

Report Gender and Nationality Composition in Student Teams

The focus of this project was to understand the experiences of computer science and electrical engineering students working on group projects in gender- and nationality diverse groups. To this end we interviewed fourteen bachelor students from computer science or electrical engineering studying at one of the four Dutch universities of technology. Almost all but one of the interviewees were a part of a group with mixed genders and nationalities. The results showed that all interviewees had predominantly positive experiences, and most of the interviewees would work with the same group again. Interestingly, even groups that had negative experiences in the project still saw the overall experience as positive.

When it comes specifically to perception of diversity, none of the groups saw diversity as something negative. In fact, students from less diverse (either gender or nationality) groups would have liked there has been more diversity. At the same time, the students recognise benefits of homogeneity as opposed to diversity, e.g., the shared first language made communication easier. This being said, groups that were not communicating in their first language did not report considerable communication barriers.

While the interviews provided us with the first insights in the topic of gender- and nationality diversity in student teams, a broader investigation is required to understand to what extend are the opinions of the interviewees shared by the broader population of computer science and electrical engineering students. Hence, as a follow up study we plan to conduct a broader survey about diversity in group projects.