work not building friendships as I did not see him talking to anyone or smiling although he did raise a thumb and smile at me when I waved at him when he came back down from lunch.

At the very end I was chatting to an older Irish guy about the weather and that it could snow in March I told him about the Cheltenham festival when the gold cup was cancelled in March because of Snow. He patted me on the back and said nice talking to you as he left. I went upstairs got my coat XXXX was talking to some of her colleagues about the earlier event I said goodbye she thanked me for the tea gain I went and said goodbye to XXXX and XXXX and left by the front door. I wondered what lay in store for the night XXX and his girlfriend who had confronted XXX and also how low one might spiral and the outcomes of doing so were.

Observation 3 15th March time: 11:30-12:30

Location: Coffee shop

Comments on mobile phone voice recorder as waiting for doors to open:

I came back to the Coffee shop after my break and my audiotaped interview from 9am-10am that morning. Doors opened at 11:35 am. I waited outside with customers. There were a number of men, a young couple a man with his child an Arabic man and a Romanian woman with two children. As we were going in the woman who had been with the man had gone for a smoke she asked me if I was in the queue and I said 'go ahead'. [I wonder if queuing and not jumping queues is important and the cultural implications of misunderstanding this behaviour is important?]. As I was entering the Arabic man was holding back I got the sense that he was not a usual visitor and was waiting to talk to the door staff. One FISM was talking to the Romanian woman about times and pointing to the handout she had given the customer. The man with the child (about nine or ten years of age) was directed across the road to the housing First office opposite, his child followed him over. I said hello to the FISMs and then went inside.

It immediately seemed a lot louder than the last morning I was there. A little bit more chaotic perhaps. I went upstairs and put my coat away said hello to a couple of staff members as I was going upstairs who I had not seen earlier. I then went back downstairs. I went over to get a cup of tea and had a quick word with XXXX about racing tips for the Cheltenham festival. I then chose the seat nearest the information desk and next to the toilet entrance. It was busy but not as busy as the first observation. The weather was really nice outside, it is

the first really warm day we have had and it is mid-March! [could that have something to do with the smaller numbers inside the coffee shop?].

I recognise three members of staff from last week (then one staff member came in at 12pm to start at 1pm. I wonder how much the staff changes each week and if there is still continuity. I didn't recognise the other staff members although I did interview XXXX this morning.

I began to look around. Opposite me were the woman and man from outside who had asked me if I was in the queue. There was also the young man with the scar from last week and his friend, along with his friend from the other day. As I was observing them two young women came in and said hello, followed by an older Man who also spoke to the group. He went up to the Pass and got tea and a scone and came and sat behind this group - the table nearest the door. One of the women I recognised from last Friday afternoon as she was the woman who was filling in the application form. The two women were carrying largish handbags and engaged in pleasantries then went to the pass to get tea. I observed the woman who asked me about the queue a little more closely as I thought that she might be a little intoxicated outside. She seemed to be as she was swaying a little and had problems focussing a little and it also sounded like she was slurring her words although I was slightly too far away to tell for sure. They all seemed to know each other well and were having a laugh. One of the younger guys was on his mobile and charging it at the same time. He was shouting across to XXXX who had obviously given him a number: Are you sure it is the right number. She replied that she thought it was. A few seconds went by he was still waiting for a reply ' XXXX, 086 yeah' XXXX asked him not to shout he said sorry then she said she'd look it up. At this point XXXX became quite focussed on this group using a lot of eye contact- frequent glances over as the man with the scar and the woman outside did appear to be intoxicated in some way. She also glanced at XXXX next to me and XXXX at the door who had come in from the alcove when she heard the raised voices. XXXX came over to the help desk and looked at the computer but neither of them said anything. After a moment XXXX went back. It all quietened down a little and moments later the guy with the scar got a phone call which one of the women answered and called him back he was heading to the food pass. He got the phone and started talking to someone. [It appears a little more hectic today a lot louder also. Is the later 11:30 am start on Wednesdays a contributory factor??].

Directly opposite me was a young guy wearing a Parks style olive green coat. He was very tall and lean with curly hair and glasses. He was busy writing notes with a cup of tea in front of him. When another man came to sit next opposite him he briefly glanced up but did not acknowledge him. He looked a little nervous and I wondered about his background. [Was he someone with health issues? He looked a little out of place and definitely vulnerable.] Next to me on the other side of the entrance to the corridor of the toilet was an older man who looked intoxicated with alcohol. XXXX who was the toilet supervisor began to talk to him and she crouched down to do this I noticed this technique when she was talking to someone on Friday. [Again I wonder about the cultural difficulties this may bring, it seems like a very Irish or at least Western communication style. I wonder how other cultures might react to this non-verbal behaviour/] XXXX then went over to the information desk and looked up a number on the internet before ringing a number and beckoning the man over to talk to whoever she had rung. He spoke briefly and then went back over to XXXX who had returned to her position. He looked frustrated but not with XXXX She was asking him a number of questions but I couldn't hear what exactly.

A middle aged man 45-50 then came over to my table where none else was seated:

Man-: 'Alright if I sit here? '

Me- no problem work away

Man: still standing 'just to let you know I am gay though.' (These were not his exact words as I cannot remember the introductory clause)

Me: no problem at all

Man: sitting down- nah I'm only messing with you, XXX is my name [this is a very common slagging device when meeting people for the first time in Ireland]

Me- Hi XXXX I'm Martin

We shook hands.

XXXX then said sorry that he had taken his top dentures out to eat the scone. I said no problem. [I then to my shame thought about saliva from taking the dentures out and if any health problems could be transferred e.g. the discussion about HEP B with XXXX last week. I am a real hypochondriac!!!].

Me: That scone looks lovely

XXX: "yeah they're very nice here... [pause] Do you want some money to get one?"

Me: "No I'm fine"

[I think that was so generous of him he has only just met me. He might think that I can't afford a scone as I am sitting with just a cup of tea in front of me.]

We then remained quiet for a minute or so while he put sugar in his tea- three sachets and buttered and spread jam on his scone.

I told XXXX that I was volunteering and that I was there to see how the coffee shop was and what happened in it. I said that it was a nice and bright space. He said that he was not homeless anymore but came to the CS everyday otherwise he would be stuck in his flat '24/7'. I asked him where that was and he told me where. I said where exactly as I used to live there and gave me the exact location I knew it. He said it was near an old (grange Gorman) that was now a new third level centre for DIT. This was relevant as lead in to a lengthy discussion of his landlord who was trying to get them out of the flats because he wanted to convert it back in to a house. XXXX said 'does he think we are stupid or what?' He believed that the landlord wanted them out so he could put up rents to get new student tenants in. He wasn't annoyed by this and stated it as a matter of fact. Although he then went on to say that he was annoyed by the fact that the Landlord had asked him to leave in front of his child as his child then asked him 'Da are we going to be homeless? I agreed with him. [It struck me as completely crass of the Landlord to say something like this in front of someone's child. parental pride of XXX important- [[didn't want to be stigmatised]]. Then XXXX went on to say that generally speaking the Landlord was OK even giving him a day's paid work to chop down trees and clear the back garden. XXXX told me he found three kittens that he first thought were rats. He was surprised his neighbours who put washing out the back window facing on to the garden hadn't seen the kittens and that he saw them within weeks of arriving.

XXXX was very personable and a real character. He broke off to say that if I ever needed his number that I should ask XXXX for it. When she didn't hear him he said it a bit Louder by an introductory: 'Here XXX, I was saying...' She

responds yeah right all the FISM seem to get on with XXXX. He also includes XXX in this and she comes over for a brief chat. She goes back to the help desk and XXX starts to talk about Sister Stan who is the founder member of Focus Ireland. He called her the sister and I asked 'do you mean sister Stan' and he said she has so many names and that she was a lovely lovely woman which he repeated a couple of times. He then called XXX back to repeat this and I saw this as his way of trying to engage with XXX I got the feeling he wanted to talk to her about something. He then shows XXX two passports of his son when he was a baby and now as a nine-year-old. 'He means the world to me' says XXX. It is a pity that (the son wasn't the age he is now when he went to Australia. He has also been to Bali. XXXX asked him if that was with his mother but I couldn't hear the reply I did catch '... his grandad...'

I am very conscious at this stage that whilst I am thoroughly enjoying the conversation I am not observing too much at this point. Reflexively; does this matter/ I am establishing rapport and beginning to interact with the customers?] [[read up on this!!!].

I grabbed the opportunity of XXXX talking to XXXX- he seemed like he wanted to talk to her about something when she asked how his son was- to observe and turn ever so slightly away from XXXX so he could continue to have what appeared to be developing into a personal conversation which I did not want to overhear. I began to talk to XXXX to break this off. We talked about the weather contributing to a lack of customers (there were about 15) she seemed to think that this was a contributory factor. She said that it was usually manic at this point.

As we were talking a few people came in an Arabic man came in and headed straight for the food counter. Another Irish man came in with a friend who looked very affluent big silver watch trendy clothes a few tattoos. He sat down and the other friend was saying very hurriedly excuse me excuse me to people in the queue to get by them and head for the toilet. He looked very flustered and appeared to be quite desperate to get to the toilet. He was quite loud and a little aggressive. XXXX seemed to calm him down and let him in to the toilet. I then looked at the Arabic man who sat near me he had a tray with Vegetable curry and a bowl of fruit a colourful knapsack with a coloured bottle of water. Another man two up from him was eating he looked to be another international customer. At this point two guys came in one very stocky looking a tracksuit and skinhead and I think they were speaking in Russian/Lithuanian a Slavic language.

They ordered dinners and sat down near the door. Back to the Arabic guy he was on his mobile phone and then started eating he didn't interact with anyone but looked very happy.

XXXX asked the guy in the toilet it was a good ten minutes at this point if he was coming out. He did eventually come out and XXXX went in to check the toilet. [I wonder had he been shooting up in there and if that was XXXX thoughts]. At this point it is becoming busier. The man who was waiting for his friend left and his friend went for food he had the curry but not much and then started on the sweet dessert with cream. Desserts seem very popular. A couple came in and ordered food. My attention was drawn back to the man who had been in the toilet who was now shouting at someone outside looking in the window. He was asked to calm down. For this whole six or seven minutes the young guy who was a friend was waiting by the toilet entrance to use it. He was really close to me and was swinging around with his bag which was getting quite close to my head. He had been checking me out a lot when I first sat down as he and his friend with the scar had last Thursday. I wondered if he disliked my presence. He continued to use frequent eye contact in the form of very frequent glances at one point even checking out my shoes. We caught each other's eyes a lot which he would break immediately. He never said anything to me.

At this point, the couple who came in were now seated opposite me and the woman went up to get knives, forks and serviettes. I noticed the man's hand go down to her purse and grip it tightly to look after it. She came back and they started eating. I mention this because almost at the same time XXXX got up to clear his plate and cup and asked me to look after his coat and bag. I said no problem. [I wondered if customers were concerned about their belongings. This is the same in any city centre café though.]

Young guy- lime green florescent t-shirt and tattoos seemed very personable a jack the lad who everyone seemed to like came in with a coffee cup XXXX asked to check it and asked him to leave it outside he said there was no 'booze' in it but he did what she asked. XXXX has a wonderful way about her with the customers. He then started complaining about a toothache and another customer feeling sorry for him gave him Ibuprofen it was too quick for the staff who wanted to stop her but they were ok about it. The young guy thanked her profusely saying it saved him from having to go back to his 'gaff' to get some painkillers. XXXX then asked him to come in to the toilet corridor where

they spoke in hushed tones about an incident in Dublin yesterday, I overheard the words 'a few punches' but deliberately turned so they had privacy.

When XXXX got back I stood up and told him it was nice meeting him he said the same and asked me my name He then said see you around and I left the CS floor. I said goodbye to DIRDRE and as I was getting my coat talked briefly to a FISM who was having lunch in the staffroom. Again, we talked about the beautiful weather which she was missing and lamenting because she was on till nine o'clock that evening down on the quay (this is the shorthand for Merchants quay another centre mainly for rough sleepers run by a different charity but which FISM's help out at. [I wonder if I should ask to go there as it did come up in the interviews earlier on that morning. I might ask].

Observation 4

Tuesday 21st March 2017

Time: 14:00- 15:00

Location: Coffee shop

I entered the coffee shop at 14:00 and was greeted warmly as always by the staff both at the door and inside. I headed upstairs and bumped into XXXX on the stairs we had a quick chat as she was heading downstairs to be on the floor. I think she was relieving a staff member for lunch. As I was heading downstairs I bumped into XXXX who was heading to the staffroom for lunch. When I got to the coffee shop floor it was a good deal busier than on Friday- the lunch period must go on to around two thirty as it began to thin out a bit around that time. It was certainly a good deal louder and there appeared to be a few people who were intoxicated or drug induced. One woman who I nearly bumped into coming from the toilet as I was heading upstairs to put my coat in the staffroom had seemed like she was affected by drugs. She was now sitting at the table near the toilet entrance and was slurring her words and looking bleary eyed she was talking quite loudly. I got a tea and looked around for a seat. [I am very conscious that taking a seat at a table may prevent someone from eating at that table, it's a very small space and people are said to queue at times to get in] bearing this in mind I sat over by the reception desk under the window. I had sat here before but only briefly, whilst the reception desk blocked some aspects of the room and some interactions between customer and staff member it did give me a good vantage point for people entering and leaving the coffee shop.

