

**EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN A  
GLASS MANUFACTURING COMPANY IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

The researcher hereby declares that the thesis “Employees perceptions towards diversity management in a glass manufacturing company in the Western Cape” is her own work, and that all sources have been referred to, and quoted have indicated and acknowledged with complete references.

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Jasmina Daniels



## DEDICATION

Dedicated to you, the reader. May you find value from this work.

Also to my son, Mikhail. It is my intention for you to believe that all things are possible.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

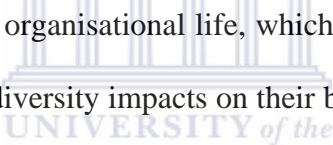
I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to my supervisor, Karl Heslop, for his assistance, encouragement and his perseverance with me. The final product owes much to his suggestions and constructive criticism.

My gratitude also goes to my employer who funded me, and to my colleagues who participated, particularly Valancia, who believed in me and believed that this work can transform our environment.

Finally to His Grace, who gave me strength to complete this work.



## ABSTRACT

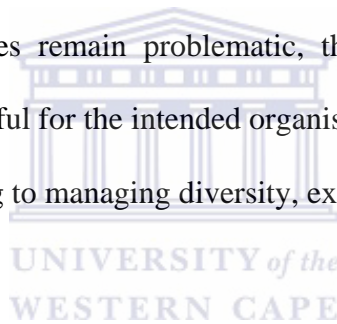


Diversity is an inevitable aspect of organisational life, which has to be dealt with at one time or another. How employees perceive diversity impacts on their behaviour and therefore managing it is imperative. The purpose of the study is an evaluation of employee perceptions towards diversity management in a glass packaging manufacturing concern in the Western Cape. There has been a movement by many organisations over the last two decades to place more emphasis on valuing employee differences, and developing diversity management initiatives (policies and programs that benefit all employees regardless of differences for a common goal). Organisations are faced with understanding the importance of valuing differences and instituting effective diversity management initiatives as counter-measures to protect themselves from such negative consequences as lawsuits, loss of competitive advantage and diminished legitimacy in the eyes of the customers they serve. The increase in females and previously disadvantaged groups in the work force, along with employers' concerns about motivating and obtaining

satisfactory levels of performance from a diverse group of employees, has created an urgency to understand and recognize the value of differences.

A quantitative, cross-sectional research design, based on analysis of questionnaires administered within one of the manufacturing plants of the organisation based in the Western Cape, was undertaken. The Workplace Diversity Survey was used to measure employees' perceptions and attitudes towards diversity. Significant differences in the perceptions of employees (n=80) on the basis of age, race and gender, were found. However, there was no statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity on the basis of job status.

While some methodological issues remain problematic, the researcher is of the opinion however, that the study will be useful for the intended organisation and its management in that no scientific information pertaining to managing diversity, exists within the business.



**KEY WORDS:** Diversity, Diversity Management, Culture, Cultural Diversity, Organisational Culture, Transformation, Acculturation, Perceptions, Attitudes.

# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Organisational transformation, and more specifically, diversity management, for several reasons is impacting on the bottom line of organisations. New economic realities force organisations to continuously reshape their structure and identity, thus forming the basis of changing social networks. Organisations are built around individuals that find innovative ways to deal with complex business issues, incorporating their diverse backgrounds, insights and experiences, in order to remain competitive.



Research (Cummings & Worley, 2001) shows that top companies have diversity management as a strategic imperative, yet very often corporate strategies fail since the organisational culture cannot accommodate the desired change, or if the organisational culture itself is not addressed, it does not reflect the desired transformed state. Cummings and Worley (2001) further contend that transformation is driven by change which is not incremental, process –driven adjustments, but on the modification of behaviour based on the internalisation of the changes. Individuals are often not psychologically prepared for the type or level of change required of them (De Beer, 2002).

Workplace diversity is an increasing reality and organisations need to be able to manage this phenomenon successfully, as this diversity is also becoming increasingly complex (Homan, Van Knippenberg, Van Kleef & De Dreu, 2007; Hostager & De Meuse, 2008; Robertson & Stevens, 2006; Seyman, 2006; Yukl, 2010). The South African history of apartheid and, discrimination

and predicaments arising with regard to the management of diversity, have made workplace diversity a critical challenge that faces South African organisations today (Boon, 2007; Human, 2005). If organisations could identify the antecedents of a positive attitude towards diversity, these organisations could develop employee skills vital to effective social interaction and team work (Homan et al., 2007; Sanchez-Burks, Blount & Bartel, 2009; Sawyer, Strauss & Yan, 2005; Seyman, 2006; Strauss, Connerley & Ammermann, 2003).

The need for a better understanding of how members of an organisation make sense of diversity has increased, because particular interpretations by members may promote tolerance for diversity and assist conflict resolution (Roberson & Stevens, 2006). Diversity has been said to improve tolerance and understanding of differences, supposedly resulting in positive outcomes including heightened group commitment and individual employee satisfaction (Wise & Tschirhart, 2000). However, despite changing demographics of the work force and potential benefits of diversity management, organisations have made minimal progress toward promoting friendly, productive working relationships across cultural differences (Ivanevich & Gilbert, 2000). Only a limited number of studies have focused on the area of receptivity to diversity (employee attitudes toward diversity) and receptivity to diversity management initiatives (employee support for diversity management initiatives implemented by the employer) (Soni, 2000).

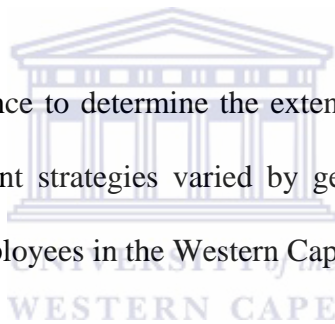
Among the few studies in this area the focus has primarily been on gender and ethnicity differences in attitudes toward EEO/AA measures (Aguirre, Martinez & Hernandez, 1993; Bobo & Kluegel, 1993) rather than diversity management strategies. In one study, the emphasis on diversity within the organisation and the role of AA programs was found to be a point of



considerable disagreement between minority and majority samples (Triandis, Kurowski, Tecktiel & Chan, 1993). Women and minorities favoured AA programs and favoured stronger pro-affirmative action policies than did Caucasian males (Triandis et al., 1993).

A survey of 1,406 U.S. companies by the Hay Group (1992) found that more than 60 percent of the respondents reported that they felt diversity was either not very important or not a high priority. Nonetheless, several researchers (Gentile, 1994; Loden & Rosener, 1991; Thomas, 1991) have reported that gender and ethnic differences continue to have a significant effect on the treatment and experiences of people in the work place.

The purpose of this study was hence to determine the extent to which employee receptivity of diversity and diversity management strategies varied by gender, race, age and ethnicity in a sample of glass manufacturing employees in the Western Cape.



## **1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the current research are:

- To determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on age, race, job status, and gender in terms of the implementation of diversity policies and procedures within an organisation.

### 1.3 HYPOTHESES

A hypothesis can be defined as a logically conjectured relationship between two or more variables expressed in the form of a testable statement. Relationships are conjectured on the basis of the network of associations established in the theoretical framework formulated for the research study. By testing the hypotheses and confirming the conjectured relationships, it is expected that solutions can be found to correct the problem encountered. According to Sekaran (2001, p. 108), there are three formats to express a hypothesis namely: If-Then statements, directional and non-directional hypotheses and null and alternate hypotheses.

