

Diversity in Daily Living – An International Survey for Individual Practices

Monica Mastrantonio¹, Raveenthiran Vivekanantharasa², Lidia Martinez³

¹Department of English and Related Literature, University of York, York, UK

²Faculty of Education, Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

³Department of Psychology, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, USA

Email address:

monica.mastrantonio@york.ac.uk (M. Mastrantonio), rvive@ou.ac.lk (R. Vivekanantharasa), info@drlidiamartinez.com (L. Martinez)

To cite this article:

Monica Mastrantonio, Raveenthiran Vivekanantharasa, Lidia Martinez. Diversity in Daily Living – An International Survey for Individual Practices. *Science Frontiers*. Vol. 3, No. 2, 2022, pp. 60-65. doi: 10.11648/j.sf.20220302.11

Received: February 28, 2022; **Accepted:** March 22, 2022; **Published:** April 29, 2022

Abstract: This study uses the concept of diversity from Science applying it to Social Studies to understand the diversity of relationships and inputs present in human everyday living. Diversity requires a multi-ethnic, cultural, age, gender, religious background to be developed. This means diversity in relationships need diversity as a concept in all human relations. Diverse living and lifestyle can potentially support the individual through harsh periods meanwhile diminishing prejudice and intolerance. The present study applied the Diversity Survey Questionnaire (DSQ) containing 47 questions (40 questions using a 5-multiple choice scale ranging from always to never, and 7 questions with written answers). A total of 333 individuals participated in the research. The DSQ was created by Dr. Monica Mastrantonio to measure how diverse and inclusive a person's life can possibly be. The results were collected and measured using the Google platform, and automatically using metrics to reach quantitative results. The collected data shows that diversity has crucial importance in everyday living. Nevertheless, data also showed that people lack significant opportunities to engage in multiple life experiences. Participants also agreed on various aspects that can be done to improve diversity as a method of living. It is concluded that this survey brought important aspects in how people engage in a plural and diverse society, and what needs to be done in that direction.

Keywords: Diversity, Everyday Living, Globalization, UN Goals, Digital Humanities

1. Introduction

Diversity in humanities means the inclusion of different cultures, identities, and people with emphasis on underrepresented races, ethnicities, genders, nationals, languages, abilities, classes, among others (Alan, 2020) [1]. Therefore, the concept of diversity in social practices and research is recent. However, the use of diversity dates from long history; for instance, there is plenty of evidence that the Roman empire was relatively diverse, as might be expected from an empire that encouraged trade and mobility across different territory (Handley, 2011). [4].

In a brief search at the University of York database, diversity in biology brings 1.432.591 results, whilst diversity in humanities has only 440.383 results. Morris (1998) [9] calls out for the importance of understanding the movements between diversity and extinction.

Diversity is more than a natural state of the human race that makes it capable of adapting to different circumstances. Although, it is only in the latest 2010 that diversity becomes a recognized way of avoiding one-dimensional ideas, cognitive dissonance, and unlimited language use of the word is part of the contemporary discourse. Humanity needs new ideas, views, practices, which are fundamental to the surveillance of the species.

This leads to assuming that although diversity is a survival concept in Life Sciences, its application in Social Studies is limited. Natural sciences have long taken diversity as part of environmental and survival practices and used this concept to plea for diversity as part of a healthy habitat. In humanities, this same association begins to develop in diverse areas of knowledge as in family relationships (Widmer, 2010) [15], college (Turner, 2015) [14], school curriculum (Donald, 2007) [3], or work (Wilson; Baruch; Boulaye; Hartog, 2015) [16].

With the rise of the call for diversity and equality as one of the UN goals, more attention has been given to this topic (Ramirez; Bromley; Garnett Russell, 2009) [10]. However, what is diversity from the individual perspective? How diverse are someone's surroundings and background? How open are people to accepting diversity as part of their lives? What does it require to have a diverse living style? Would this help against prejudice and intolerance?

Diversity in this study implies being in contact with a wide variety of experiences capable of creating heterogeneous thinking, less prejudice, more tolerance, and a wider variety of influences and inputs. Mass media and globalization have contributed to the standardization of individuals and loss of diversity richness (McLuhan, 1964) [8]. Somehow, this seems to run in parallel to the endangerment of species in the biology field, while its effects on humanity have not been given proper attention.