When seated I noticed three young adult males at the entrance chatting and messing with the staff on the front door. One of them was 19 possibly twenty wearing a baseball cap and hoody with earrings he could be a skater as he had that look. His friend was smoking an e-cigarette the size of a hashish pipe. They seemed to be having a good time. Their other friend was sullen looking. [Again you don't know what goes on in their life outside the coffee shop.] All the time I observed this, people were coming and going it was very busy, it seems that there is a quicker turnaround at lunchtime. The Arabic [his phenotype is Arabic] man from last week came in [it is not possible yet to find out if he is he could be Irish]. He went to the counter got his food charged his phone looked at eat his meal and then as he left he picked up a handout on the front windowsill and left. He didn't have any interactions with other customers or staff. When he left I had a look at the leaflet, they were available that day the title said that they may accept people on Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) schemes. I couldn't believe the prices ranging from 550 Euro one bed to 1,600Euro for a two bed. [Those prices would have me stretched and I am middle class in terms of income. Surely the customers cannot afford these prices? I will ask the staff at some point why they are on the windowsill.

I look back into the coffee shop floor XXXX is on floor duty today. Again, her eye contact and posture are very effective. She also comes to the front near the door twice to wake a man up she touches him lightly on the shoulder and tells him he has to wake up [I learnt from the pilot interview that this is the policy in the coffee shop and that customers are very used to this] nonetheless, XXXX does this with great sympathy and her use of touch [HAPTICS]. XXX moves to the door to talk briefly to staff there as does XXXX I think they may be concerned about XXX. Again those customers who know of her situation have left the whole table empty. PROXEMICS as a method of communication for those entering the CS space. All the customers are moving to other tables if there were spaces there.

As I move from observing this a young adult male walks past black tracksuit/cycling top with a small knapsack and cycling helmet attached he is smiling as he leaves. He looks like any other student leaving a coffee shop.

One young adult male moves to the reception desk- he's in his early teens I think and is very intoxicated he tries making a phone call but drops the phone XXX comes over to his vicinity but doesn't say anything but directs gaze frequently towards him and his friend who has now joined him. The friend picks

up the phone and dials for him but the call is unsuccessful. They move to the table and gather up their things. The younger man keeps dropping his gloves and his friend picks them up for him. The younger guy is now trying to finish his orange juice from his carton but is struggling somewhat. His friend says 'comon just neck it' as they are leaving the older man who was trying to sleep at the door and who also appears intoxicated says to the young guy who is not intoxicated 'thanks for earlier and thanks for staying on the corner [I assume he was waiting to see if he was ok an altercation perhaps?] you're a gent' the young adult replies 'no bother' they kind of high five each other and all leave at the same time. It is really hectic around the door and I can't help feeling that if it did all of a sudden become violent or people turned aggressive it would be very difficult for FISM's to manage the situation. [Manage is a term the participants used a great deal in my first group interview with staff members last week. [I wonder if the staff think it was chaotic.].

A FISM from across the road in the 'housing first' building has been in deep conversation with three customers a woman and what could be her boyfriend as well as an older woman- the mother perhaps? Again a good deal of eye contact in the communication and some gesturing. He then moves outside and across the road to make a phone call on their behalf?

An African customer comes in swiftly he stands near the toilet then looks as if he's asking for directions and then leaves stopping briefly to say something to the staff on the door. It is a little quieter now so I move to the door to have a brief conversation with the staff there. I ask them if they get a lot of international customers they ask me if I am referring to the numbers or if they have dealings either I say both. They reply that there is a large amount of international customers but that the level of English plus time pressure makes it difficult to communicate with them. Even at the door some of these customers just present the staff with their passports rather than giving the details required to enter the coffee shop. [Both from these unstructured conversations and the interviews it is becoming apparent that the staff don't have the time to work through the perceived language barriers and also that many international customers don't voluntarily engage with staff members. They mention again using XXX their Polish colleague sometimes as an interpreter [[the role of cultural ambassadors is taking shape in my analysis it is something I will have to think about in more detail how is it logistically possible?].

Now that the space is quieter, I notice that XXXX has been sitting with an older customer for a good five minutes. It must be great as a customer to know that someone is interested in you, he talks about getting a few food staples like bread and milk. He looks as if he is happy that XXXX has shown an interest in him.

XXXX comes up to make a phone call there is no answer and she goes back to her seat waiting to use the toilet. A group comes in I think they might be travellers. They get tea one woman asks if it is ok to get tea but I then realise she is not with this group but another man they sit quietly with their tea. A man who I recognise from twice last week leaves with a younger man I saw on my first visit the check me out quickly with eye contact and then say something it might not be about me but it might be. [I hope I am not annoying customers by my presence, as I am not clearly helping out why am I there they might be thinking. Am I coming to saturation point? I might be as I am not seeing a great deal of contact with International customers I might have to observe elsewhere maybe on the street at night. I might contact HR later and see if this is a possibility. I do not wish to be intrusive on these customers' everyday lives]. Meanwhile XXXX and her Chinese colleague behind the hot food pass are joking laughing and smiling with the three 'traveller' customers [reflexivity- I am categorising a lot in my descriptions] with the Chinese staff member saying 'merci beaucoup' and the male customer laughing at this.

XXXX is called back to the phone by XXXX she has an arrangement for a bed in place as she is walking to the phone though she gives me a hard stare and makes a face at me. When she sits back down and I am trying to observe the rest of the room she I keep catching her eye and she doesn't look happy about this. I am feeling uncomfortable about making her uncomfortable and I decide to remove myself from the observation. I take my tea cup along with one on the window sill and bring them up to the pass. A quick chat with the catering staff, especially XXXX about his luck at Cheltenham. I leave the floor 14 minutes earlier than planned.

Back up in the staffroom I chat for ten minutes with two of the XXXX about XXXX it turns out she was unhappy with one of them yesterday afternoon calling her a 'fucking bitch' so XXXX removed herself from the interaction. This leads us on to TCI which was discussed in the interview last week and how important it is in training for the coffee shop floor, also the importance of NV communication. I said that I thought they were very good at it. They asked if I

was lecturer and I confirmed this, and said NVC was one area I lecture in reaffirming my hope to deliver training in this and other areas of intercultural communication. They talked about the importance of NVC and mentioned the high percentage of communication that is carried out non-verbally. They seem to know a lot about this is it from Sociology or social work XXXX going to do a Masters in social work in September and the other XXXX has a Master's in sociology from five years ago. [I will ask this directly in the interviews with the coffee shop floor staff next week]. We had some more general chat on jobs in universities and then they had to leave as their lunch break was up. I had a brief chat with one of their colleagues who is a volunteer three hours every Wednesday and how rewarding it was for her. I went downstairs said goodbye to everyone and XXX and last confirming I would be in tomorrow for interviews with the catering staff.

Observation 5

Monday 3rd April Time: 11:15- 12:15 location: coffee shop

As I entered the coffee shop a young Irish mother early twenties was talking to the door staff asking if it was ok to come in. I said hello to the door staff and entered in behind the mother with her young daughter. As I came through the door there was a Chinese woman (I soon discovered that she was from Malaysia) she looked very worried and had a number of bags in front of her she looked to be waiting to speak to someone. I went upstairs the FISM on the toilet door didn't know who I was so I explained briefly and let myself through the hall door to go upstairs to the staffroom. [I wondered if she was a temporary member of staff and how many temps the staff worked with each week and if this was good for continuity. I knocked on the manager's door and asked him if it was ok to observe today he said it was no problem. He looked relaxed and we talked briefly about his holiday in Jamaica.

I went downstairs and got a tea from the counter. As I turned around it was quiet and each table was occupied so I got the table by the counter facing the wall it wasn't ideal and I made a mental note not to sit there again if could be helped. It seemed a lot quieter than normal but as the hour went by the CS filled and got a little more chaotic each time. There were ten people quickly rising to 14 by the time I sat down, apart from the mother and daughter who was now sitting at the family table and being looked after by a FISM floor staff member, there was one other woman who was with another man on the

table next to me. The floor staff member was talking to them about where to go for emergency accommodation as there appeared to be a problem in the place they were staying. As always the floor staff member was very attentive to the couple and engaged again in very good eye contact the couple were very anxious and she dealt with their problem very sympathetically. She went back and forth from the couple to the reception desk a couple of times and made one phone call and looked up the computer twice. As she was doing this three men were waiting to use the toilet one of them a little exacerbated saying 'you'd think they'd have more than one toilet'.

I looked around the CS at the front door at the table under the galls partition were three men one looked to be Russian/ Polish.

Two Irish men were chatting young lads over tea and another couple of men were on another table but not really chatting save the odd comment. One of them I recognised from my first observation he was the man with what appeared to be forms for perhaps social security. He didn't have a bag with him today- I wondered where his belongings were. He looked a lot more tired and crestfallen than the first observation. He checked me out a couple of times and then went back to his tea. As this was happening the FISM on the floor was going back and forth to the service counter for the young woman for tea and a pudding for her and her daughter. The woman was then blowing on the dessert and trying to get her daughter to eat who wasn't interested in the slightest and was wriggling a bit in her arms.

I didn't recognise two of the FISMs and wondered if they were temps. Then XXX and man from Vietnam were slagging each other behind the counter whilst getting set up for lunch and serving the remaining breakfast I looked at the rashers and white pudding and thought about having some. The menu was chilli con carne and vegetable curry both with rice large portion 1 euro 60, small eighty cents. I then glanced back to the room and the young guy who used to check me out a lot came and sat on the table next to me facing me checked me out again but didn't say anything. Next thing a guy came up and must have asked him for money as the young guy gave him some the older guy standing said "gracias" and something else I couldn't catch but definitely with an Italian accent. H must have been apologising because the younger man said 'no bother you're grand. Her came up and stood right next to me and ordered in good English the whole transaction went smoothly and he sat down with his tea.

As he did so he looked over to the FISM dealing with the couple and called across that he needed some help with something but I could not make out what. The staff member said that she was dealing with someone else in a very polite way and that he was now third in line. [I wondered if Irish customers did this and I will ask in the next set of interviews because I know that in Italian culture the attitude to queuing is very different to Ireland. [[I wonder if this annoys either the Irish customers and or the FISM and I will explore this in a little more detail as it did come up in my interview with the caterers.]] The Italian customer seemed happy enough and started to chat very happily with the other Irish customers at his table.

I was drawn back to the woman and her daughter because wan was calling out from behind the counter to ask her if she wanted a banana for her daughter. Next thing he came out with two bananas and three apples and placed them on the table. The customer thanked him a lot and there was a little bit of chat with the daughter. It was a nice scene. I felt immediately that there is a different atmosphere when young children are in the CS. At this point there were still only fourteen customers in the CS as a few of them had left and been replaced by a few more. There was an empty table immediately behind me and the FISM who had been dealing with the couple beckoned the next customer n the queue to come and sit with her there.

It was a little difficult to observe as they were behind me so I sat sideways to observe as unobtrusively as possible. It looked tom be serious the FISM engaged in a lot of eye contact but so did the customer I am pretty sure he was from Poland. I could hear the accent but not what they were saying exactly. He seemed very annoyed but it could have been Polish facial expressions which can sometimes look like this. The FISM went away came back after a quick phone call and chatted briefly he seemed ok with what was said if not entirely happy. [I am going to ask her about facial expressions if I get the chance if not on Wednesday when I come back for more interviews.]

An older Irish man is at the counter now wearing a dark blue blazer and khaki trousers he gets two glasses of water and sits at the table next to me facing me. He looks either very hungover or still drunk. He then asks the FISM to get him a roll and rasher and roll with white pudding she does this very patiently but I thought he was rude to her. [I wonder if the staff usually do this as I haven't seen it done apart from with families when the parents stay seated at

the table and FISMs help them out. He got his food and barely acknowledged the staff member for doing this for him.

An older Irish guy with glasses comes in and says hello to the older man eating his rasher roll. They shake hands but the man eating doesn't look to happy to be talking to anyone. The other man gets tea and sits at the table next to the man eating and facing me also. They chat a little and the man with the tea notices that I don't have any tea left and offers me some from his pot. I [am struck by the generosity again I have noticed this between customers a lot now either with food or change for food. There must be a sense of we're all in this together.] I have never seen this in a coffee shop that is run on commercial grounds with members of the 'general public'] the younger man comes back who likes to check me out and is sitting waiting to talk to the floor staff member. He gets up and as he does a Polish man comes with food and starts to sit in his place the other two older men look at him and through gestures no verbal communication at all he discerns that he shouldn't sit there. He slides over the younger man comes back and sits down. Meanwhile the Polish man starts eating his chilli but nothing is said between him and the Irish men. The older Irish guys are talking a bit now. The man with the rasher sandwich seems to have perked up a bit.