The hypotheses for this study are as follows:



**Hypothesis 1:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on age.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on gender.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on race.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on religion.

## **1.4.DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **1.4.1. Workplace equality**

All people must be given the same employment opportunities. According to the Employment Equity Act (1998), an employer may not discriminate against any employee or potential employee on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy, disability, HIV status, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth (Meyer, 2002 as cited in Smith, 2008)

### **1.4.2. Employment equity**



This is defined by Meyer (2002) as cited in Smith (2008) as the end result of enforcing equal opportunity, affirmative action and diversity management. The aim of the Employment Equity Act is to achieve a diverse workforce which is representative of the population (Uys, 2003).

### **1.4.3. Affirmative action**

This is an initiative that is designed to ensure that suitable, qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce of a designated employer (Finnemore, 2006). The key objectives of affirmative action is to rectify inequality regarding the racial structure of the

workplace, to rectify inequality regarding policies, practices and facilities and to ensure that employees are broadly representative of South Africa's racial groups at all levels and in all disciplines (Smith, 2008)

#### **1.4.4. Black Economic Empowerment**

South Africa's policy of black economic empowerment (BEE) is a pragmatic strategy aimed at realising the country's full economic potential (Finnemore, 2006). The Apartheid regime systematically excluded black people from the labour market and BEE aims to empower these people.



#### **1.5. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

A perceived limitation to this study was the fact that participants may not have been truthful in answering the questions for fear of being exposed and possibly victimised within the working environment. Since the study focused on employees within a particular geographical location within one branch of the organisation, the research findings cannot be inferred to other populations. The research study therefore lacks external validity.

Due to the fact that the researcher was internal to the organisation that was assessed, participants to the study may have questioned the confidentiality of their responses. This could have potentially impacted on the level of honesty applied in answering the questions. However, this

problem was addressed by the confidentiality clause that was included at the start of the questionnaire assuring participants that their identities would not be revealed. Furthermore, respondents were assured of their anonymity by means of an anonymity clause in the questionnaire.

The availability of respondents was a concern as the work environment in which employees operate was very demanding at the time due to a number of key strategic projects being underway within the organisation in which the research was conducted. This also impacted the response rate and was therefore perceived as a potential limitation in successfully carrying out and conducting the study.

The generalisability of the study was compromised, as the sample group was drawn on the basis of a non-probability sample which was restricted to the Western Cape region only. The research was based exclusively on the results obtained from the survey and no qualitative information was utilised to corroborate the findings.

## **1.6 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS**

Chapter 1 captures the core of the research focus for this study with particular reference to the motivation for this study, its research objectives, hypotheses and limitations. Some key terms to the study are highlighted and defined to assist in creating a common understanding for when these terms are discussed in the research study.

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on the topic of managing diversity. It provides definitions of managing diversity and discusses related concepts such as affirmative action, employment equity, equal opportunities, black economic empowerment and valuing differences. The benefits and drawbacks of managing diversity are presented, with the implications being addressed in relation to organisations.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research methodology used in the study regarding how the research problem was investigated. In this chapter, detail around the research design is also discussed with specific reference to the population of the study, sample group, sampling technique, procedure for carrying out the research, and the measuring instrument used to gather the relevant data. Relevant statistical techniques are discussed and the hypotheses are presented.

In chapter 3, the research methodology and design utilised during the current study were outlined. The information provided and discussed in the previous chapters serves as a background against which the contents of chapter 4 are presented and interpreted and is based on the empirical analyses conducted to test the hypotheses. The statistical programme used for the analyses and presentation of data in this research was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The descriptive statistics computed for the study are presented first in an outline of the characteristics of the sample with regards to the variables included in the study. Thereafter, the analyses of the constructs relevant to the study, are presented with the aid of inferential statistical procedures. Conclusions are then drawn on the basis of the obtained results.

In chapter 5, the major findings of the study are revealed in relation to research relevant to supporting the findings of the current study. A number of conclusions are drawn based on the results obtained. Lastly, this chapter outlines recommendations that may be useful for future research.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

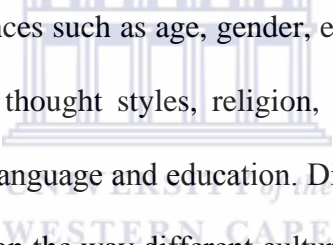
Organisations have been challenged by diversity issues for many years. In the modern organisation, diversity phenomena have multiplied as a result of democratization, globalization and generational factors. Democratization refers to changes taking place because of human rights consciousness, and the pursuit of equal rights and representation in the economy (Cilliers, 2007).

The business imperative for managing and embracing diversity lies in the improvement of relationships and business results. These results could be accomplished through the improvement of the following: the attraction and retention of talent; the quality of the relationships between different groups of workers; the attachment to and detachment from the organisation by white males; team effectiveness; problem-solving, creativity and innovation; performance standards; sales through improved customer diversity and service; competition in a global market; saving on costs caused by employee absenteeism and turnover and legislation that forces organisations to work towards a more representative workforce in an attempt to “get their numbers right” (as is the case in South Africa). From a human resources management and labour relations point of view, it is generally accepted that the improvement of the above aspects relates directly to how effectively the interpersonal and intergroup relationships are managed in the organisational system (Cilliers, 2007).



## 2.2. DEFINITIONS OF DIVERSITY

There are many definitions of diversity. Diversity is the variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs that people have and how these act as assets to the groups and organisations in which they interact (Feldman, 2001). Diversity can be described as the ways in which we differ as individuals or organisations and the commonalities and similarities that justify and motivate diverse people and entities to work together in order to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes (Human, 2005).

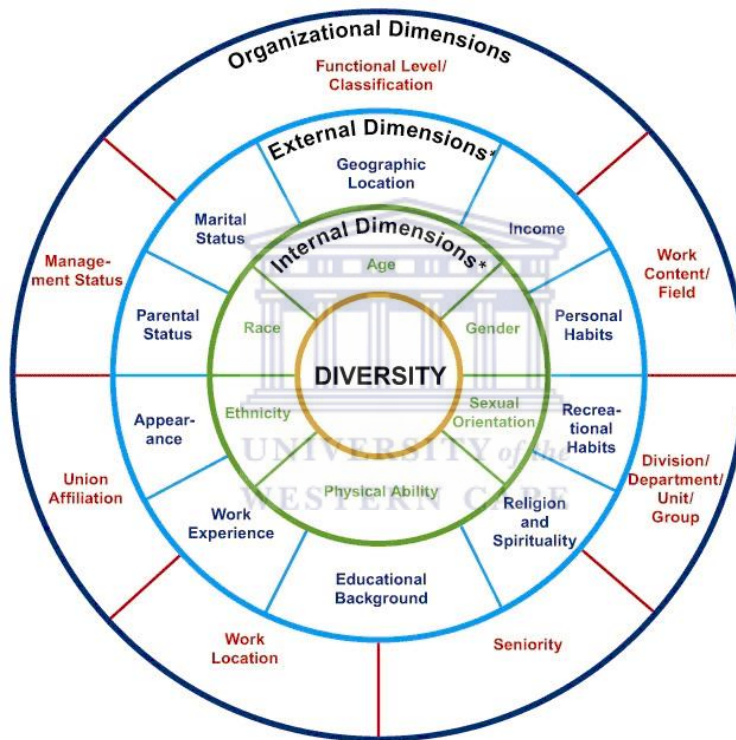


Diversity includes attribute differences such as age, gender, ethnicity and physical appearance as well as personal differences such as thought styles, religion, nationality, socio-economic status, belief systems, sexual orientation, language and education. Diversity is a 'mechanistic issue' that can be 'put right' through training on the way different cultures experience life. This assumption denies the dynamic nature of diversity aspects and the continuous process of evolution that diversity undergoes as society redefines itself. Diversity is often confused with related concepts such as 'diversity management', 'valuing diversity', 'multiculturalism', 'affirmative action' and 'employment equity' (Cilliers, 2007).