As nature and biology diversity threats become more frequent, biodiversity conservation is due to the loss of varieties (Holmes, 2015) [6]. Nevertheless, how can diversity be understood in everyday living? How are diversity and inclusion present in linguistics, art, culture?

Inclusiveness can bring light towards the path of building a democratic and equally participative society. The cross-disciplinary nature of humanity requires interdisciplinary research and methodologies to understand how people experience and live diversity in practical aspects. Further on, it requires the development of different resources, like the Diversity Survey Questionnaire - DSQ (Mastrantonio, 2021) [7], collaboration, and the creation of assessment and measures to understand the process and escalate it. The diversity in science subjects is also important to exchange knowledge and collaboration. (Baron, Donn, 2000). [2].

Despite the lack of material in approaching human diversity in research and academia, future professionals will deal necessarily with a multicultural world, or at least while it still lasts (Spence, Brandao, 2021) [12].

For Rescher (1985) [11], the valorization of diversity on a global scale poses new challenges to society along other dimensions. Technological environments require global perspectives, but, to enhance democracy and well-being, diversity and socio-economic inequalities need to be addressed (Haworth, John T.; Hart, Graham, 2007) [5].

Extremists, nationalists, monoculture narratives pose exclusive, singular perspectives, which take for granted or even despise everything differently. Diversity drives excellence (Swartz, et al, 2019) [13]. A global multi-cultural perspective is much needed, including being the condition for effective implementation of the 20-UN-goals.

This research asks, how do people live diversity in their everyday living? Do they consider diversity important? Is diversity experienced differently according to each aspect of daily living? What aspects can be worked out to build a more diverse and inclusive life?

To do that, a Diversity Survey Questionnaire was developed and applied to responders across different countries and continents.

2. Methodology

A survey with 47 questions about diversity was developed and applied to different people across the world. Diversity was translated into aspects of everyday living, for example, diversity in music, books, friendship, relationships, trips, food, and other social and cultural aspects; measuring the impact of these factors in everyday living.

The survey was composed of 40 multiple-choice questions with the following choice of answers: 'never' (0%), 'rarely' (25%), sometimes (50%), most often (75%); always (100%). The objective of these answers was to measure the frequency of diversity in people's daily influences and interactions. This article presents twelve (12) of these questions throughout figures with the percentage quantity for each answer. The responders were all treated anonymously, and a follow-up answer with the results was automatically emailed to each participant. Two hundred and twenty-two of the responders said they wished to receive a follow-up email with tips for developing a more diverse lifestyle.

The data shows that there were 57% of the responders from Asia, followed by 16.5% from Europe, and 10% from the Americas. A total of 19.6% of them were at the age of 20 to 30 years old, 26.9% from 31 to 40 years, and 26% from 41-50. In terms of education, 49.7% had masters or doctoral degrees, and only a small fraction was high school level. They all spoke English as the Survey was applied in English.

3. Results

The results were automatically processed and figures for each question of the survey are shown below. The answers for each of those questions are allocated as follows: 1 (never), 2 (sometimes), 3 (usually), 4 (often), 5 (always) with the correspondent percentage. In the figure 1, which comes next, diversity in friendship received a high percentage of 'always' answers.

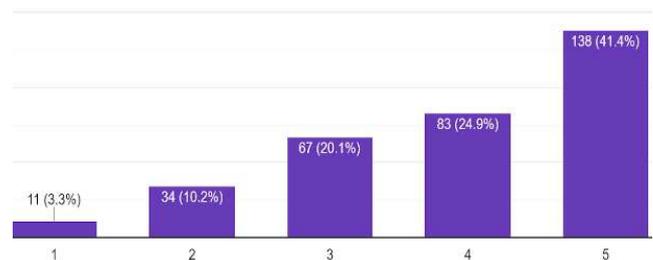


Figure 1. Diversity in friendship.

The figure above shows that 41.4% of the responders do have friends from diverse backgrounds that means from different ethnicity, culture, religion, social class. However, there are still 10.2% plus 3.3% who rarely do, which makes 13.5% altogether of respondents whose friends are not diverse from themselves.

The below figure shows if the responder has already lived with someone from a different religion, culture, ethnicity.