I look to the door and the Romanian man who is sometimes dishevelled comes in looking very dishevelled today. I am often left thinking I wonder what type of night some of the customers have had. I had a warm night in a comfortable bed. As an observer I am beginning to feel a bit guilty about my role and I wonder if I will be contributing to Focus Ireland, with this research.

Man with baseball cap runners and blue t-shirt heads to the hall door via the toilet entrance....

As I am contemplating this an older woman comes in wearing a pink cardigan and blue trousers and is stopping at tables and talking to the customers everyone customer and staff all seem to know her and warm to her. As she moves towards me I know that she has noticed me and I start to think that she maybe Sister Stan the founder of FI. She talks to quite a few more customers and staff and then gets tea at the counter I am right by the spoons as he puts sugar into her tea she says hello and I state my name and then go on to tell her whop I am and why I'm there. She listens very intently and did not know that I was conducting research. I tell her how great the staff is and she is very

interested in what I have to say. She is very encouraging and suggests a number of readings I might consider. After two or three minutes this is a long time for conversation in the coffee shop approaching lunch she moves off to talk to some more staff. I suddenly realise it has become very crowded at the counter as people are getting food and chatting again it is becoming a bit chaotic but with some order to it that everyone seems to understand. I do a quick head count twenty-three. I decide to leave as I have mentioned I won't get in the way of people getting their dinner. I get up to put my cup away and immediately someone sits in my place not a moment too soon.

Before I left, XXXX arrived in and I literally bumped into him as I was putting my cup away. We chatted for a couple of minutes about his boy, the school holidays and how he wouldn't be going to the Phoenix Park Zoo with him because he couldn't get him off the PlayStation. There followed a general discussion about the youth of today and technology!

Observation 6

Thursday 13th April 2017 Time: 10:30- 11:30 Location: coffee shop

I was waiting outside and the coffee shop didn't open until 10:35. I didn't get down to the coffee shop floor until 10:40 and stayed until 10:50.

As I was waiting to enter there was a big group- 6/7 men, waiting outside sitting and standing on the step next to the entrance but before the CS opened four of them left. Two older men and two younger men went in after giving their names. There was an International couple with their child in a pram. I am not sure from where, they had a Middle Eastern phenotype- perhaps?? Before I entered a young man wearing a Pringle sweater and jeans a small rucksack with water in the side pocket asked if there was a queue. He sounded Polish [my only way of ascribing identity is by phenotype and accent is it not ideal. When I can check nationalities with the staff I do. But it is not something they ask at the door, so they cannot tell me if the customer is new]. He gives his name and enters. He looks like an Italian tourist who has come to the wrong place. He looks very nervous and young.

As I get to the info desk I chat to a XXXX about the mix up with the interview yesterday that couldn't take place because of the importance to the staff of the topics being covered. He is very apologetic but I assure him there is no

need to be as the job and duties come first before my research. I then realise that the young nervous looking man is behind me as I notice XXXX's brief eye contact with him and I move away from the desk promptly. I looked back briefly and the man looked very nervous. I would say it was his first time in the CS.

I head upstairs as I am going through the door to the stairs the FISM on the toilet door asks me if I am ok. I say yes and tell him I am heading upstairs and I enter the code. He realises that I am not a customer. I recognise the man as a temp from last week the man with the baseball cap and blue t-shirt with the tattoo. I head upstairs and put my coat in the staff room. When coming downstairs I meet XXXX who is also very apologetic. I assure her that it was ok. She tells me that she had a week off to do her degree which she is completing part time. The appears to be encouragement by FI for their staff to study third level and fourth level programmes, it must stem from the advocacy ethos which is ingrained in the culture values of the charity. We laugh about how difficult it is to get work done when you come home from a day's work. I was reminded of my part-time Master's and it came flooding back, especially the procrastination.

I go down on to the CS floor and start as always by getting a cup of tea and chat briefly to the caterers I note the sweet desserts the caterer: everyone fancies a bit of sweet as a treat'.

I sit by an older Irish man by the entrance to the toilet. He asks for a cloth to wipe up spilled tea next to me a FISM on the floor says 'no problem that's what I'm here for', as he wipes up the tea. The customer says hello to me. He finishes up his tea and checks his sandwich and heads out. It is a nice morning out of the window. It is early yet but not as busy as other mornings. It is pay day and the weather is nice this obviously contributes to the lack of customers. I scan the floor. There are two older men. A man on his own who I have noticed a number of times an older customer always well groomed. I imagine that he is not a rough sleeper. He drinks his tea in peace as always and chats infrequently to the customer facing him. He also scans me as he has done previously. There are two other Irish men chatting away, I think they are waiting for help. The man who was next to me is now using the phone.

On the small table next to me near the food counter is a man eating dessert and drinking coffee. He stands up and he is enormous I think immediately that

he would make a great forward in basketball. He talks loudly across the food pass towards XXXX and I realise that he is Polish. He sits back down and asks a FISM something (the staff member is the temp from last week with the tattoo and blue t-shirt) I couldn't hear what. The staff member tries hard to communicate with him he uses eye contact and gestures **OCULESICS AND KINESICS**. The FISM is trying to tell the man that he should go up to the information desk where XXXX can help him. He doesn't appear to understand I think he has minimal English. The FISM realises this and gestures to go up and uses the term 'GOOGLE it'. This is clearly a universal term as the Polish customer nods his head saying ah. [It must be so difficult to get access to services if you have little or no English. The FISM's are so helpful and diligent in trying to make themselves understood. But I wonder how many customers fall through the net?] The FISM smiles at him. He comes back to stand by the toilet entrance and the Polish man goes to the info desk. I chat briefly to the FISM and tell him who I am and why I am there. We also talk about his temping and that he will be heading down to Merchants Quay at four. We talk about the long day they have and he says he prefers it when it is busy. I say that I recognise him from last week. He tells me his name is Keith. There is one other woman who is a temp looking after the dockets - XXX has directed a customer to her. [It must be good for the customers and FISM's when the temps return often for continuity]. I look towards the info desk and XXX has obviously helped the Polish man who looks happy as he is smiling and extends his hand which XXX shakes. **HAPTICS**.

I look towards the door and sitting at the table under the glass partition to the doorway is an older woman and what could be her daughter. The daughter had been at the food pass when I was getting my tea. She had milk coffee and two slices of chocolate cake with cream which looked lovely. The older woman was facing me and she looked upset. I thought that she might be the Malaysian woman from last week who was with her partner then. I found out from XXXX that she was. XXXX came over to talk to her whilst her daughter went to the toilet. When she came back an A & I staff member came downstairs and they got up to go up for their appointment. The older woman looked worried. [I wonder whether the daughter was in fact an interpreter?? I make a mental note to ask XXXX, which I later forget to do!].

It is still very quiet. One of the assistant managers is now working the floor. And suddenly it starts to get very busy. There is always a constant ebb and flow in the CS. [[Trans migratory- a metaphor for the customers lives

perhaps.]] Next to me is the couple with their baby who I took for Eastern European or Arabic I am not sure. They have finished their coffees and are waiting to see someone from A & I. the baby catches my eye and I wave at her and she gives a huge smile the couple smile at her and I smile at them and ask how old the baby is. The man answered me but it took a couple of attempts to find out how old she was mainly because of his pronunciation. Although he seemed to understand me very well. The baby was five months old. [Again within the space of a few minutes the language issue in this case PRONUNCIATION is an issue] [[I wonder if FISMs recognise the different language problems i.e. in this case it is not a lack of English but Pron that prevents this customer being understood]].

As I am mulling over this I notice one of the FISMS glancing over to me, my table is next to the family table and there are an Irish couple and me at it. I realise that another family is coming in and get up and ask the FISM if she'd like me to move she says yes and I move to the small table next to the knives and forks. The FISM comes over to the Irish couple and asks in a very polite way if they could move also but the woman mutters under her breath which I can hear because she is right next to me as she is getting up' every fucking time this happens' [it strikes me that not two minutes ago she was smiling at the other baby and saying she was 'lovely'. However, when another family impacted on her she got quite annoyed very quickly. Annoyance does seem to bubble under the surface of a lot of customers. It must be difficult for the FISMs as it feels like walking on egg shells to me. [[That is quite a judgemental statement. I wonder if it is worth pursuing in the interviews???]]. [It is a charity which focuses on families though I wonder how much this is a common attitude with the customers without children and if it is universal.].

As the other family settle in to the table it is apparent that they are not Irish. I am assuming this based on phenotype and accent. There is a young mother with her young son it turns out he is three months old when I ask the mother later. Also at the table are what I assume to be her mother and father. I assume they are Italian as the lilt and words have an Italian flavour. FISMs are very attentive and it is clear that once again language is a big issue in this encounter. It seems that only the young mother has a smattering of English. [LANGUAGE ABILITY AND GENERATIONAL APPETITUDE]]. The staff member says that they have an appointment for 12pm (it's 11:05) and if they want to wait they can have some coffee. Also that they would be dealing with XXXX and a translator. [This interests me. I need to find out how often

translators are used and where they are from. [[It could be an avenue we explore in training even through the university with recent graduates in translation.]] It is obvious that the three adults are struggling with this. Immediately the FISM crouches down in front of the younger adult woman and also gets out the mobile phone to show the time. She deals with the situation very well modulating tone and pace and the customer eventually understands. The FISM member repeats the offer from tea and coffee plus some cereal and juice. [This basic lexis is difficult for the younger adult whilst the older adults seem to find it impossible to follow what is going on.]. [[I am reminded of the role of younger immigrants/ refugees in an interpretation situation and I need to look up some reading on this]]. At this point the young man from the young couple at the table next to them gets up and moves over to begin translating which the FISM utilises very effectively. The FISM waits patiently whilst each sentence is translated. [It is good that it is quiet I wonder if the FISM would have the time to do this if not]. Eventually between two staff members and the man translating the message is disseminated and tea coffee sausages and bread are ordered and then brought to the table as well as some juice for the baby. [the importance of the roles of **KINESICS, POSTURE OCULESICS AND PARALANGUAGE** are all evident in this interaction. The more senior full time FISM deals with this extremely well, whilst the temp staff member appears a bit lost by it all. Nevertheless, she is very polite and comes back with the food which the caterers have prepared for the three adults. Once this has been delivered the FISMs move away. At this point I start waving at the baby who smiles and I ask how old he is and where they are from the family struggle with this basic introductory question. The young woman says 'my English very little' I say pointing at my chest Ireland and point to them then I try 'Italian?' still a confused look then 'Romania' they all smile at this. I leave them to eat they look more comfortable as each minute passes. It must be very hard not having the language and not understanding the system. Are they wondering even if they have to pay for this food? [I then had a sudden thought what about basic menu food items printed in other languages? Then- but of course this assumes literacy it might be something to point out at some stage along with the cultural ambassadors].

The young couple next to them are greeted by and A & I staff member who has just come on to the floor and they head up to one of the rooms as the man leaves he says goodbye to the family. I wonder if he is Romanian as well. Almost immediately the table is cleared and a woman who had just entered and been

waiting at the window comes over with her baby in a pram and sits down. I notice the tattoo of the cross on her wrist as she settles her baby. Almost in unison with this another A & I staff member who had appeared escorts another woman with a very young baby in her arms upstairs. At this point there are three buggies almost blocking the toilet and stairs door, so the staff ask the Romanian family and the woman with the baby in her arms if they can put the buggies in the hallway. It is getting very busy now. A group of four young Irish customers over my shoulder are telling a story of a confrontation one of them had the night before, but they are not being overly loud, they could be in any café telling the story and they seem to be really enjoying the story. The FISM on the floor looks over to them but she doesn't say anything and they glance a few times in my direction and at the Romanian family also.

The manager comes down to the floor to help with buggies and is assisting a floor member of staff retrieve something from one of the buggies in the hallway. It is a big lime green bag and they give it to the Irish woman with her baby it has Formula in it and she begins to make some in a bottle for her baby.