Diversity in the workplace is defined as recognition of the groups of people who share common traits. Hellriegel and Slocum (2009) differentiate between primary diversity and secondary diversity. They say that primary diversity has genetic characteristics that affect a person's self-image and socialisation, and secondary diversity consists of learnt characteristics that a person

acquires and modifies throughout their life. Figure 2.2. depicts the manner in which diversity may be viewed.

Figure 2.2: Dimensions of diversity



Source: Hellriegel and Slocum (2009)

## 2.3 BRIEF BACKGROUND

The country's history is fraught with differentiation, segregation, exclusion and discrimination (Bekker & Carlton, 1996; Eades, 1999). The replacement of the apartheid regime by the first democratically elected government in 1994 facilitated opportunities for everyone in the rainbow nation towards the celebration of diversity (Beck, 2000; Charlton & Van Niekerk, 1994). This road, to reconstruct the South African society, has been far from smooth (Hunt & Lascaris, 1998; Thompson, 2001).

The New South African Constitution looks to address the imbalances of the past and accelerate a process towards equality. One of the most pertinent challenges in South Africa is the implementation of employment equity plans (Smith, 2008). The ultimate goal of these practices and laws are to achieve a diverse workforce which is representative of the South African population. Previously marginalized groups have to become the focal point in terms of reaching the desired goal of equality for all. Educating, training and the development of these groups is the only way to effectively carry out principles of the constitution. It is also imperative that managers receive training on these laws and regulatory practices so as to effectively implement it in the workplace. According to Smith (2008), employment equity initiatives and diversity training/management go hand in hand as they form the key components of an employment equity strategy. It is important to have a good understating of these regulatory practices and laws when dealing with diversity.

The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act No.53 of 2003 was implemented in order to address the past inequalities (Nel, Werner, Poisat, Sono, du Plessis & Ngalo, 2011). BBBEE is defined as an 'integrated and coherent socio-economic process that directly contributes to the economic transformation of South Africa and brings about significant increases in the number of black people that manage, own and control the country's economy, as well as significant decreases in income inequalities' (Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda & Nel, 2006).

The Act has stipulated codes of good practice which will be issued by the Minister of Trade and Industry, aiming at ensuring consistency and harmony when implementing BBBEE initiatives within the economy. A generic scorecard was issued by government and implemented to cover areas of BBBEE focusing on six main areas. These areas are equity ownership, management, employment equity, skills development, preferential procurement, enterprise development and a residual which is determined by the specific sector (Erasmus et al, 2006). This is portrayed in figure 2.3.

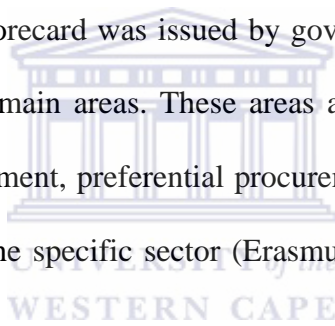
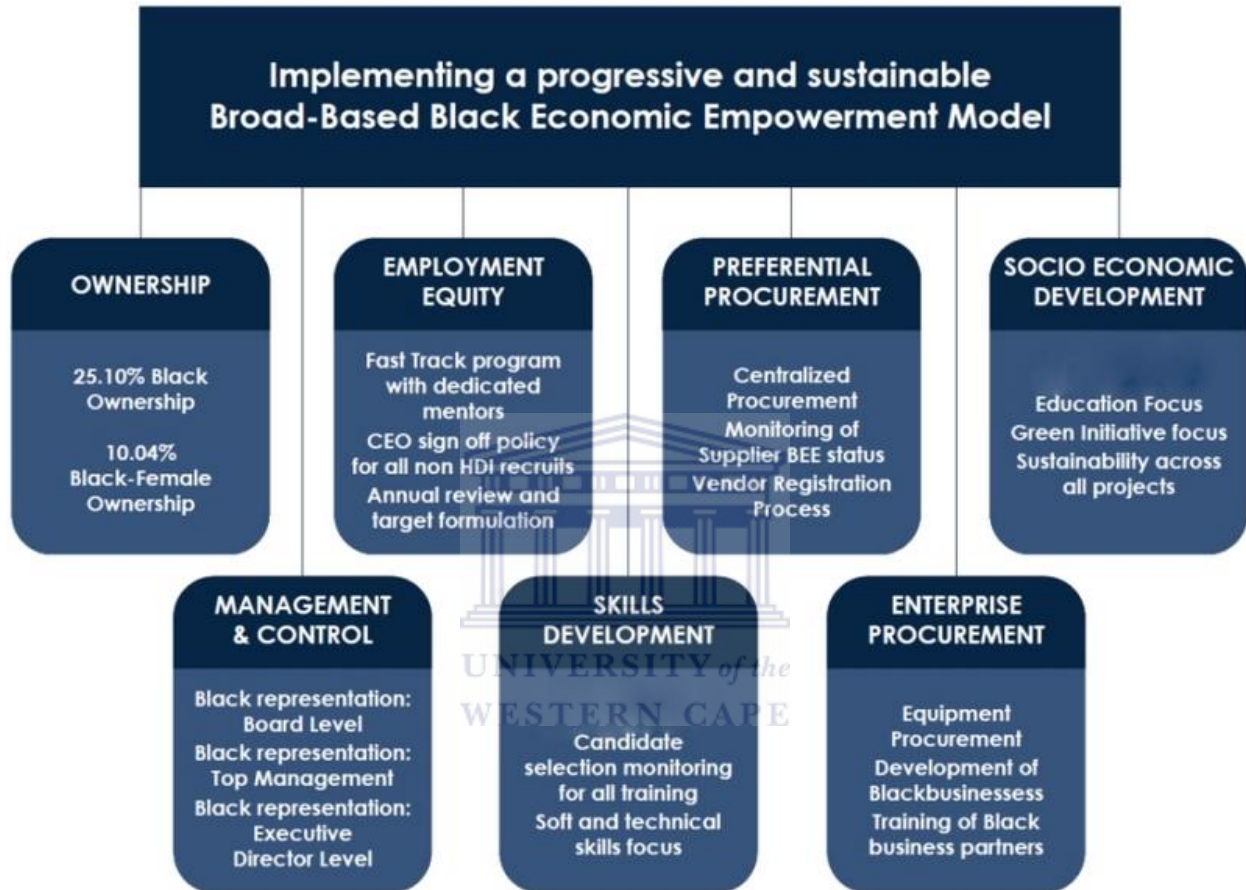


Figure 2.3: Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Model



Source: Erasmus et al. (2006)

The Skills Development Act (1998) aims to develop the skills of the workforce to increase the quality of working life for workers, to improve productivity in the workplace, to promote self-employment and the delivery of social services (Smith, 2008). The impact of the South African history on the population’s workforce is quite large. Due to this, organisations need to implement policies and procedures in order to accommodate the diverse population. The way the

organisation will deal with diversity will ultimately determine whether it will be constructive or destructive for the organisation. Figure 2.4 illustrates some of the critical issues confronting organisations, comparing equal opportunities and managing diversity.