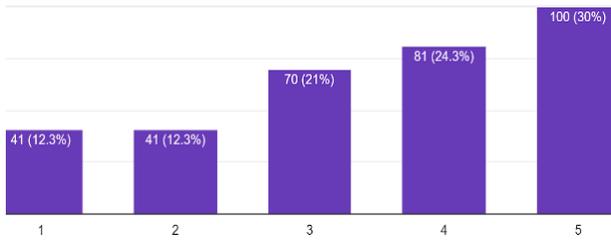


Figure 2. Diversity in living with someone from a different culture, ethnicity, gender, religious, or economic aspect.

As can be seen, by the figure above, 30% of the participants have already lived with someone who differs from their background, but 24.6% rarely or never did it. It is important to note that 1/4 of the interviewed have never had such an experience.

Figure 3 shows Diversity in dating someone from a different background (cultural, ethnic, religious, economic, age).

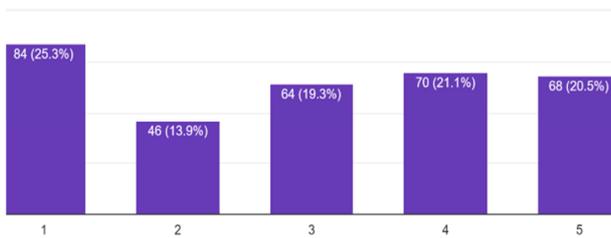


Figure 3. Diversity in dating someone from a different background (cultural, ethnic, religious, economic, age).

Moreover, when asked if the responders have been on a date with someone from a different background (cultural, ethnicity, religious, economic, age), the positive response rate is 20.5%, meaning “always.” The smaller number of responses is 13.9% of the 46 respondents among other levels of response rates. However, the impressive data in this question is the “never” choice, gathering 25.3% of the answers. Again, over 1/4 of the responders have never experienced diversity in this area.

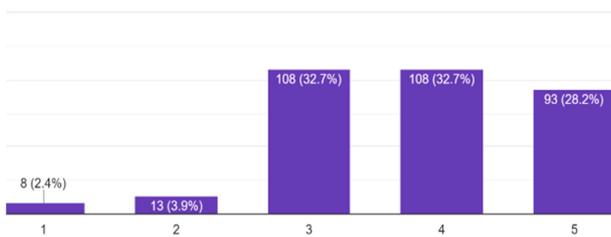


Figure 4. Willingness to buy foreign products.

For the above question ‘willingness to buy foreign product’, 28.2% of participants out of 333 participants responded favourably when asked if they would buy a product made in another country, (buying a ‘foreign product’). A negative response from the participants was only 2.4% of 8 for this question or 3.9% for rarely. Nevertheless, the greatest response rate is set in the middle with ‘sometimes’ ranking with 32.7% percentage of answers.

The below Figure 5 brings the diversity concept applied to the neighbourhood around someone showed the following figures.

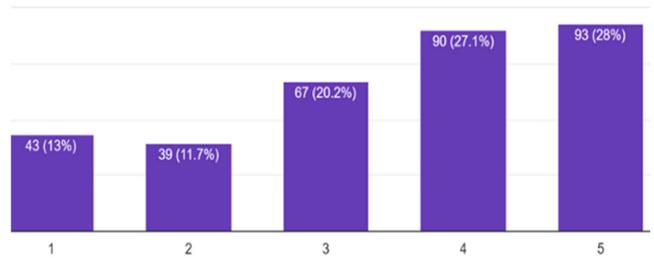


Figure 5. Diversity in habiting, living in a multi-ethnic, cultural neighborhood.

When asked if they had ever lived in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural neighborhood, 28% out of 333 responses said ‘yes.’ At the same time, 11.7% of 39 responses, which is the lowest answer rank said they rarely lived in a diverse neighborhood, whilst 13% never did it. Adding ‘never’ and ‘sometimes,’ the result will be 24.7%, which corresponds to 1/4 of the responders having never experienced diversity in the neighborhood.

The next figure will show how diverse were the first friends and classmates from primary school were.

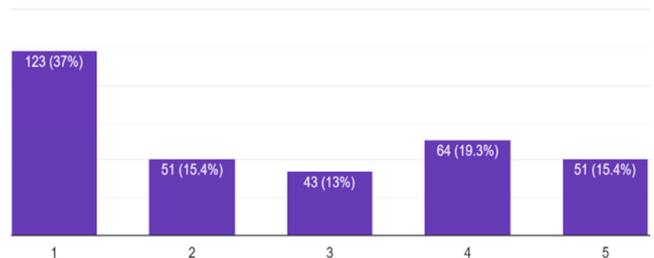


Figure 6. Diversity in primary school friends.