As I am looking at this another A & I staff member who had come onto the floor moments ago is greeting an African couple at the info desk. I had noticed them through the window waiting outside about five minutes ago and I wondered why they had not come in. initially the African woman speaks and then the man he offers his hand and the FISM shakes it and then the woman's. The importance of Haptics within African culture and Polish culture the man earlier is evident and I note this as another NVB to perhaps cover in the training. I notice the use of eye contact by the FISM and lack of it by the woman more so by the man. The woman does appear to acquiesce a little to what I assume is her partner- **VALUES (MASCULINE CULTURES) AND BEHAVIOUR**. The FISM is dealing with these customers very well and it all appears to be going well. All of a sudden the place is emptying the four young lads have gone. Also the other Irish men at the table immediately behind me go and the two men who have used the toilet are also leaving. The customers have dwindled to 8 from about 17. I look at the clock and realise I have been here for an hour and ten minutes. I decide to leave before the rush for lunch starts. I chat briefly to XXX about the racing and football, then head upstairs. Before I do one older Irish customer wearing a woolly hat who had been seated across from me on the table opposite the pass asked a FISM to ask me if I was leaving my table. He had waited to see if I was going. I am beginning to realise that once you are

seated that customers don't take other customers spaces unless it is clear they are leaving.

I head upstairs and say hello to XXXX again I had greeted her five minutes previously when she came up to the food counter but she began to chat to a young Irish customer when he jokingly asked 'what do you recommend?' I commented on the amount of families that were in and how there was a steady stream. She told me that this was probably due to the bank holiday Easter weekend and the fact that some hotels require homeless customers who they accept when it is not busy, to leave. I was aware of this through the news but the physical result of this today leaves me with my jaw open I say to XXX that I couldn't do that if I were a hotelier and she agrees. I say goodbye to her and then XXXX and head downstairs. As one of the A & I team are still on the floor I explain who I am and what I am doing here and ask the nationality of the young couple that she has just finished with. She is very reluctant understandably so and I assure her it is just for training purposes and that I do not want to know any details other than nationality, I ask were they Romanian on a hunch and she confirms this. On seeing this the FISM assistant manager asks if the observation was good I suppose to confirm with the A & I staff member that I was ok to talk to. It was very good of her to indicate this - the staff are so welcoming and open to aiding me in my research. I move to her and talk briefly about the hotels and whilst I admonish the hoteliers she blames the system of using privatised hotels. [Amongst all of this is the wider issue in ethnography of political ethnography look it up!!!]. I agree and leave I feel today has been really fruitful and know that interviews with the A & I staff will also be extremely useful when they are able to see me of course. The staff are always extremely busy!!!

Observation 7 Thursday 13th July, 2017 Time: 10:00- 12:45 Location: Focus Ireland Sligo

I rang the doorbell at 9:50 am and the manager XXXX answered the door. As with the coffee shop in Dublin, there are cameras outside and inside the premises. However, there is no coffee shop here in Sligo. Customers are usually seen by appointments but they can also drop in and a FISM will see them if they are available. There is a reception counter with computer and telephone. The décor is very nice- grey and white walls and a black leather sofa by the reception desk. Before going upstairs XXX shows me the toilet and the consultation room at the back of the building.

We head upstairs there are three floors but I only see two of them. At the front of the building is one office I am introduced to a second colleague who is the Advice and information officer (A & I) she greets me with a warm friendly smile and I shake her hand and briefly chat about the Coffee shop in Dublin where she has worked, so it appears has the manager who worked in Dublin for a number of years. Both are from Sligo and when the Sligo office opened then years ago the manager returned to Sligo the A & I officer has been here for seven years.

We leave this office then at the stairs there is a sink with coffee making facilities and a microwave. I then go up one step into the back office where I meet XXX who works with another colleague in this office. He is responsible for home visits mainly with single people but he does deal with families as well. Because of this his job entails a great deal of driving as he covers all of County Sligo. He informs me that as this is the only FI centre in the West that the centre gets many queries from Donegal and as far as Galway. As I go into the office another colleague is behind me taking her coat off she is younger than the other staff and she informs me that she is on placement and that this is her last day, she tells me that it has been really interesting to work there for her three-month placement. There is some chat and slagging with the other staff and I lose the opportunity to ask her what she was studying.

The office is a good size and I am given a desk to sit at. Facing me on the wall is a whiteboard with all the names of FI customers who are residing in FI accommodation in Sligo. The names have starting dates for when they took up residence. There is also another list of names two surnames of which are not Irish, one looks to be Polish.

The manager informs me that I will be able to sit in with some of the international customers that one of the A & I team has appointments with. I give her the informed consent form along with the plain language statement. She says that the language is too difficult for the customers and I said that I realise this and that this was for the staff, but perhaps her colleague could paraphrase the information when asking orally for permission for me to sit in on the appointments. She heads off to give this to her colleague and when the colleague comes back she informs me that the first customer has missed the ten o'clock appointment and that she will ask the Polish customer when he arrives for his 10:30 appointment if I might sit in. [the staff are so accommodating and very open to research being conducted in Sligo. Again the

ethics of FI plays a large part in the ethics of the FI staff- transparency advocacy but also respect for the customer.] This particular colleague fills in the informed consent form on the spot and hands it back to me. I remind her that the interviews and observations are entirely voluntary and that if she doesn't wish to take part then that is perfectly understandable. She tells me that she is happy to take part. She then gives me a quick background to her work and very interestingly tells me that some of her customers are from the Direct Provision centre in Sligo [this is where refugees are initially placed, but they could be there for a number of years] one of which I might meet today she is from Africa. She informs me that she and the male colleague I am sharing the office with inform me that they deal with Irish customers as well as Polish, African, Chinese and English customers. They also talk briefly about the Irish English some of the customers have, particularly referring to the Polish customer I might meet. It is now 10:25 and the doorbell rings.

I head downstairs with the FI staff member and I head into the toilet quickly whilst she is asking the customer for permission for me to sit in on their meeting. He looks very serious. As I come out of the toilet the staff member tells me the customer does not wish me to sit in, so I head back upstairs

I ask XXX about the names and he informs me that these are the people who are in short term accommodation homeless hostels etc. who are hoping to get some longer term accom. He tells me that currently out of the twenty-five customers he is supporting six are not originally from Ireland. I note that he uses the term "non-Irish" but immediately says "although I don't like the term" [this is an "official term in that it is used by the CSO in their census statistics reports].

The informal conversation is around his background as he notes my English accent and asks me where in England I am from I tell him about Cheltenham and he tells me that he had a friend living there once and that he has been to Cheltenham. He notes my strong English accent despite my being in Ireland for twenty-seven years. I note that I detect his English accent but it is slighter than mine. He has been here for twenty years and he tells me that he is originally from Middlesbrough. We talk a little more about England and he informs me he drives fifty km each way each day if he is in the office as he lives in Clare. Obviously, he drives more if he is on visits- it's a good deal of driving each week. As we talk the telephone rings a lot, I note that he is answering the phone today and he tells me that the staff try and share this out

and that it just happens to be him today that is answering the telephone. As he answers he might shout across the hallway to his colleagues to tell them who it is before transferring. We then talk about the fact that he is in the office today to catch up on paperwork to document all the meetings he has had in the week. He informs me that documentation is very important in FI even if a meeting doesn't take place it is documented along with phone calls and email communications [this strikes me as an important part of the service for customers so that both customer and staff member are clear in their dealings with each other and that if there is confusion documentation can be referred to clear up matters]. XXX shows me the information that is filled in about new customers, some of it is quite sensitive I note and he tells me that he is often surprised at how much customers are willing to share with him. He informs me that from his point of view it is "important to customers that staff are listening to them and show them respect" he then believes that the staff then "gain their trust" [he mentions trust a couple of times. He believes that often this is an advantage that FI staff have over social workers who may be seen as authority figures- this is the term I use to clarify his point and he agreed with me about this term. He cited examples where he gained trust with a family and the child gave him a hug and a high five in front of the social worker who commented on the fact that she had never seen that before in the boy. The FISM recounts how he bluntly replied that that was because he "listened rather than talked at the customers" at which the social worker was a little miffed. But he reaffirms that this is often the difference especially if the social workers are young. [I believe he was referring to the need by the social worker to assert some form of authority and to show that they have knowledge but that this was then counterproductive with customers.] XXX also believes that as well as trusting the FISMs the customers also see them as their last chance to help them find accommodation. Some of the information he has to fill in is around mental health or alcohol abuse a lot of the customers suffer from mental health problems.

We go on to some more small talk and I also explain the background to my research to him. As this conversation is continuing, the manager comes in to suggest that she and the colleague might do an interview now from 11am to 12pm and rather than in the afternoon and then I can observe two appointments between 12-1pm. As we are discussing this the A&I colleague comes back from her meeting with the Polish customer and explains that some

of the information was upsetting for the Polish customer and that he did not wish to share it with anyone, we agree that the interview should go ahead now.

At 12pm the interview is just being wrapped up when XXXX knocks on the door to say that the customer has arrived for her 12pm appointment so I head downstairs to meet her. Her name is XXXX and she is from China. I reiterate to her that I will leave the observation at any time if she feels uncomfortable or does not want me to hear any personal information but she says it is ok. We are having the meeting at the front reception because they need to look at the internet and the phone is playing up. They are already on the phone as an interpreter will be helping the Chinese woman it is clear that the customer's English is quite limited. The FISM had already explained that this would be happening and that the service was provided by DIVAS who are willing to provide this service if children are involved. What I am immediately struck by is that XXX can speak at her normal speed of delivery and use terminology in the knowledge that the interpreter is at hand, it is an effective process if a little long as the FISM tells the interpreter who then speaks to the customer, the customer then speaks to the interpreter who then translates this to the FISM and so on. [This is not the first time that I feel that undergraduates at DCU might be able to help out here it is something I need to pursue]. The Chinese customer is a little reticent at first due to my presence I am sure as she engages in a number of furtive glances in my direction but she also has a lovely warm facial expression, despite her problems. The FISM member's eye contact is very good and she is very patient. The customer has eye contact consistent with Chinese speakers, who will engage but not for the same duration as Irish customers might, the eye contact is shorter with the Chinese customer. There is a misunderstanding around a piano which turns out to be a keyboard that one of the customer's children has. The customer finds this amusing and she laughs and smiles a lot at this as do I and the FISM it seems to relax the customer more in terms of my presence. It is a bit difficult because I am sitting on top of the couch in order to see over the high counter. As the appointment progresses there is a phone call to the estate agents once three properties have been identified. The FISM is conscious of the customer's needs in terms of location and type of property a house is the preferred option [I am immediately reminded of the earlier conversation about respect and this is certainly evident here] however, the FISM refers to her pressing need to find a property quickly due to safety concerns for the customer and her two children. I am not aware of the background but the FISM and customer and

interpreter clearly are. Unfortunately, the first estate agent informs everyone that the first property on the river on a good bus route and close to Sligo has just gone, it is clear from the customer's facial expressions that she is disappointed, the FISM asks the estate agent to keep her informed if any similar properties come up. Next, the FISM rings another estate agent who is not there but who will contact FISM as soon as they can. At this point the doorbell rings and another customer is let in the FISM tells her she'll be with there in a moment and lets her in to the back consultation room. As the meeting with the Chinese customer is wrapping up she puts her hands together in a praying gesture to thank the FISM she also says goodbye to me and I respond with "XIE XIE" which the customer is surprised at but I feel she likes.

I wait on the sofa as the FISM asks the customer for permission for me to observe she does this privately with the door closed which would make it easier for the customer to say no. the customer is happy for me to do so, so I come in and shake her hand, her name is XXX and I reiterate again that I will leave immediately if she or the FISM wish me to do so. I find out that she is from the Democratic Republic of Congo and that she was in the Direct Provision Centre in Sligo, also that she had been in accommodation and that she was now moving I don't know why. The purpose today was to go through a document for social security which the customer was to then take over to their office to be signed immediately after this meeting. I sit to the side of the FISM and customer about two feet away at the end of the oval table. The room is very well laid out and is relaxing, it has a box of tissues by the table and I notice a portable whiteboard in the corner this is a multipurpose room which I am sure must be used for training as well.

It is clear from the very beginning that FISM is speaking very quickly [this cd be for a number of reasons in the interview I have just conducted it was agreed by the two staff members that the African Direct provision customers appear to have the best English and that they understand the system very well. This might be why the FISM's speed of delivery is so quick. It also might be an area to work on because the staff member might not realise this.] [[I think that my background might help here in terms of ELT training in vocabulary, speed of delivery and the use of concept check questions- something to consider for the training- I will look out for this more]]. The kinesics of the customer tells me that she might not be following everything that is being said. Having said this the FISM is very patient. This is in evidence especially when the customer receives a phone call which she takes after the FISM says " do

you want to take that?" she does and culturally this wouldn't be considered good form in an Irish context but the FISM seems ok with it. Overall, her use of English is good with good understanding as well although her pron is quite weak.