Figure 2.4: Comparison of Equal Opportunities and Managing Diversity

	Managing Diversity (MD)	Equal opportunities (EO)
Issue	Maximization of potential	Discrimination
Population	Broader range of people	Social categories according to legislation
Orientation	Individualistic initiatives	Collective actions
Attitudes towards change	Changing the organisational culture	Acceptation of the status quo
Focus	Movement of people	Problems of the labor market
Emphasis	Individuals	Social groups
Goal	To add value	To promote rights

Source: Erasmus et al. (2006)

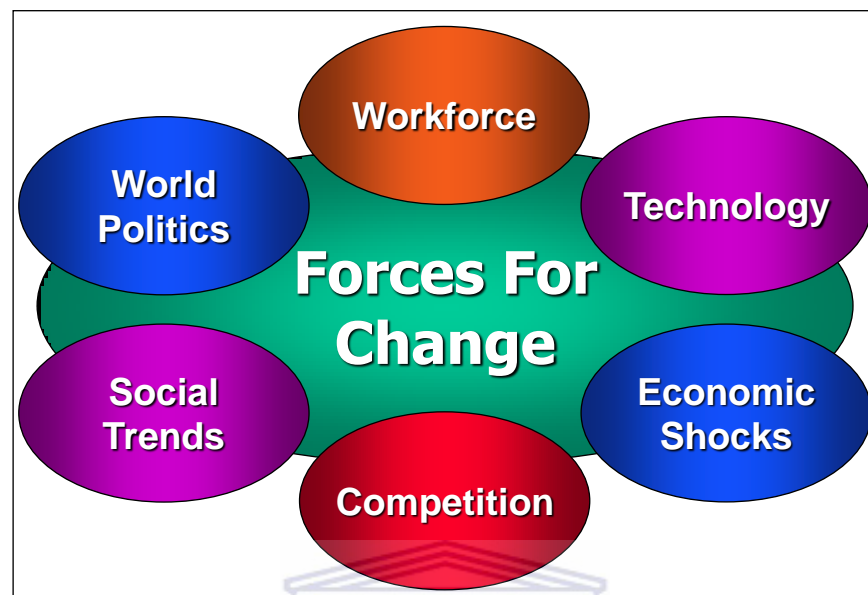
Organisations have realised that diversity often leads to frustration, misunderstandings, unhealthy conflict and an increase in turnover of people if it is not properly managed (Milliken & Martins, 1996; Van Eron, 1995). Often such organisations use mechanistic approaches to diversity (Cilliers & May, 2002).

### **2.3. THE NECESSITY FOR MANAGING DIVERSITY**

Change, which is a multifaceted constant in organisations, challenges managers to be creative when it comes to leading employees. Unfortunately, diversity programs have been known to be expensive and often unsuccessful (Aghazadeh, 2004; Davidson, 1999; Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006). Many organisational leaders, however, believe that diversity training is a necessary component to a diversity initiative (Cox, 1991; Davidson & Ferdman, 2002; Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000; Wiethoff, 2004).

The popularity and cost of such programs indicate the need and attention that is required from managers and program developers to incorporate appropriate and effective initiatives (Agars & Kottke, 2004; Anand & Winters, 2008; Bell & Kravitz, 2008; Cox, 2001; Kulik & Roberson, 2008; Thomas & Ely, 1996; Wiethoff, 2004). Furthermore, Mathieu, Tannenbaum, and Salas (1992) and Rosset and Bickham (1994) contended that the causes of diversity program failures need to be examined as the need for increased acceptance of diversity is unquestionable. Consequently, successful diversity programs are a necessity in today's workforce due to globalization and demographic shifts, and managers should treat them as a priority. Figure 2.5 reveals some of the issues which provide impetus for a more diverse workforce.

Figure 2.5: Forces for change within organisations



Source: Robbins (1998)



Cooperation by employees toward organisational goals is an essential element for success (Li & Hambrick, 2005). However, when diversity factors are highlighted through diversity awareness programs differences between groups are often focused on, which has the potential to lead to conflict (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Validzic, 1998). Furthermore, diversity faultlines, apparent differences between groups on diversity characteristics and traits, are a possible cause of diversity programs failure. Li and Hambrick (2005) found that large diversity faultlines increase emotional and task conflicts in corporations. In their study, emotional conflict also related to behavioural disintegration, which had tangible effects on an organisation through the loss of productivity (Li & Hambrick, 2005).



As a result, organisational management needs to counter potential conflict due to diversity factors. The rise of women's breaking the glass ceiling and gaining leadership positions within organisations also contributes to the change in workforce demographics (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Managers need to address the potential impacts on their organisations' culture and diversity climate related to the imminent changing nature of workplace leadership gender demographics.

As women rise into leadership positions, their greater cultural empathy may help them be more successful in implementing diversity programs. Addressing possible issues associated with increasing diversity is important in the expanding global marketplace. To accomplish this task, diversity interventions should attempt to increase cultural similarity awareness and decrease ethnocentric attitudes held by employees. Triandis (2003) suggested that focusing on organisational members' levels of cultural intelligence would assist in these processes. Additionally, individual cultural intelligence (Triandis, 2003, 2006) can be enhanced through increasing empathy toward various groups (Vescio, Sechrist, & Paolucci, 2003; Wang et al., 2003). This research examines the relationship between ethnic/cultural empathy and behavioural intentions toward different components of diversity initiatives.

According to Nadler (1994, p. 63), " environmental demands are creating profound stress for most companies. Markets, supplies, and regulations are changing drastically. Competition is on the increase, forcing executives to rethink business strategy and methods of addressing unexpected challenges. As if these external forces are not enough to contend with, organisations are having to grapple with demands from within: worker attitudes are shifting; labour-management tensions are increasing, and productivity is declining".

In conjunction with this, the dynamic nature of modern organisations, particularly those competing in global markets and their susceptibility to external pressures, makes it imperative that managers and their organisations remain receptive to new ideas, approaches and attitudes. This receptiveness will enable them to anticipate the new ideas likely to have an impact on their organisations, accommodate these developments into their strategic and operational plans and maintain a competitive advantage (Bornman, 1992).

Within this hyperturbulent environment, organisations are being compelled to adapt in the face of a changing work-force, advances in technology and a fundamental transformation in the values of their members (Kreitner & Kinicki, 1992). In accordance with these changes, procuring the highest calibre and qualified personnel requires attention to training and proactive management development programmes, combined with visionary leadership (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1994). Moreover, dealing fairly with minorities and women requires attention to programmes of selection and appraisal (Beardwell & Holden, 1994).

Pressures for increased organisational effectiveness and efficiency necessitate a movement toward strategic human resource management which is " the process used to establish human resource objectives, to develop strategies for attaining objectives and to identify policies governing the acquisition, utilisation, development and maintenance of human resources (Nkomo,1988, cited in Adonisi, 1991, p. 28).

However, strategic human resource management is dependent on an organisation's strategic capability, which can be considered to be "the inherent capacity of an organisation to continuously learn about its environment and to mobilise its resources to compete" (McDermott, 1989, p. 65).

Globalisation, inequalities and disparities resulting from a segregated past, changing legislation and regulatory practices compel South African organisations to shift from segregation and exclusion to inclusion and acceptance of differences (Pretorius, 2003). Creating awareness and understanding employees' perception around diversity, is argued to make it easier to facilitate change.