With the percentage of 37% out of 333 responses as ‘never,’ that was the answer, which received the highest rate. This means that primary school did not count on having classmates from other countries, cultures, or religions. The lowest score for the above question is 13% of 43 responses, and that was for the category with the lowest score and selection.

Next figure of number 7 shows diversity in living abroad.

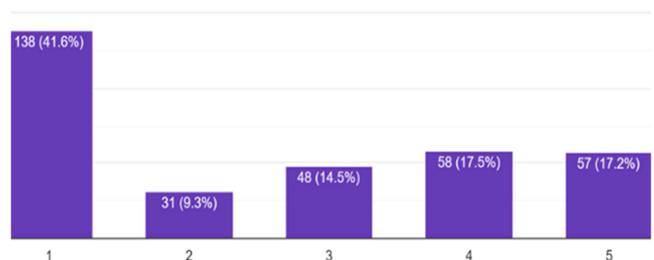


Figure 7. Diversity in living abroad.

Figure 7 shows 41.6% of 332 responses is the higher rate of response percentage for the question on living abroad,

meaning ‘never.’ The least number of responses for the above question is 9.3% with 31 responses, meaning ‘sometimes.’

The next figure of number 8 presents diversity in literature, that is reading authors from a variety of backgrounds.

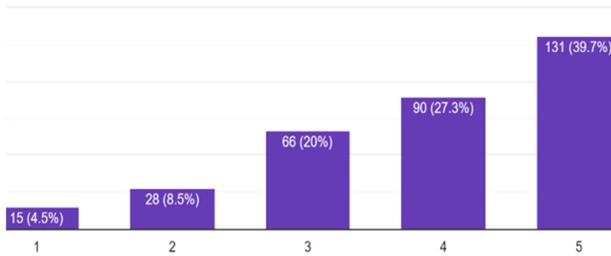


Figure 8. Diversity in literature - reading authors from a variety of backgrounds.

How participants responded to the question of reading authors from different backgrounds is 39.7% with the highest rate as ‘always’ among the 333 of the responses received. The number with the lowest score is 4.5% with 15 participants’ responses. Respectively, other responses were in average level when compared with the medium response rate, and ‘never’ received the lowest score with 4.5%.

Figure 9 demonstrates diversity in films – watching Bollywood films and other off circuit films.

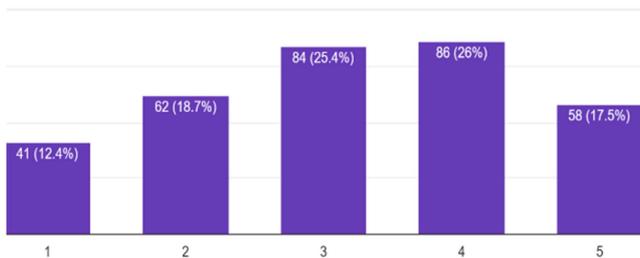


Figure 9. Diversity in films – watching Bollywood films and other off circuit ones.

The question of watching Bollywood movies and other off-circuit movies is positively responded with more response rate ranging respectively in 26%, and 25.4% of the 333 responses. The fewer participants’ responses were 12.4% with 41 for the question. What seems interesting to note here is the concentration of answers on ‘sometimes,’ which may indicate the possibility of the responders interacting with films of a variety of sources. The same sort of input is asked when enquiring about diversity in reading books, shown in Figure 10.

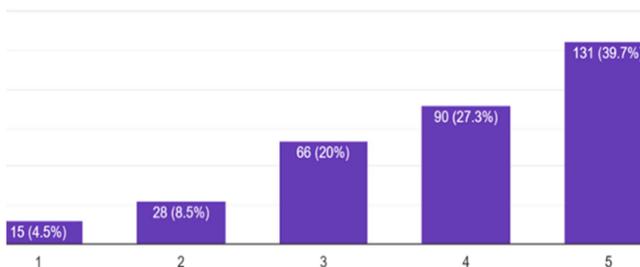


Figure 10. Diversity reading, reading foreigner's authors.