The form must be filled in for DAP [check out what this means]] and the landlord, to that end the FISM checks over personal information and PPS numbers along with phone numbers. Particular care is taken with the spelling of the customer's name. The customer is then asked to sign the form at which point she asked if this means her name or signature I am not sure if the FISM understood this as she says her name which the customer appears to write out in printed form- an interesting misunderstanding I think. Overall, the FISM uses good eye contact as a technique to look for clarification. The whole process takes about fifteen minutes. The customer's facial expression is serious throughout; this could be cultural to indicate the importance of the meeting. In addition, her eye contact is quite limited. She demonstrates a good understanding of the situation and her ability to communicate effectively when she explains the confusion around her deposit and the fact that DAP took this away from her without asking for her consent. Consequently, she is querying why she has to pay the deposit and the first month or so of rent if DAP already have some money from her. The FISM says she'll look into this for her. It is clear that the FISMS take the advocacy role very seriously for their customers.

The customer and I chat briefly about living in Sligo and that the move won't be too difficult as the new place is four doors away from the old place which we laugh about, the customer laughs and smiles a bit at this point, and is clearly more relaxed now. I the FISM comes back in from photocopying the document which she keeps and hands the original to the customer. I thank the customer for allowing me to be present as she is leaving and the FISM reminds her to go to get the form signed immediately. It seemed to be a very effective meeting.

We head upstairs and agree with the other FISM who is also responsible for A & I and who has just arrived at work that we will take forty-five minutes for lunch and then have the interview at 13:30.

I HEAD OFF FOR LUNCH.

Interview - 13:30- 14:40

I finish the interview and get my things ready and say goodbye to the staff, I ask if it is ok to email them a document on qualifications and background that I forgot to bring and the manager agrees to this. We have a brief conversation about where the training might take place- here in Sligo or in Dublin with other FISMs the staff see the benefits to both and we agree to discuss this further when I have a better idea of when this might take place.

I leave at approximately 15:00.

APPENDIX D PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT & INFORMED CONSENT FORM



DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

Plain Language Statement

Introduction to the Research Study

Intercultural communicative competence: the case of an Irish, not for profit, community based organisation for the homeless in the Republic of Ireland.

Investigator: Martin Toal: School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies in Dublin City University (DCU), Ireland

Email: martin.toal@dcu.ie ; Tel: 00 353 1 7005197

Supervisor:: Dr Agnès Maillot
agnes.maillot@dcu.ie

II. Details of what involvement in the Research Study will require

My name is Martin Toal. I am conducting a study on the communication process and styles of staff in Focus Ireland with homeless customers who are not originally from Ireland, as part of my PhD in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies at DCU. Part of the study will involve observing typical interactions between staff and customers in Focus Ireland. Based on the observations, you will be asked a number of questions about your work with customers who are not originally from Ireland in an audiotaped group or individual interview lasting no longer than an hour. Once data is analysed, a customised training programme will be designed and delivered in a series of workshops. When an appropriate period of time has elapsed, sufficient to put into practice some of the concepts and techniques discussed in the workshops, I will conduct group interviews to gauge the effectiveness of the training workshops.

III. Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research Study

There are no risks to you from involvement in this study. At no time will your real name be used. If you wish to withdraw from the study at any time, both the data and your recorded interviews will be destroyed.

IV. Benefits (direct or indirect) to participants from involvement in the Research Study

Your involvement in this study will help to generate customised training material for Focus Ireland in relation to cross-cultural communication. This material will be used in a training programme aimed at increasing the effectiveness of communication with customers who are not originally from Ireland. In addition, your involvement will contribute to the research field of intercultural communicative competence, as little work has been done on this topic within the charitable homeless sector in the Republic of Ireland to date.

V. Confidentiality

Your anonymity will be protected at all times. You will be given a different name in the research findings report to protect your confidentiality. This name will not be connected to your personal information. All data will be stored on password protected computers/databases and in a secure filing cabinet. The information gathered will be destroyed securely five years after the final report is published. As is the case with all information, there are limitations to the confidentiality that can be offered and the information is subject to the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information and legal access, and will have to be shared accordingly if requested.

If I (the researcher) become aware of ongoing or prior harm to individuals, especially children, I am obliged to report such abuse to appropriate authorities.

VI Advice as to whether or not data is to be destroyed after a minimum period

Field notes from the observations and the audiotaped interviews will be destroyed five years after the completion of my PhD.

VII. Statement that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

Involvement in the Research Study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the Research Study at any point.

VIII Other relevant information

Once my PhD is completed, it is my intention to present my findings to the staff of Focus Ireland. In addition, it is my intention to publish these findings in a number of academic articles. I will also continue to conduct training workshops to Focus Ireland staff with the material generated from the research.

Please note that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee.

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000

Informed Consent Form

- I. Research Study Title:** Intercultural communicative competence: the case of an Irish, not for profit, community based organisation for the homeless in the Republic of Ireland.

Investigator: Martin Toal: School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies in Dublin City University (DCU), Ireland.

Email: martin.toal@dcu.ie ; Tel: 00 353 1 7005197

Supervisor:: Dr Agnès Maillot
agnes.maillot@dcu.ie

II. Clarification of the purpose of the research

I understand that as part of your PhD study in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies at DCU you will be conducting a study of the communication process and styles of staff in Focus Ireland with homeless customers who are not originally from Ireland. I also understand that the aim of the research is to investigate, through observations and audiotaped interviews, how these interactions take place and that a customized training programme will then be delivered. In addition, I understand that my opinions on the effectiveness of the training workshops will be sought through further group interviews.

III. Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)	Yes/No
I understand the information provided	Yes/No
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study	Yes/No
I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions	Yes/No
I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped	Yes/No
I understand my interactions with service users in Focus Ireland will be observed and notes will be taken	Yes/No

IV. Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

I understand that I may withdraw from the Research Study at any point.

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

I understand that data gathered for this study will be used for research purposes only. I also understand that the data will be stored securely, and that it will be handled in the strictest confidence.

I understand that my anonymity will be protected at all times and that I will be given a different name in the research findings report to protect my confidentiality. I understand that this name will not be connected to my personal information. I also understand that all data will be stored on password protected computers/databases and in a secure filing cabinet. The information gathered will be destroyed securely four years after the final report is published.

I understand that as is the case with all information, there are limitations to the confidentiality which can be offered. I also understand that the information is subject to the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information and legal access, and will have to be shared accordingly if requested.

I also understand that should the researcher become aware of ongoing or prior harm to individuals, especially children, that he is obliged to report such abuse to appropriate authorities.

Finally, I understand that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee.

VI. Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researcher, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E PARTICIPANT DETAILS

No.	Nationality	Gender	Age	Qualification	Length of Time in Focus Ireland	Sections+ of FI that participants have worked in/ previous jobs in homeless sector
1	Irish	F	30	BA Social Science	2 yrs	Coffee shop
2	Canadian	F	35	-	8mnths	Stanhope Green voluntary work, coffee shop
3	UK	F	25	BA Social Care Ireland	3yrs	University placements Sligo Focus Ireland coffee shop
4	Polish	M		Catering	10yrs	Coffee shop
5	Irish	F		-	17yrs	Catering in Stanhope Green & George's Hill
6	Irish	F		-	13yrs	Johns Lane, coffee shop
7	Irish	F		Degree Psychology	6mnths	1yr placement for a mental health organisation, CSV coffee shop
8	Irish	F		Degree Social Science/ Social Care	6mnths	CSV coffee shop
9	Irish	F		Degree Social Care	4mnths	Part-time in social care, CSV coffee shop
10	Vietnamese	M	-	-	9yrs	Catering George's Hill & Stanhope Green
11	Irish	F	-	-	15yrs	Cleaner, childminding in FI, Catering
12	Irish	F	-	-	17yrs	Catering
13	Irish	M	-	-	17.5yrs	Catering

No.	Nationality	Gender	Age	Qualification	Length of Time in Focus Ireland	Sections+ of FI that participants have worked in/ previous jobs in homeless sector
14	Irish	F	24	BA (Hons) Applied Social Studies in Social Care	1.5 yrs	CSV, Coffee shop
15	Irish	F	27	BA Sociology & Psychology, HDip Social Policy	1.5 yrs	CSV in Grange Lodge (under 18 residential care), coffee shop
16	Australian	M	42	Diploma in Youth work and many related courses	15 yrs	The Loft extension, Caretakers, Block 4 (STA), CISP, (OTS) Grange Lodge, PETE, coffee shop
17	Irish	F	37	HDip Youth & Community work (level 9), Certificate in Homeless Case Mgmt, Certificate in Mgmt in Homeless Services CPD courses mental health addiction etc.	10 yrs	PETE, Extension (Youth Services, Aftercare (Youth Services), Prevention Case Mgmt. 9Family Services), Prison In-Reach, Coffee Shop, A & I
18		F		Currently studying for a degree		Grange Lodge (under 18s residential care) A & I

No.	Nationality	Gender	Age	Qualification	Length of Time in Focus Ireland	Sections+ of FI that participants have worked in/ previous jobs in homeless sector
19	Irish	F	31	BA (Hons) Applied Social Studies in Social Care	2+ yrs	Childcare, Residential Aftercare, Long term Housing, Aftercare Support & Settlement, A & I, Coffee shop, Family Prevention
20	Irish	F	32	Degree in Social Science (specialising in social work), MA Equality Work	1yr	Coffee shop, Family Prevention, A & I
21	Irish	F	29	Degree Social Science, MA Social Policy	5yrs	Open Access Case Mgmt., Coffee shop, A & I
22	Irish	F	34	BA (Hons) Social Care	1-3 yrs	Residential (children), CISP, A & I
23	Irish	F	-	MA	8+ yrs	Stanhope Green Long term housing, Youth housing, Relief work in FI hotel (now closed), CISP, Extension, youth reach, A & I & Youth housing (p-t concurrently)
24	Irish	F			14yrs	Project leader Georges Hill, Caretakers youth work, Project leader Sligo. Also history of employment in Homeless charities: in St. Mungos London and 10 yrs for a homeless charity in an Archdiocese in the U.S.A, Simon community in Dublin

No.	Nationality	Gender	Age	Qualification	Length of Time in Focus Ireland	Sections+ of FI that participants have worked in/ previous jobs in homeless sector
25	UK	M			10yrs	10 yrs homeless charities in the UK e.g. St Mungos and 3 yrs homeless charities in the USA, Long term housing FI Sligo
26	Irish	F			7yrs	FI Sligo
27	Irish	F			6yrs	Short-term emergency Housing, Long-term Housing, A&I, Family services, CISP, Stanhope Green, PETE
28	Irish	F		Degree Social Science Masters Public Policy		Housing LED, Housing First, A & I
29	Canadian/ Irish	F	35	BSc Counselling & Psychotherapy, BA Psychology	Less than a yr.	A & I, Cork Simon Community, SVDP
30	Irish	F	-	Degree Social Policy		
31	Irish	M	55	RPN RGN Psychiatric General Nursing, Diplomas-Addiction Studies & Youth Community Work, HDip Social Personal & Health Education SPHE,	6yrs	TSS, Housing Support Project worker, A & I

No.	Nationality	Gender	Age	Qualification	Length of Time in Focus Ireland	Sections+ of FI that participants have worked in/ previous jobs in homeless sector
				Currently studying for an MA in Advanced Facilitation for Promoting Health & Wellbeing		
32	Irish	F	-	Diploma Social Care	5yrs	Project Leader, A & I, Resettlement Project
33	-	F	-	BA (Hons) Social Care	3yrs	A & I, Resettlement
34	Irish	F	20	3rd Year Degree in Social care	University Placement	Resettlement
35	Irish	F	38	Degree Social Care	10 yrs	A & I, TSS, Housing
36	Irish	F	52	Degree Social Care	10yrs	TSS, A & I, Prison In-Reach
37	Irish	F	21	Degree Social Science	3mnths CSV	Prison In-Reach
38	Irish	M	54	Applied Social Care & Education	4yrs	TSS, Youth Housing, PETE , Also Simon Community & MTS
39	Irish	F	38	CAHE Diploma in Nursery Nursing, Diploma Early	11 yrs	Childcare & Aftercare

No.	Nationality	Gender	Age	Qualification	Length of Time in Focus Ireland	Sections+ of FI that participants have worked in/ previous jobs in homeless sector
				Childcare and Education		
40	Irish	F	38	BA Applied Social Studies in Social Care	14 yrs	Housing- Long term & Short term, Childcare & Aftercare Project
41	Irish	F	33	Childcare	11 yrs	Childcare & Family visits
42	Irish	F				
43	Irish	F				
44	Irish	F				
45	Irish	F				
46	Irish	F		Early Childhood Studies, MA Child Youth & Family Studies	3mths	Contact worker
47	Irish	F			6mths	Housing support team
48	Irish	F			17 yrs	Health Board homeless teenage girls, Project worker housing
49	Irish	F	39	Degree Public Admin, HDip Social Policy, MA Social Work	12 yrs	Coffee shop, Crisis Team, Open Access Case Mgmt. Team, National Family Case Mgmt. Team, FHAT, Kildare Project- My Choice My Home, SLI

No.	Nationality	Gender	Age	Qualification	Length of Time in Focus Ireland	Sections+ of FI that participants have worked in/ previous jobs in homeless sector
51	Irish	F	40	BA Social Science, HDip Community & Youth Work, QQI Special Needs Assistant Level 5 & 6	14 yrs	Stanhope Green, DOSH Open Access Case Mgmt., HAT, Kildare County Council, SLI
50	Polish	M			12yrs	Old Reach extension; caretakers for Stanhope Green, HAT, Housing First SLI
52	Irish	F				DOSH
53	Irish	M				Coffee shop, DOSH

A & I: Advice & Information; DOSH: Dublin off-site housing; HAT: Homeless Action Team; SLI: Support to Live Independently; PETE: Preparation for Education, Training & Employment; TSS: Tenancy Support & Settlement

APPENDIX F 15-POINT CHECKLIST OF CRITERIA FOR GOOD THEMATIC ANALYSIS (BRAUN AND CLARKE, 2006, p.96).