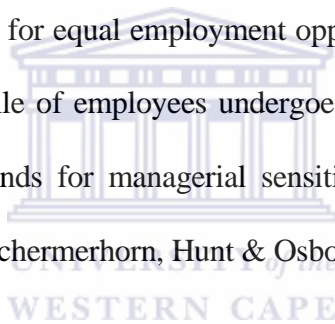
## **2.5. DIVERSITY AND DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT**



Diversity refers to all the characteristics that go into shaping of individual perspectives. According to Norton and Fox (1997), diversity refers to numerous categories of individual differences including culture, gender, spirituality, language, disability. Diversity includes an infinite range of characteristics that are not visible simply by looking at the individual. It also includes important characteristics related to one's background, experiences and perspectives (Meyer, 2002). Broadly defined, diversity is any combination characterised by differences and similarities. The paradox of diversity is, at a personal level, individuals are unique unto themselves, at an interpersonal level, they share some similarities with others and as human beings, share vast similarities with all other human beings. Within organisations, diversity viewed from a positive perspective can improve decision-making and creativity (Robbins, 2005).

On the contrary, diversity viewed with pessimism can be hugely destructive. Diversity management within the context, is interchangeably used with Valuing Diversity. It is firstly values-based and is dealt with at a behavioural level. It is an integral part of how individuals within the organisation are expected to conduct themselves. However, Pretorius (2003) states that more emphasis should be placed on the affective level, the deeply held emotions and feelings expressed by people.

Concomitant with these trends, human rights and social justice are increasingly revered in the workplace, with increasing pressures for self-determination, pressures for employee rights, pressures for job security, pressures for equal employment opportunity, and pressures for equity of earnings. As the demographic profile of employees undergoes radical transformations, workforce diversity brings with it new demands for managerial sensitivity and understanding, as well as responsive employment practices (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 1991).



## **2.6. APPROACHES TO THE CHALLENGES OF DIVERSITY**

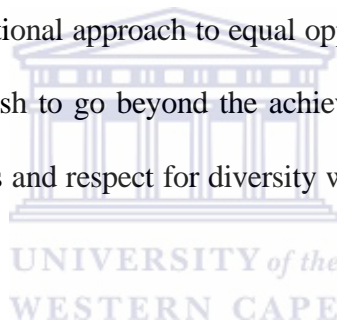
Greenhaus and Callanan (1994) have delineated three approaches to the challenges of diversity, which are addressed below.

### **2.6.1. VALUING DIFFERENCES**

According to Thomson (1993, p. 5), "acknowledging the existence of cultural differences within the workforce and establishing a systematic process of interaction to develop a learning organisation

can provide the means to attain strategic goals with new organisational structures". Valuing differences is a philosophy that fosters among organisational members an acceptance, understanding and ideally an appreciation of the differences that exist among them, with the objective of fostering more harmonious and productive work relationships. The philosophy is anchored in the conviction that the broader the spectrum of differences in the workplace, the greater the synergy among employees and the more excellent the organisation's performance (Hall & Parker, 1993).

Moreover, valuing differences recognises the benefits that can be accrued from multiculturalism, including the challenging of traditional stereotypes and assumptions (Greenslade, 1991). This philosophy differs from the conventional approach to equal opportunities in that it seeks to create a climate whereby those involved wish to go beyond the achievement of a mere statistical goal by attempting "to encourage awareness and respect for diversity within the workplace (Thomas, 1991, 24).



This is typically achieved via the agency of celebrating diversity, or isolating particular days highlighting the particular culture of a racial or ethnic group (Kennedy & Everest, 1991). Programmes to increase awareness and appreciation of differences in people tend to focus on changing attitudes. However, a criticism of such programmes is that they do not teach skills for working with diverse groups-skills such as negotiating and communicating (Hall & Parker, 1993).

Thomas (1990, cited in Galagan, 1991, p. 42) points out, "an individual can appreciate difference, be free of bias, and still not know how to manage a diverse work team. You can value diversity and still not know how to create an environment and a set of systems that will naturally work for

everyone. It boils down to a managerial issue". However, since an understanding and acceptance of diversity are not sufficient to maximise the contributions of all employees, managing diversity is required.

### **2.6.2. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

Affirmative action has been defined as "a remedial concept that requests employers to improve the work opportunities of women, racial and ethnic minorities, handicapped workers and those who have been deprived of job opportunities" (French, 1990, p. 171). Gerber, Nel & van Dyk (1995, p. 202) maintain "affirmative action is a proactive development tool to assist with the creation of, inter alia, greater equal employment opportunity. It is a process which should be integrated and holistic, involving the entire organisation and all of its actors. It should not just be a series of ad hoc training programmes for Blacks and diversity programmes for Whites. These programmes are important, but are no more than one aspect of what often involves a fairly major restructuring of how human resources are recruited, promoted and developed".

Many organisations are realising the benefits of affirmative action policies. These policies seem to assist organisations to focus on minority underrepresentation and move towards effecting positive changes (Fischer, 1995). Employer's recruitment strategies may need to reflect this change. Laabs (1991, p. 3) postulates "if organisations actively solicit the best available talent through aggressive proactive outreach from all segments of society, minority recruitment will no longer be a problem, it will be an asset".

However, although affirmative action has been successful in many respects, it is unlikely to solve the long-term needs of organisations and employees (Thomas,1991, cited in Greenhaus & Callanan,1994). This is because historically, the affirmative action option has not called for permanent organisational changes (Primos, 1994). Since the focus changes from eliminating discrimination in hiring to assuring the full contribution of all members of a diverse organisation, managing diversity is required.

### **2.6.3. MANAGING DIVERSITY**

Within recent years, managing diversity has become a popular topic within management in general and organisational behaviour and human resource management in particular; however, as is true of many contemporary topics within management, considerable confusion exists as to what managing diversity actually is. A plethora of definitions have been advanced in recent years. Thomas (1991, cited in Williams & Bauer,1994, p. 298) argues "managing diversity is a holistic approach to creating corporate environments that allows all kinds of people to reach their full potential in pursuit of corporate objectives".

Moreover, effective management of diversity requires "an environment catering for the full expression of the self, in a situation that is freely changing in reaction to the needs of all participants" (Biko, 1978, cited in Human,1991, p. 122). Historically, human resource management systems were developed to encourage and reinforce appropriate behaviours in a workforce that was relatively homogeneous. Managing diversity is a process through which those systems may be

changed to be more receptive to standards and behaviours embraced by minority cultures (Zonia & Kossek, 1995).

The interest in managing diversity can be traced to two different trends within society. First, there is the concern that affirmative action has been only partially successful in achieving its objective of minority representation at all levels within organisations (Dwyer, Gleckman, Segal, Smart & Weber, 1991). It is generally recognised that affirmative action has been at least partially responsible for the increase in women and racial minorities at entry levels within organisations, but recent attention has been drawn to the fact that members of these same employee groups have not progressed as rapidly into middle and upper management positions (Dominguez,1990).

This lack of progress points to the likelihood that what happens to these individuals once they enter the organisation may be playing a role in their lack of upward mobility, and affirmative action was not designed to deal effectively with these concerns (Ramudzuli & Menne, 1994). According to Thomas (1990, p. 108), "affirmative action is an artificial, transitional intervention needed to give managers a chance to correct an imbalance, an injustice, a mistake, but affirmative action alone cannot cope with the remaining long-term task of creating a work setting geared to the upward mobility of all kinds of people".