The above figure shows how participants responded to the question of reading authors from different backgrounds. The highest score was 39.7% with ‘always’ reading different sources among the 333 responses. The option with the least number of responses is 4.5% with 15 participants’ responses. In between, there is a crescent number of responses going from ‘never’ to ‘always.’ The other noted point in this figure is that diversity in literature is the response that received the highest score in terms of experiencing diversity in everyday living, which may indicate this field is the closest to equality. Respectively, other responses were in average level when we compare the overall response rate.

The next figure 11 will show the diversity on comments on social media.

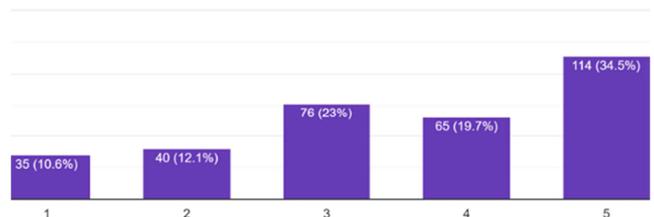


Figure 11. Comments on social media from diverse people.

In Figure 11, participants’ responses for the question of comments in social media profiles from different countries and ethnicities are 34.5% (always) with the highest score out of 333 responses. At the same time, ‘never’ with 10.6% of responses are the lowest score for this question. In conclusion, there is a high percentage of diversity interaction in social media for some of the responders. On the other end, for 23% this only happens ‘sometimes.’

The following figure of number 12 shows if responders keep track of other currencies apart from their own.

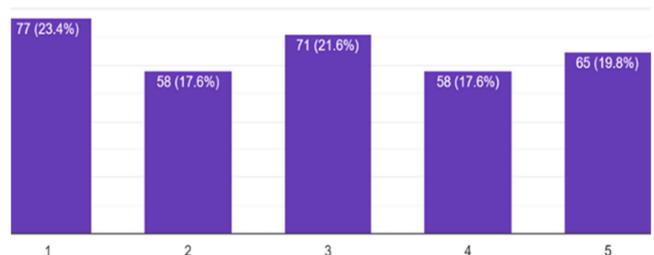


Figure 12. Record and follow-up of other currencies.

For the question above on how people keep track of other money currencies apart from the ones in their own country, the response rate of 23.4% of participants mentioned that they ‘never’ do it. The smaller number of responses is 17.6% saying they ‘rarely’ follow any other currency apart from their own. Different from that, 19.8% and 17.6% say they ‘always’ or ‘frequently’ do, respectively.

The survey also counted with some open questions at the end of it, and the following answers described activities that could incentive diversity in everyday living.

The list is as follows:

1. Spending some time abroad.

2. Engaging in activities with diverse groups.
3. Learning more about other cultures.
4. Living in a diverse and inclusive city.
5. Using apps that have diverse-inclusive agenda.
6. Questioning Social Media and Internet Algos.
7. A better presence of people from diverse backgrounds guiding mass media (both for entertainment and informative purposes).
8. Attending Seminars & Symposium.
9. Experiential learning about other cultures.
10. Learning new languages.
11. Formal education/courses in cultural safety and competence.
12. Watching other cultural movies.
13. Connecting with other cultures.
14. Education in school. I'm mostly referring to LGBTQ acceptance and more gender diversity.
15. Interreligious dialogue.
16. Chatting with people of different nationalities on social networks...
17. Developing personal relationships with people from different cultures and sexualities.

It is important to note that the responders gave very important tips on building a more diverse lifestyle, and all of their suggestions can be incentivized since early years through multiple stakeholders and entities.

4. Discussion

Diversity is indeed a most important topic and category in human relations as well as in Life Science. It is through diversity that people learn different perspectives, and together with it, to interact with diversity in respectful ways.

This survey showed that the initial aim was reached. It demonstrated the impact of diversity in everyday living, and how this concept is not homogenous. Some aspects of diversity tend to be more developed than others, as it can be noted mainly by figures 2, 4, 8, 10, 11.

Contrary to those, some aspects like school friends, dating, currency, living abroad, the diversity aspect is very low. This is very important to note because diversity is not a steady concept, it fluctuates throughout multiple interactions and particularities.