Process	Criteria
Transcription	1. The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy'.
Coding	<p>2. Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.</p> <p>3. Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.</p> <p>4. All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.</p> <p>5. Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.</p> <p>6. Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.</p>
Analysis	<p>7. Data have been analysed -interpreted, made sense of -rather than just paraphrased or described</p> <p>8. Analysis and data match each other - the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.</p>
	<p>9. Analysis tells a convincing and well-organized story about the data and topic.</p> <p>10. A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.</p>
Overall	11. Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly.
Written Report	<p>12. The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.</p> <p>13. There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done i.e. described method and reported analysis are consistent.</p>

	<p>14. The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.</p> <p>15. The researcher is positioned as active in the research process; themes do not just emerge</p>
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APPENDIX G SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT PAGES

Please see page G1

APPENDIX H FULL LIST OF NODES

Node	Number of Interviews	Number of References
Advocacy	3	8
Alcohol	6	18
Anti-social behaviour	1	1
Background of staff	7	23
Busy job	10	25
Stressful	3	3
Child protection issues	6	13
Childcare centre	1	1
Children bring external disputes in to the centre	1	1
Disputes with other parents	1	1
Children and race	1	1
Children having knowledge of inappropriate information	1	1
Coffee shop space	5	15
Chaotic space	6	23
Overdose and self-harm	1	1
Violent space	2	5
Noisy space	1	1
Safe space	6	20
Staffing issues	4	16

Collaboration with other services	13	46
Communicating with customers from a different nationality	1	1
Community support integration	1	1
Cultural difference	1	1
Cultural difference around food	1	2
Customer conflict, violence or anger	11	47
Customer to customer violence	2	5
Customers	16	128
Addiction	2	3
Alcohol issues	2	2
Bad manners	4	17
Chaotic lifestyles	3	3
Children	1	3
Customer generosity	1	1
Customers not originally from Ireland	13	68
Church and or community	1	4
Males have higher status	1	2
Networking in community for childminding	1	1
Parenting	4	6
Transition into community	1	2
Different groups in one space	1	3
Direct Provision	6	12
Drug users	2	6
Families	6	24

In recovery	1	1
Irish	5	11
Irish Travellers	12	56
Children	2	7
Distinction between Travellers and settled travellers	1	2
Domestic violence	1	2
Education	1	2
Entitlement	2	3
Feuds & anti-social behaviour	3	5
Local authorities	1	2
Parenting	1	3
Petitions against travellers	1	1
Playing the minority card	1	2
Traveller ethnicity	1	5
Mental health	2	3
Networking to find houses	2	6
Old guard now in private rented	1	1
Prison in-reach programme	1	3
Refugees and asylum seekers	4	7
No social capital	1	1
Refugees utilising their social capital networks	2	2
Roma	1	2
Children	1	2
Singles	1	2
Statistics of nationality	1	1

Support	4	14
Rapport	1	1
Support plans	2	2
Those in crisis	1	1
Working with customers	3	7
Younger people	1	1
Differing cultural practices	1	1
Directions around a city	1	1
Documentation	5	12
FI documents	1	1
Domestic violence	3	5
Duration with customers	1	1
Expectations not met	2	2
Families or parents disciplining children	2	5
Different parental practices	1	1
Feeling vulnerable when interacting with customers	3	12
FI housing	3	10
Anti-social behaviour	1	3
Chaotic behaviour	1	3
Disputes with neighbours e.g. praying	2	4
Religious practice causing conflict	1	1
FI reflects wider societal issues	7	21
Adaptation and isolation	1	2
FI services	10	21
FI staff characteristics	1	2

FI staff frustration with the system	1	2
Focus Ireland linking in with each other	2	2
different backgrounds and motivations	1	1
Focus Ireland staff of different nationalities	1	1
Friendships	1	2
Gender	12	55
Sexism	3	3
Good relationship with customers	1	1
Home visits	11	52
Customs	6	12
Emotional state of the customers	1	1
Hospitality	6	12
Professional persona	3	10
The space	8	17
Curtains drawn	5	6
Vulnerability	2	2
Lack of time	8	26
Lack of time to consider cultural difference	1	1
Landlords	3	9
HAP	1	1
Language barrier	17	103
Accent	1	1
Adapting language complexity	3	3
Age	1	1
Customers multilingualism	1	1

English classes	1	1
L1 being spoken too much	1	1
Language brokers or interpreters	14	57
Bias of interpreters	1	1
Documentation	3	6
FI documents	1	2
Interpreters and power	2	2
Multilingual interpreting	1	1
Professional interpreters not good at job	1	2
Literacy issues	4	8
Mix of l2 ability in families	1	2
Not an issue	1	1
Not understanding staff	1	1
Showing customers things on a computer screen	1	1
Slows effective service	2	4
Staff and customer using shared knowledge of a third language	3	3
Staff using own L2	2	2
Strategies to check understanding	1	2
Translation	7	15
Using colleagues	7	13
Vulnerability of customer due to lack of English	1	1
Legal status	2	6
Legal systems in other countries	1	1
Length of time in Focus Ireland	9	24

Miscellaneous	3	4
Misinformation	1	1
Motivation for working with homeless	1	1
Non-verbal behaviour	11	40
Parenting practices	1	2
Professional	8	17
Racism	12	36
Acceptance in community	1	1
Discrimination	3	6
Surname as a marker of traveller identity	2	2
Fear	1	1
Institutional racism	3	6
Pigeonholing	1	1
Prejudice	2	2
Resentment	2	2
Stereotyping	5	6
Stigma	2	2
Guards service inadequate to FI customers	1	1
Respect	4	6
Shock at cultural difference	1	2
Social welfare	1	1
Staff customer relationship	1	2
Staff needs re intercultural training	7	14
Appropriacy	1	2
Awareness training	6	8

Communication	3	4
Contact with different groups travellers, Africans etc.	2	2
Different legal requirements	2	2
Dublin centric	1	1
Food	1	1
Gender diffs	3	3
Knowledge	14	30
Language barrier	4	6
No need staff already have empathy	2	4
Non-verbal communication	1	2
Online material	1	1
Power and vulnerability	1	1
Racism training	4	5
Reflective work	2	3
Similarities predominantly	1	2
Skills	2	3
Stereotyping	1	1
Tools	1	1
Travellers	1	1
Training staff receive	7	21
Understanding	1	1
Staff with same cultural background as customers	1	1
TCI	5	10
Western concept of communication e.g. eye contact	2	2
Teams	1	1

Trauma	3	4
Trust	5	11
Understanding the system	11	21
Different cultural attitudes to social welfare assistance	1	1
Unsatisfactory options offered to homeless customers	1	1
What's a typical day in Focus Ireland	17	66

APPENDIX I A SUMMARY OF METHODS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE (FOWLER AND BLOHM, 2004, P.79)

<i>Methods</i>	<i>Training Outcomes</i>	<i>Considerations</i>					
		<i>About or Across Cultures</i>	<i>Learning Styles</i>	<i>Adaptability</i>	<i>Accessibility</i>	<i>Useful With</i>	
						<i>Groups</i>	<i>Individuals</i>
Lecture	Knowledge	About cultures	Abstract conceptualization	High	Low	Yes	
Written materials	Knowledge	About cultures primarily	Abstract conceptualization	Low if using existing text	High	Yes	Yes
Computer-based training	Knowledge, skills	About cultures	Active experimentation	High	Medium	Yes	Yes
Film	Knowledge, skills, attitudes	Both	Concrete experience	High	Medium	Yes	Yes
Self-assessment	Knowledge	About	Abstract conceptualization	Medium	High	Of 30 or fewer	Yes
Case studies	Knowledge, skills	Both	Concrete experience	High	Low	Of 30 or fewer	Yes
Critical incidents	Knowledge, skills, attitudes	Across cultures	Concrete experience	High	Low	Of 30 or fewer	Yes
Simulations and games	Knowledge, skills, attitudes	Across cultures	Active experimentation	High	High	Of more than 10	
Role Play	Skills, attitudes	Across cultures	Active experimentation; concrete experience	High	Low	Yes	
Culture Contrast	Attitudes	Both	All	High	High	Yes	
Culture Sensitizer	Knowledge, skills, attitudes	Both	Concrete experience	Low	Low	Of 30 or fewer	Yes
Culture Analysis	Knowledge, skills	About cultures	Reflective observation	High	Low	Yes	Yes
Cross-cultural Dialogues		Both	Concrete experience	High	High	Of 30 or fewer	Yes
Area Studies	Knowledge	About cultures	Abstract conceptualization	High	High	Yes	Yes
Immersion	Knowledge, skills, attitudes	Both	Active experimentation	High	High	Yes	Yes
Exercises	Knowledge, skills	Across cultures	Active experimentation, concrete experience	High	High	Yes	Yes
Visual Imagery	Knowledge, attitudes	Both	Reflective observation	High	Low	Yes	Yes
Art and Culture	Knowledge, Skills, attitudes	Both	Reflective observation	High	High	Yes	Yes

APPENDIX J STAFF WHO TOOK PART IN INTERVIEWS AND/OR TRAINING

Participant No.	Interview	Training 1	Training 2
Coffee shop			
1	x	x	x
2	x		
3	x	x	x
8	x		
7	x		
9	x		
14	x	x	
15	x		
Catering in coffee shop			
5	x	x	x
13	x	x	x
4	x	x	x
6	x		
10	x		
11	x		
12	x		
A & I Dublin Coffee shop			
16	x	x	
17	x		
18	x		
19	x	x	

20	x	x	x
21	x	x	x
22	x	x	
23	x		
Sligo			
24	x	x	
25	x	x	x
26	x	x	
27	x	x	x
Kilkenny/ Waterford/ Carlow			
28	x		
29	x		
30	x		
Cork			
31	x	x	
32	x	x	x
33	x	x	x
34	x	x	
35	x	x	
36	x	x	x
37	x	x	
38	x	x	x
Waterford			
39	x	x	
40	x	x	x

41	x	x	x
42	x	x	x
43	x	x	
44	x	x	x
45	x	x	
46	x	x	x
47	x	x	x
48	x	x	x
49	x	x	x
50	x	x	
51	x	x	x
52	x	x	
Others (Training only)			
53		x	x
54		x	x
55		x	x
56		x	
57		x	x
58		x	x
59		x	x
60		x	
61		x	
62		x	x
63		x	
64		x	x

65		x	
66		x	
67		x	x
68		x	
79		x	
70		x	

APPENDIX K FEEDBACK FORMS FOR TRAINING SESSION ONE AND TWO



Post-Training Feedback

Course Name: Intercultural Competence Training 1

Course Date:

1. What did you like best about the course?

2. What did you like least about the training?

3. What did you learn from the training?

4. How will you incorporate this training into your daily work practice?

--

5. What benefits to your work practice do you hope will result from this training?

--

6. How would you rate the quality of the training delivery? Please briefly explain:

--

Post-Training Feedback

Course Name: Intercultural Competence Training 2

Course Date:

1. What did you like best about the course?

2. What did you like least about the training?

3. What did you learn from the training?

4. How will you incorporate this training into your daily work practice?

5. What benefits to your work practice do you hope will result from this training?

6. How would you rate the quality of the training delivery? Please briefly explain:

Please indicate on the following scale how much you liked/ disliked the following activities on the topics we covered.

1 Unsatisfactory 2 Satisfactory 3 Neutral 4 Good 5 Very good

7. Exercise on skills, knowledge, and intercultural competence

1 Unsatisfactory		2 Satisfactory		3 Neutral		4 Good		5 Very good	
Comment:									

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8. Pair and group discussion based on Information leaflets on different nationalities attitudes, behaviours in relation to family structure, decision making etc.