A second societal trend that has led to the widespread interest in managing diversity is the changing demographic profile of the workforce. It is now widely known that the majority of people entering the workforce from now until the end of the century will be women, and more predominantly members of racial minority groups (Johnston, Packer & Jaffe, 1987, cited in Lewan,1990).



Cox and Blake (1991) refer to the necessity of attracting excellent employees from different demographic groups as "an inevitability-of-diversity" issue. Any organisation that is able to "achieve the same productivity, commitment, quality and profit from the new heterogeneous work force as from the old one... without creating artificial standards, without compromising competence, and without demanding conformity, will be able to make its business more competitive in the increasing global marketplace" (Thomas, 1990, p. 112).

The motive for managing diversity stems from the fact that workforce diversity is a current reality and from the goal of organisational effectiveness rather than from legal requirements, moral responsibilities, or responses to internal and external group pressures. Managing diversity requires a managerial capability, and calls for assessments of organisational culture and systems, and for modifications to foster creation of an environment that will work naturally for all participants (Greenslade, 1991).

In essence, a pluralistic frame of reference is required, in which mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork and productivity among people who are diverse in various ways, is promoted (Caudron, 1992). Maximising the level of those underrepresented groups' productivity is essential to achieving competitiveness. By adjusting better to the differing needs of various employees, employers will be better positioned to utilise more fully the talents of all employees (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1994).

## **2.7. PRESSURES FACING THE MODERN ORGANISATION DEALING WITH ISSUES OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT**

There are several areas in which organisations are likely to experience greater pressures from a diverse workforce. These include, inter alia, pressures for self-determination, for employee rights, and for equity of earnings and for organisational restructuring (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993).

### **2.7.1. PRESSURES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION**

Diversity in the workplace implies that employees no longer desire to be assimilated into the prevailing culture of the organisation, but seek greater freedom to determine how to do their jobs and when to do them. Subsumed under pressures for self-determination are issues relating to decision-making; pressures for alternative work schedules; pressures for equity of earnings; and pressures for organisational restructuring (Armstrong, 1995; Beach, 1991; Kreitner & Kinicki, 1992).

### **2.7.2. PRESSURES FOR PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING**

According to Laubscher (1991, p. 32), "participative management has, at times, been promoted as a panacea for poor morale and low productivity". Workforce diversity places pressure on contemporary organisations to increasingly grant workers a modicum of decision-making power. In conjunction with this, employee participation has been strategically identified as promoting increased productivity and improved quality (Laubscher, 1991).

Cohen (1991, p. 2) postulates "the whole point about industrial participation is that it involves a modification to a greater or lesser degree of the orthodox authority structure, namely, where decision-making is the prerogative of workers in which workers played no part". However, in reviewing the work of Franke, Kaul, Locke Schweiger and Latham (1986, p. 34), found "no productivity increase could be attributed to employee participation".

### **2.7.3. PRESSURES FOR ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES**

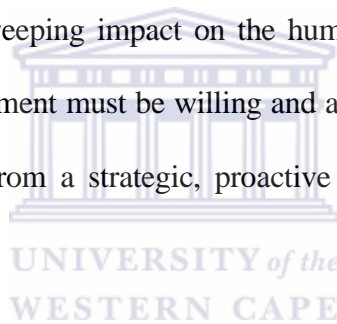
As organisations become more vulnerable to environmental turbulence and the vicissitudes of their employees, it becomes increasingly important to maintain a healthy balance between the activities which serve the needs of the individual and those which serve the needs of the organisation. Bolton & Gold (1994) maintain matching individuals to appropriate jobs ultimately raises individual capability, which contributes to the competitive advantage of the organisation. The multi-cultural organisation needs to acknowledge connections between work and family, and seek to create a culture that legitimises work-family issues and helps employees balance their involvements in different life roles (Armstrong, 1995).

Organisational initiatives need to be designed in order to positively affect productivity and the quality of work life (QWL). Thus issues of part-time employment, telecommuting, compressed work week, parent-tracking, flexitime, job-sharing, elder care and on-site child care centres are

becoming an increasingly important feature in organisations (Kreitner & Kinicki,1992; Russell, 1991).

Although there is a paucity of research on the benefits of flexitime, compressed work schedules and job sharing, research suggests these programmes help employees manage home/work conflicts and have a limited effect on productivity. Hence, the available evidence suggests approaching alternative work schedules with caution when attempting to improve employee productivity (Beach, 1991).

Employee diversity will have a sweeping impact on the human resources management function. Therefore, human resource management must be willing and able to participate fully in solving the problems that face organisations from a strategic, proactive and top-down approach (Messmer, 1990).



#### **2.7.4. PRESSURES FOR EQUITY OF EARNINGS**

Status incongruity between males and females and between Black and White employees necessitates a revision of issues pertaining to remuneration (Snelgar, 1989). Advocates of equal pay for work of comparable worth perceive job evaluation as a mechanism with which legal support can further reduce earnings differentials between males and females as well as the wage gap between White and Black workers. It has been proposed that people who perform comparable work receive similar remuneration (Meng, 1989). This proposal is of vital importance when considering the pay structure which may reflect both sexual and racial discrimination in prevailing pay rates (Auld,

1987). Moreover, designing flexible, cafeteria style benefits packages which are tailored to individual needs is another factor which organisations managing diversity will need to take into consideration (Armstrong,1995).

### **2.7.5. PRESSURES FOR ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURING**

The globalisation of business activities forces issues of diversity into the foreground as organisations envision their strategic objectives. As they struggle to get closer to international and local customers and to win their loyalty, many organisations are changing their organisational structures. Some of these changes, such as increased use of work team accountability, highlights the importance of working through domestic demographic diversity (Russell, 1991).

Other changes, such as new strategic alliances, reveal new types of diversity that must be managed, including differences in corporate cultures and differences in the cultures that host an organisation's foreign operations (Jackson & Associates, 1992). The remodelling may be designed to improve the organisation's ability to compete for the most qualified job applicants or to promote the fuller development and productivity of the individuals they already employ (Rhinesmith, 1991).

### **2.8. HOW DIVERSITY CAN IMPROVE AN ORGANISATION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

Cox and Blake (1991) delineate six areas in which an organisation has a well- managed, diverse workforce, can gain a competitive advantage. They assert, as women and racio-ethnic minorities

increase in proportional representation in the labour pool, organisations must compete to hire workers from these groups. There are considerable benefits that can be achieved if diversity is implemented and managed effectively within an organisation. Diversity can help organisations create new and more innovative products and services, better meet needs of customers or clients and do more for the community that the organisation is part of and that it serves. According to Cox and Blake (1991) as cited in Gilbert et al. (1999) and Mfene (2010) some of the benefits that arise because of diversity policy implementation are:

- It enables a wide range of views to be present in an organisation, including views that may challenge the status quo from all sides.
- It allows organisations to attract the best personnel as the labour pool shrinks and changes.
- It creates flexibility in the system; people are able to react to environmental changes much faster and at less of a cost.
- It stimulates social, economic, intellectual and emotional growth.
- It helps an organisation understand its place in the global community.

Organisations undertake diversity initiatives for a multitude of reasons. When companies are staffed by people from diverse ethnic and cultural groups, these employees are bound to think differently about situations they are faced with (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). This divergence in thinking patterns is a key factor of creativity and innovation. Many organisations have claimed that they can attribute their successes to the highly creative ideas that emanated from employing people from diverse cultures and ethnic groups (Greenberg & Baron, 2008 as cited in Smith,

2008). A diverse workforce is also important as it could be indicative of the successful implementation of affirmative action in the workplace (Feldman, 2001 as cited in Smith, 2008).