Nevertheless, it is possible to infer that although there is some penetration of the concept of diversity throughout social media, and its objects like films, books, living with someone from a different background, when it comes to more specific and intimate relationships – the act of immersing oneself into diversity, there is still a large gap to being covered. This is specifically found in the question of dating someone from a diverse background. Perhaps, if society and schools offered a diverse surrounding from early age that could be diminished.

Another aspect that is relevant in this research is that the responders were very willing to participate, receive tips on how to develop a more inclusive and diverse life, and

collaborate towards it. The suggestions given by the responders to a more diverse lifestyle are very pertinent and can be implemented by governments, agencies, institutes, and multiple organizations.

Some organizations have already been taking the lead in calling attention to diversity while implementing programs and agendas. However, there are still miles to go in that direction. Cities, neighborhoods, schools, mass media companies, all have their parts in this.

It is mister to note that the focus of this research were the individuals, the perspective adopted was from the individual elaboration and experience of diversity. In sum, most of the individuals who took part in this research said they were willing to participate and know more about it. One possibility might be that agendas include motivation and training of individuals as leaders and collaborators of diversity. Such guidelines could potentially work as pro-UN goals while building and spreading diversity towards a respectful and inclusive humanity.

5. Conclusion

Diversity is indeed a most important topic and category in human relations as well as in Life Science. It is through diversity that people learn different aspects of the world, and concomitantly, learn to respect them.

To build a diverse and equal society requires diversity as a key concept crucial for a future that includes everyone.

References

- [1] Alan, L. I. U. (2020) Toward a Diversity Stack: Digital Humanities and Diversity as Technical Problem. *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 135.1 (2020): 130-51. Web.
- [2] Baron, Robert A. Byrne, Donn Erwin. (2000) *Social Psychology* 9th ed., Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- [3] Donald, James. (2007) Internationalization, Diversity, and the Humanities Curriculum: Cosmopolitanism and Multiculturalism Revisited. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 2007.
- [4] Handley, Mark. (2011) Dying on Foreign Shores: Travel and Mobility in the Late-Antique West. *Journal of Roman Archaeology* Suppl. 86, 2011.
- [5] Haworth, John T.; Hart, Graham. (2007). *Well-being: individual, community, and social perspectives*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- [6] Holmes, G. (2015) What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Biodiversity Conservation in the Anthropocene? *Environment and Society*, 6 (1). pp. 87-108. ISSN 2150-6779.
- [7] Mastrantonio, Monica. (2021) *Diversity Survey Questionnaire*. Fully available at <https://forms.gle/QibeyV3oe4kFYYZa7> Open Source. Ongoing.
- [8] McLuhan, Marshall. (1964) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- [9] Morris S. C. (1998). The evolution of diversity in ancient ecosystems: a review. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 353 (1366), 327–345. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.1998.0213>
- [10] Ramirez, Francisco; Bromley, Patricia; Garnett Russell, Susan. (2009) The Valorization of Humanity and Diversity. *Multicultural Education Review* 1. 1 (2009): 29-54. Web. DOI: 10.1080/23770031.2009.11102862.
- [11] Rescher, Nicholas. (1985) *The Strife of Systems: An Essay on the Grounds and Implications of Philosophical Diversity*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: U of Pittsburgh, 1985. Print.
- [12] Spence, Paul Joseph, and Renata Brandao. 2021. "Towards Language Sensitivity and Diversity in the Digital Humanities." *Digital Studies/Le champ numérique* 11 (1): 9, pp. 1–29. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16995/dscn.8098>.
- [13] Swartz, T; Palermo, A.; Masur, S; Aberg, J. The Science and Value of Diversity: Closing the Gaps in Our Understanding of Inclusion and Diversity, *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, Volume 220, Issue Supplement 2, 15 September 2019, Pages S33–S41, <https://doi.org/10.1093/infdis/jiz174>
- [14] Turner, Caroline S. (2015). *Mentoring as transformative practice: supporting student and faculty diversity*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.
- [15] Widmer, Eric D. (1966) *Family configurations: a structural approach to family diversity*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- [16] Wilson, Doirean; Baruch, Yehuda; Boulaye, Patti; Hartog, Mary. (2015) Is this your cultural place or mine? A global and personal career life-course journey perspective of diversity. *Human resource management international digest*, 2015-07-13, Vol. 23 (5), p. 2-4.