1 Unsatisfactory		2 Satisfactory		3 Neutral		4 Good		5 Very good	
Comment: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>									

9. Scenarios exercise

1 Unsatisfactory		2 Satisfactory		3 Neutral		4 Good		5 Very good	
Comment: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>									

10. Culturagram exercise

1 Unsatisfactory		2 Satisfactory		3 Neutral		4 Good		5 Very good	
Comment: <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px; margin-top: 5px;"></div>									

Based on the two training courses on intercultural competence that you have completed please indicate your views on the following statements:

1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 uncertain 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree

11. After these two training sessions, I feel I have developed skills to help me interact in a better manner with customers who are not originally from Ireland.

1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 uncertain 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree

12. I feel I have a better knowledge of some of the cultures which were discussed on the course.

1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 uncertain 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree

13. I feel that it was good to have a break between the two sessions.

1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 uncertain 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree

14. The gap between the two sessions allowed me to implement some of the knowledge I acquired in training session One to my job.

1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 uncertain 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree

15. I have not seen any benefit from the first training session in terms of my job.

1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 uncertain 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree

16. Training in intercultural competence is vital for my job in Focus Ireland.

1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 uncertain 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree

17. There were too many handouts and exercises in the training sessions.

1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 uncertain 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree

18. There was a good balance between theory and practice over the two sessions.

1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 uncertain 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree

APPENDIX L - FURTHER EXAMPLES OF FI STAFF COMMENTS ON THE USE OF LANGUAGE BROKERS

P16 [yeah] in in the instance of families as well often the the children will be translating for for the parents

P18 [yeah]

P16 [um which] is not right you know they're they're again being involved in things that they probably shouldn't know about um

P17 [yeah]

P16 [you] know so that's It's hard it's very hard for them

P18 [very yeah]

P18 ...as we said adult conversation that you know children should not maybe should be protected from that within the family unit

P22 [the] children go to school it's going off that but there still can be a communication barrier. The children might be able to converse quite well but actually if they're under 18 we would come up with that like

[there is a lot of noise from next door]

how how much can you inform the children and the young people to inform their parents em

P23 [yeah] and what's appropriate to discuss

P24 ...but you also have the difficulty of the older adults the parents who refuse to learn English and then so it's down to their children where and some are over 18 and some not who will do the interpreting which is not appropriate

APPENDIX M FOCUS IRELAND COLLABORATIONS

Addiction Services	NASC
Crosscare	Penny Diners Cork
Diversity Sligo	Peter McVerry Trust
Dublin City Council	Public Partnership Network (Carlow)
DVAS	RIA
Edel House	Simon Community
Homeless Action Team	Sligo Leadership Partnership
Housing First Team	Social Welfare Offices
HSE	Social workers
Landlords	St Vincent De Paul
Local Councils	Street Homeless Waterford
Mendicity	Translators
Mental health workers	TUSLA
Merchants Quay	

APPENDIX N QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE TRAINING

Who?	<p>3.1 Who will be the participants of the workshop or course?</p> <p>Will you yourself decide who the participants will be or will you be asked to run a workshop for a particular group? Students, pre- or in-service teachers, and teacher trainers will probably have different needs and expectations, diverse personal experiences of otherness, and varying degrees and types of motivation to participate in a workshop on intercultural communication. The more you can learn about your participants in advance, the better you will be able to plan the workshop.</p> <p>If you are a trainer, for maximum efficiency try to invite multipliers from different contexts who will be able to disseminate the results of the workshop to a wider audience.</p>
Why?	<p>3.2 Why do you hold this workshop?</p> <p>If the participants are pre- or in-service teachers or teacher educators, then they probably all have learnt something about cultural studies if not intercultural communication. In any case, you should definitely build on their existing knowledge. To this end, a short needs analysis questionnaire should be filled in by the participants prior to the workshop (see the sample pre-workshop questionnaire on the CDRom).</p> <p>If this is not possible, the trainer has to informally find out what the participants' expectations might be. It may also help to ask for a description of their professional profile from the host institution in advance.</p> <p>These are useful steps to follow:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the basis of the information you have, analyse the target situation: what knowledge or skills (or other aspects of intercultural competence) will the participants primarily need in their work? 2. Compare what they probably already know or have with what is required of them. 3. Think about their needs, expectations and reasons for attending the workshop. <p>After you have done the needs analysis you can define the overall aim(s) of the workshop or course.</p> <p>The aims may be some of the following:</p>

	<p>to raise cultural awareness;</p> <p>to develop the participants' intercultural competence (knowledge, skills, attitudes);</p> <p>to learn to deal with cultural diversity in and outside the classroom;</p> <p>to become familiar with the basic theoretical framework of intercultural communicative competence;</p> <p>to define terms like culture, acculturation, intercultural communication and intercultural competence;</p> <p>to practise designing and trying out activities with an intercultural focus to be used in a language course;</p> <p>to analyse the cultural components of currently used coursebooks;</p> <p>to practise modifying and/or supplementing exercises in currently used coursebooks to be able to turn any exercise into a culturally enriching activity;</p> <p>to learn to use literature, films and/or music to develop intercultural competence;</p> <p>to learn how to assess intercultural communicative competence;</p> <p>to discuss the importance of teaching culture when teaching language;</p> <p>any other aim relevant to the professional needs of the trainees in the field.</p> <p>After stating the aim(s), draft some objectives, namely statements of what the participants will learn and what they will be able to do by the end of the workshop(s) or course. For example:</p> <p>to understand the formation of one's own experience, opinion and attitudes;</p> <p>to better understand one's own cultural identity and how it is formed;</p> <p>to understand what unites or separates people from different cultures;</p> <p>to understand and break stereotypes;</p> <p>to deal with culture clashes and culture shock;</p> <p>to share a common understanding of the key concepts of intercultural communication;</p> <p>to analyse currently used coursebooks from an intercultural perspective;</p> <p>to differentiate between activities that are knowledge-based and skill- or attitude-centred;</p> <p>to design or adapt (language) exercises with an intercultural focus;</p> <p>to lead intercultural awareness-raising games, simulation activities and role plays as well as ethnographic tasks that develop intercultural competence;</p> <p>to know the basics about the assessment of intercultural communicative competence;</p> <p>to argue one's own opinion respectfully and listen to others' without premature judgment;</p> <p>to work in a group and encourage openness, empathy and cooperation;</p> <p>to accept the new role of guide, researcher and participant in the learning process as a teacher or trainer.</p>
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What?	<p>3.3 What will you teach?</p> <p>Draft your rough list of contents into a workshop planning grid (see the models for timetabling intercultural communication workshops on the CD-Rom). Keep in mind that it will be just a first draft, and you will probably not be able to fill in all the elements at this stage. You will often have to make adjustments right up to the time when you are selecting materials for individual sessions.</p> <p>Content areas to discuss in a workshop or course that intends to develop intercultural communicative competence might be – and this is an open list:</p> <p>the target language culture's (C2) social practices, customs and lifestyle; similarities and differences in values, beliefs and norms between C1 and C2;</p> <p>cultural differences in perception between C1 and C2, C3, etc;</p> <p>the nature and dangers of stereotyping;</p> <p>the acculturation process (including culture shock);</p> <p>non-verbal communication and proxemics;</p> <p>attitudes of openness, curiosity, empathy and non-judgemental thinking;</p> <p>useful communication strategies in intercultural settings;</p> <p>other.</p>
How?	<p>3.4 How will you do the training?</p> <p>Your decisions will be affected by the length of the workshop(s) or course and the age, level and size of the group. If you also want to develop skills and attitudes, the group should not be too large as you need them all to participate actively. If there are many participants, you can divide them into small groups of between six and eight for some of the tasks, and you can have small groups consisting of two or three participants for others.</p> <p>Other factors to consider are:</p> <p>the logical sequencing of content;</p> <p>starting “with a bang” to raise interest;</p> <p>scheduling the workshop or course so that there is a shared perception of a beginning with clear aims, stages of progress and an ending with a sense of achievement;</p> <p>allowing for a variety of activities and working modes (for example, instead of listening to a lecture for two hours);</p> <p>progression from low-risk to high-risk activities (for example, discussion-type activities are lower risk than acting out a role play).</p>

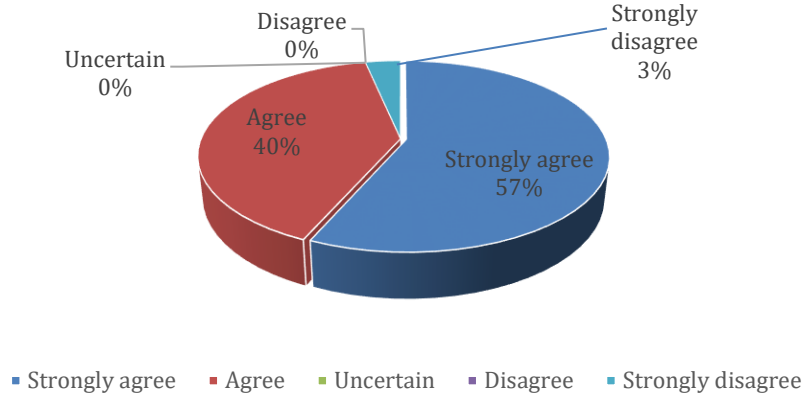
	<p>Here is a set of interrelated working principles which guide the way we plan and conduct training sessions (based on: Gabriela S. Matei et al., <i>First steps in teacher training: a practical guide</i>). We summarise the most important ones here:</p> <p><i>“Start from where participants are”</i></p> <p>In practice, this means enabling participants to explore and share their previous assumptions, experience and knowledge. New and more experienced trainees alike will perceive everything you offer them during courses or workshops against this background. Past and new experience is the essential basis of new ideas in teaching.</p> <p><i>Facilitate talk between participants</i></p> <p>The exploration of experience and ideas entails conversation between participants. There is an important role for personal narrative here, which can take the form of stories, anecdotes and critical incidents. The successful exchange of such experience and ideas does not just happen but needs to be facilitated by the trainer. This involves attention to individual and group characteristics, the ability to structure communication in a group and the skilful handling of participants’ personal information.</p> <p><i>Provide opportunities for active learning, personal review and reflection</i></p> <p>We believe significant learning happens when the trainees are truly engaged, participating in activity – talking, exploring ideas, designing solutions to intercultural teaching/training problems and planning for classroom activity. As well as being active in training sessions, participants also need time to pause and think, to reflect and to allow new ideas to “digest”. A good balance of do-and-review opportunities can contribute “deeper learning”, namely more meaningful and lasting effects.</p> <p><i>Help participants to conceptualise when appropriate</i></p> <p>We want participants to leave our training sessions with new ideas and concepts which are beginning to be internalised. A trainer needs to be ready to contribute ideas, concepts or theories at strategic points in training sessions, namely when participants are ready to relate such input to their own understanding and practice, typically after intensive exploration of experiences and ideas.</p> <p><i>Create links with the real world of teaching – Classroom, teachers’ room and schools</i></p>
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	<p>Trainees come to us from the world of the classroom and that is where they go after training. This is why participants expect training to be relevant to their immediate or future teaching contexts. One way of meeting this expectation in training is to work actively with real cases of teaching situations, perhaps drawn from participants' classrooms during observations. In addition, trainees appreciate space in our training sessions in which to make new plans or to try out ideas for classroom activity.</p> <p>After considering the general principles, you might want to select some fitting techniques and activities from the open list below:</p> <p>Recommended techniques and activity types:</p> <p>brainstorming (to map out what participants have in mind about certain issues);</p> <p>short presentations (to find out about participants' experiences, to provide input for further discussion);</p> <p>critical incidents (to raise awareness of cultural differences and their importance in communication);</p> <p>role plays and simulations (to experience as much as possible what it is like to communicate with people from other cultures);</p> <p>project work (to give ideas for culturally enriching projects that participants can do with their trainees or students in their teaching work);</p> <p>ethnographic tasks (to give ideas about the learning potential in doing interviews and observations);</p> <p>quizzes (to offer the group concrete information about different cultures and thus stimulate a purposeful discussion in small groups);</p> <p>pair or small group discussion helps the participants loosen up before discussing the ideas with the whole group or class;</p> <p>discussion: essentially after each of the above activity types it is of great importance to exchange ideas, discuss the participants' own experiences and generate further thoughts. Discussion helps both the workshop facilitator and the participants to clarify their attitude towards the stated questions or the perceived problems.</p>
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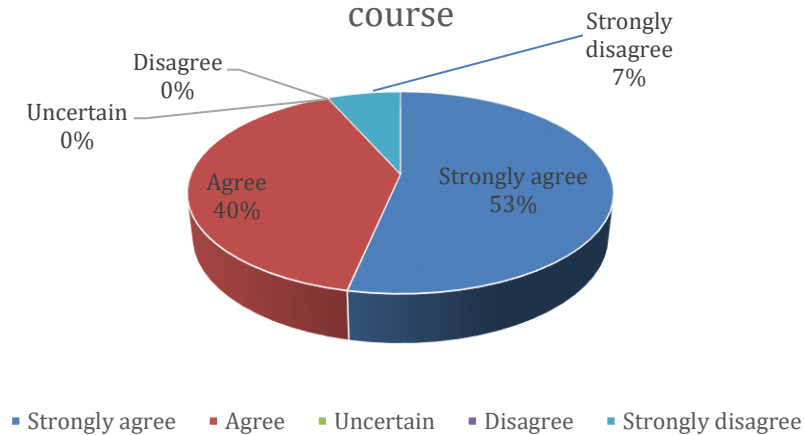
Lázár, I. Huber-Kriegler, M; Lussier, D; S. Matei, G; & Peck, C. (Eds).
2007. Developing and assessing intercultural communicative competence: a guide for
language teachers and teachers' educators. Council of Europe.