According to Von Bergen (2002) diversity implementation within organisations creates an array of positive outcomes which managers and management could expect, such as:

- Enhanced personal effectiveness and interpersonal communications among employees.
- Responsiveness to social and demographic changes.
- A climate of fairness and equality.
- Greater productivity on complex tasks.
- Increased sales, revenue, and profits.

According to Uys (2003, p.40) as cited by Smith (2008), diversity adds “credibility, accessibility and trust to the public sector”. An organisational workforce would have to embrace and learn to accept differing attitudes, interests and viewpoints from the microcosm of society in general because it needs to be reflective of people’s values and concerns. Conflict in such an environment is inevitable and should be managed effectively.

Diversity that is managed efficiently in the public sector can make a contribution to managing diversity country and organisation wide as it sends out the right message to the entire population (Uys, 2003 as cited in Smith, 2008). Generally, the effective management and the valuing of diversity in the workplace may very likely result in increased productivity, more motivation and morale among employees and teams, a less turnover and lower absenteeism, a decreases in

harassment and discrimination lawsuits as well as less risks of boycotts and strikes (Tayeb, 2006; Pretorius, 2003 as cited in Smith, 2008).

The impact of diversity on organisations depends on the extent to which it is valued and managed (Feldman, 2001 as cited in Smith, 2008). Diversity that is not managed or valued can have adverse impacts on organisational effectiveness and outcomes. According to Feldman (2001 as cited in Smith, 2008) this can occur at two levels, namely:

- **Organisational effectiveness**

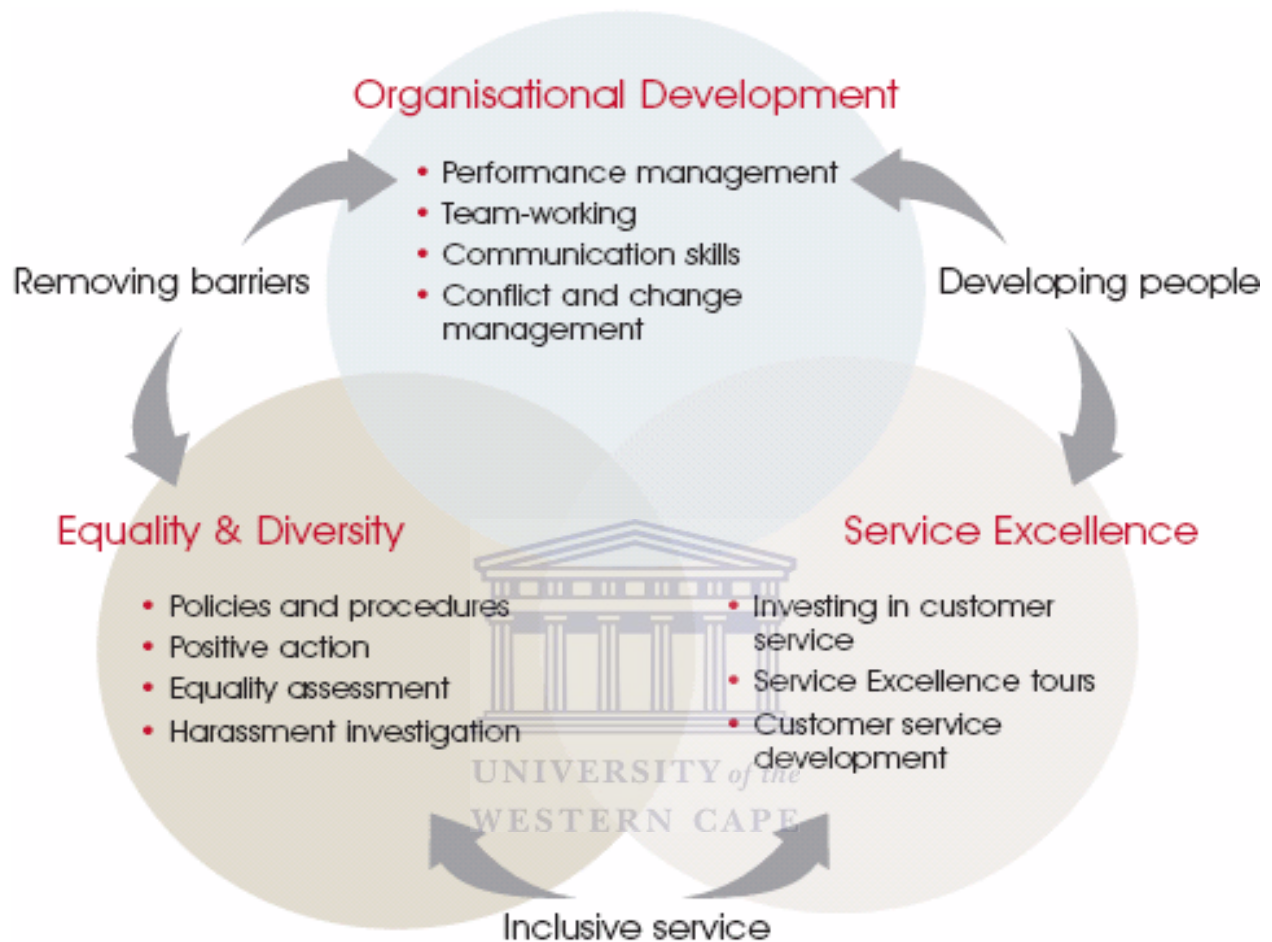
Problems that arise in the workplace due to diversity related issues can impact on organisation effectiveness by affecting work attendance/increased absenteeism, turnover, productivity, work quality, recruiting success, workgroup cohesiveness, communication, creativity and innovation and it may tarnish work relationships as well.

- **Organisational Performance**

Problems relating to diversity issues can also negatively impact on organisational performance. This may poorly affect profitability, market share, international trade and the achievement of formal organisational goals.



Figure 2.6 provides an insight into the impact of diversity



Source: Erasmus et al. (2006)

Muller and Haase (1994) describe managing diversity in terms of a manager being aware of the values and biases of his/her conventional management approaches, their ability and willingness to use employee focused strategies that affirm peoples' differences while maintaining a high quality of productivity. This approach is a strategically driven process whose emphasis is on

building specific skills and creating policies that bring out the best in everyone. Its goal is to create a level playing field through the assessment, identification and modeling of behaviours and policies that are seen as contributing to organisational goals (Svehla, 1994).

Various benefits have been identified in the diversity literature and include: group performance, organisational performance, profitability, and employee awareness. More specifically, diversity has been linked to an increase in the quality of group performance, creativity of ideas, cooperation and the number of perspectives and alternatives considered (Cox, Lobel & McLeod, 1991; Watson, Kumar & Michalesen, 1993).

The synergy model of managing diversity assumes that diverse groups will create new ways of working together effectively in a pluralistic environment. However, resistance due to denial of demographic changes and recognition of the need for and the benefits of a program can quickly derail any efforts to implement and sustain managing diversity efforts (Svehla, 1994).

Although considerable attention has been paid to managing diversity within the corporate world, very little empirical evidence exists on the potential benefits or the advantages that might accrue to the organisation that adopts such a programme (Williams & Bauer, 1994). However, Carnevale (1989, cited in Galagan,1993:43) notes "diversity matters to organisations because new competitive standards are changing the way work is done. These changes will be more important than demographics in the long run because success will depend more and more on the ability of people to work in teams and communicate with people who are different".