APPENDIX O GRAPHS OF LIKERT SCALE QUESTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS ABOUT TRAINING SESSION ONE AND TWO

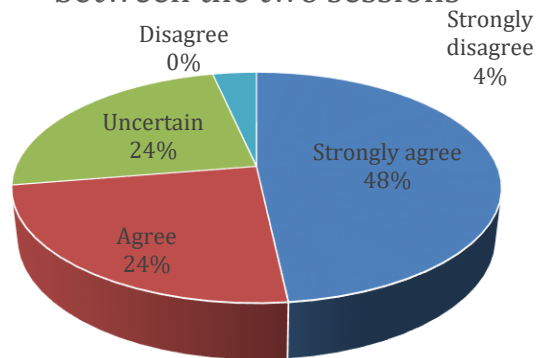
Q 12. After these two training sessions I feel I have developed skills to help me interact in a better manner with customers who are not originally from Ireland



Q 13. I feel I have a better knowledge of some of the cultures which were discussed on the course

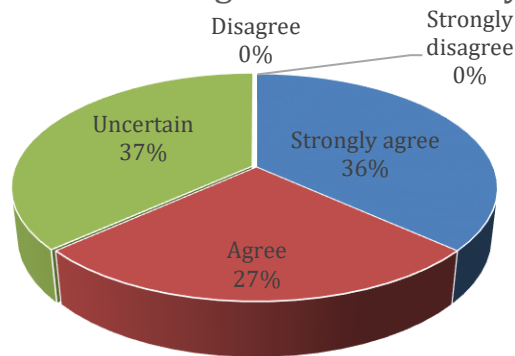


Q 14. I feel that it was good to have a break between the two sessions



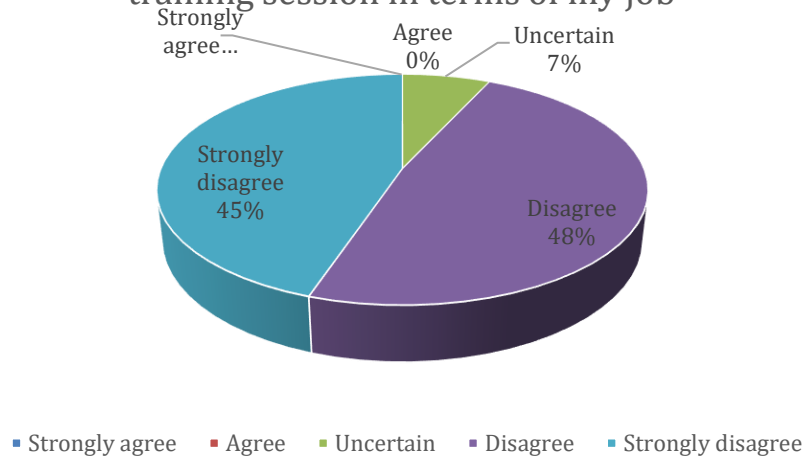
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Uncertain ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Q 15. The gap between the two sessions allowed me implement some of the knowledge Iacquired in training session one to my job

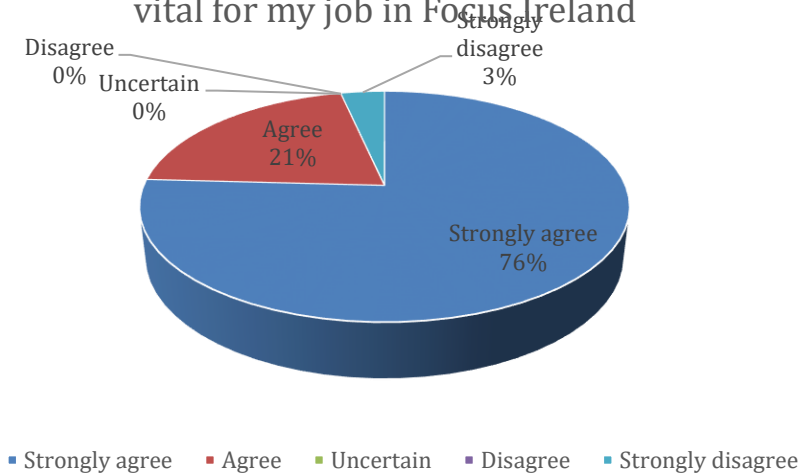


■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Uncertain ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

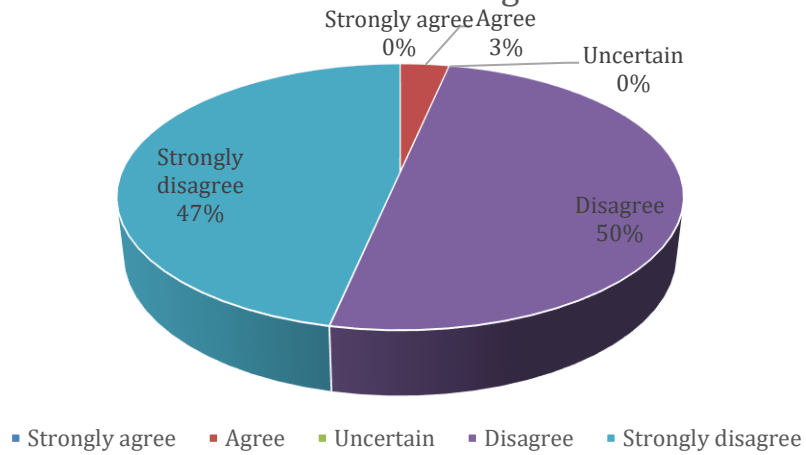
Q 16. I have not seen any benefit from the first training session in terms of my job



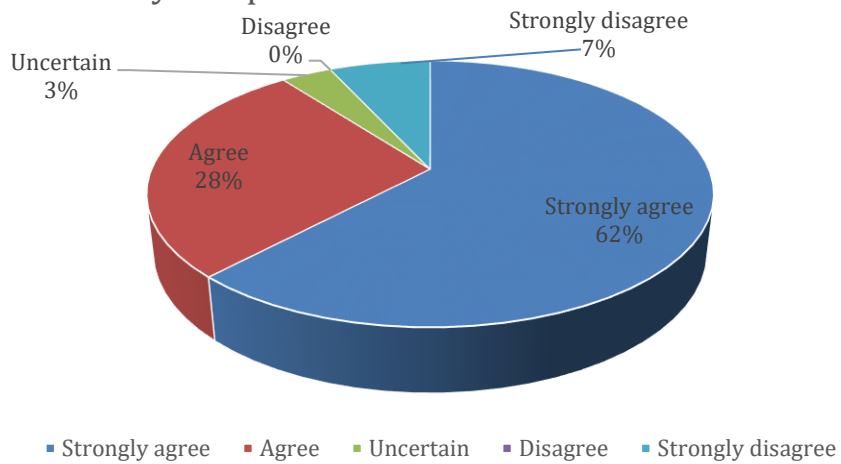
17. Training in intercultural competence is vital for my job in Focus Ireland



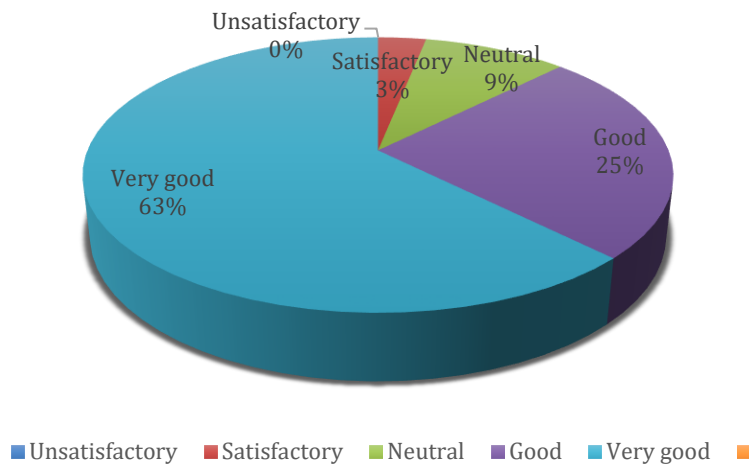
Q 18. There were too many handouts and exercises in the training sessions



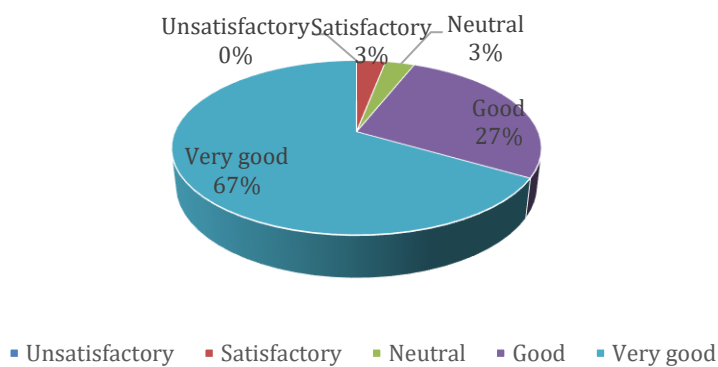
Q 19. There was a good balance between theory and practice over the two sessions



Exercise on skills, knowledge, and intercultural competence



Pair and group discussion based on Information leaflets on different nationalities attitudes, behaviours in relation to family structure, decision making etc.

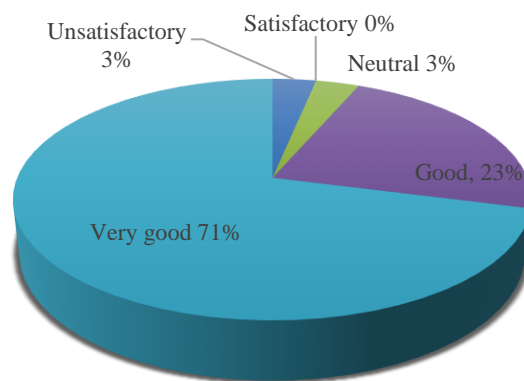


Culturagram exercise



■ Unsatisfactory ■ Satisfactory ■ Neutral ■ Good ■ Very good

Scenarios exercise



■ Unsatisfactory ■ Satisfactory ■ Neutral ■ Good ■ Very good

APPENDIX P WORKSHEET RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE FROM TRAINING SESSION TWO

Review of components of Intercultural competence

Task1: Sort these components into individual or organizational factors

Attitudes

- Being genuine, empathetic, warm and respectful.
- Flexibility in considering a range of possible solutions to a problem.
- Acceptance of cultural differences between people.
- Willingness to work with clients of different ethnic minority groups and cultures.
- Personal commitment to challenging poverty, and changing oppressive and discriminatory institutions, policies and attitudes related to all cultural characteristics.
- Resolving personal feelings regarding your own culture — whether benefiting from being part of the “dominant” culture, or struggling with discrimination in your own life and profession.

Knowledge

- Understanding of your personal values, stereotypes and biases about your own culture, ethnicity and social class and how this may conflict with meeting the needs of homeless people of other cultures, ethnicities or social classes.
- Understanding the history, traditions, values, family systems and artistic expressions, as well as characteristic behavior, attitudes and values.
- Especially important in a social services setting is developing an understanding of the cultural beliefs of particular customers in relation to seeking help/ support when they are homeless.
- Understanding the power relationships within the community, project or larger institution and their impact on these clients.
- It is important to know what resources (agencies, individuals, informal helping networks, research) might be available that can assist in working with clients of different cultures.
- It is important to have knowledge of the role of language, speech patterns and communication styles of clients who don't speak English.
- Understanding of communication styles, etiquette and body language.

Skills

- Identifying available staff positions that would benefit from the experience and skills of a person who has been homeless or who is from a particular cultural or language group.
- It is important to have staff that speak and understand the language(s) spoken by the homeless clients you serve, and that they or someone else be available to translate for staff who do not have the language skills.
- Adapting communication styles and body language to suit customers style of communication.
- Developing a policy or philosophy regarding hiring people who are homeless or who have been homeless, and people who represent the cultural diversity of the homeless population.

Adapted from: McMurray-Avila. 2001. (2nd ed). Organising Health Services for homeless People: A Practical Guide. pp. 268-273. [Accessed from: https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Pages-from-Organizing_Health_Services_book.pdf].