Moreover, Thomas (1991, cited in Greenhaus & Callan, 1994, p. 292) posits the view "many individuals believe that there is a richness in diversity that you can't get from a homogeneous workforce. This may be true, but it's not necessary to support managing diversity. Whether there is a richness or not, managers will have employees with significant differences and similarities. The compelling case for managing diversity lies in the fact that diversity is a reality-or soon will be. By focusing on the richness, you risk suggesting that the manager has a choice". However, Dodds (1995, p. 40) maintains "in order to add value from diversity, people must behave and relate to each other in new ways".

### **2.8.1. COST ARGUMENT**



Greenhaus and Callanan (1994) maintain organisations have not been as successful in managing women and minorities as in managing White males. A corollary of this is therefore, organisations unable to manage an increasingly dominant part of the workforce will incur considerable additional costs which will have profoundly negative ramifications on their productivity.

### **2.8.2. RESOURCE ACQUISITION ARGUMENT**

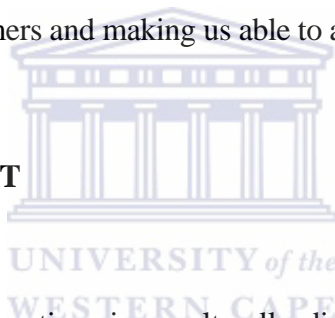
Organisations that can attract, retain, motivate and engage the most talented from diverse groups will be most likely to succeed, while those that do not may not even survive. However, current corporate attempts to address the specific needs of these new workers tend to consist mostly of isolated programmes managed at relatively low organisational levels and rarely connected to larger

strategic initiatives. Hence, the benefits of these programmes to organisations go largely unrecognised (Hall & Parker, 1994).

### **2.8.3. MARKETING ARGUMENT**

Organisations that serve multi-national or domestically multi-cultural consumers will benefit from a diverse workforce that brings a blend of insights and cultural sensitivities to the organisation's marketing efforts (Greenhaus & Callanan, 1994). In accordance with this view, Caudron (1990, p. 77) espouses the view "Ultimately, valuing diversity will provide us with a competitive edge by helping us to understand our consumers and making us able to attract the best in the labour pool".

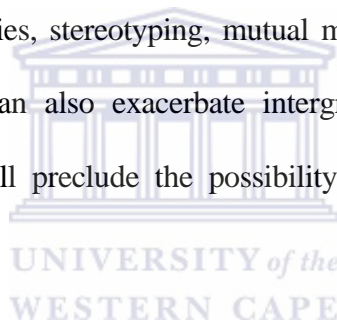
### **2.8.4. CREATIVITY ARGUMENT**



The representation of varying perspectives in a culturally diverse workforce should enhance the level of creativity in the organisation. Homogeneity of the workforce leads to a loss of creativity, originality and innovation and creative energies must be suppressed to avoid anyone consistently differentiating themselves or challenging the status quo. These trends lead to a conservative, risk-averse management environment. However, heterogeneity of the workforce has the potential of increasing levels of creativity, thereby contributing to organisational effectiveness (Allcorn, 1990).

### **2.8.5. PROBLEM SOLVING ARGUMENT**

Creating a culture where the different backgrounds of people and their different styles of interaction are embraced, adds value to problem-solving and requires fundamental behavioural changes (Robbins, 1993). Employees from different cultural groups bring different strengths and perspectives to the organisation that can enhance its effectiveness. Varying perspectives in a culturally diverse workforce should enable problem-solving groups to produce high quality solutions and decisions. Notwithstanding these views espoused, Greenhaus and Callanan (1994, p. 295) assert "culturally diverse organisations are susceptible to potential conflicts between different cultural groups. Language difficulties, stereotyping, mutual misunderstanding and resentments of perceived preferential treatment can also exacerbate intergroup conflict". However, proactive conflict management strategies will preclude the possibility of arousing dysfunctional conflict (Dodds, 1995).



### **2.8.6. SYSTEM FLEXIBILITY ARGUMENT**

Rather than ignore differences between employees, wise visionary employers are learning to embrace them and to utilise diversity to create competitive advantage. Introducing more flexibility into the workplace has been found to result in higher morale, less absenteeism, improved productivity and reduced turnover (Hall & Parker, 1994). Organisations that manage diversity effectively become more fluid and flexible, which enables them to respond to environmental changes more quickly and effectively (Feldman, Doeringhaus & Turnley, 1994).

Workplace flexibility and investigations into creative ways of enhancing the fit between people and their work roles, is a key to corporate competitiveness. More specifically, it is a critical organisational ability that enables employers to assist employees express rather than suppress their identities and roles they have outside work. Flexibility can encourage higher levels of engagement in the activities and relationships that make up a job, and as a result, can produce better work performance (Hall & Parker, 1994).

## **2.9. FAIRNESS IN ORGANISATIONS**

From the perspectives of employees, issues of fairness are not constrained to sex, cultural background, age or other legally protected attributes. Many other aspects of personal orientation are deemed worthy of tolerance and respect as well, including political views, sexual orientation, family situations, and various personal idiosyncrasies. Employers who appear to favour some personal orientations and stifle others risk paying the price of low productivity due to a restricted pool of applicants, employee dissatisfaction, lack of commitment and turnover (Beardwell & Holden, 1994).

### **2.9.1. CAREER ADVANCEMENT**

Although the number of Blacks and women in the workforce continues to increase, their representation in managerial positions is much less than for White males. The small proportion of women and Blacks at senior management levels suggests that their careers are stalled or slowed

down at lower and middle levels of management, a situation referred to as the invisible glass ceiling (Greenhaus & Callanan,1994).

Differential treatment represents lost opportunities for women and minorities to develop job-related talents, which can detract from job performance and ultimately dampen career advancement prospects. Moreover, an imbalance in women and minorities in senior positions indicates a need for special career development programmes for women and Blacks (Moshikaro, 1988). Thus, structural integration is achieved, that is, representation of cultural groups at all levels and functions within an organisation (French,1990; Russell,1991).

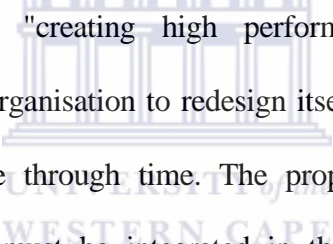
In conjunction with this, Oakley-Smith and Braxton (1993, p. 22) maintain "the process of valuing and managing a diverse work force must be an empowering process for all employees. One which creates an organisational climate which is motivating for all employees and where advancement is synonymous with personal potential in a self-actualising environment".

## **2.9.2. JOB PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS**

Ray and Eison (1984, pp. 179-180) maintain "it is important to make clear the purpose and performance measurements for each job ...The key to achieving greater and consequently higher productivity is the explicit definition of the purpose of each job and the measures of quality and quantity that show how well it is succeeding". It is evident from research that employers have a propensity to evaluate the performance of same-race and same-sex employees more highly than those of minority groups and women, which has a profound impact on the career advancement of

these groups (Landy & Farr,1980). In conjunction with this, performance appraisal is increasingly coming under scrutiny.

Jackets (1988) maintains that performance appraisal, if properly implemented, is an effective tool in the management of people. However, "if cases of favouritism or victimisation become apparent, the whole system loses its value as a motivator, and if not seen to be justifiably consistent, personal antagonism between employees and their supervisors can cause potentially damaging confrontations (Kinnie & Lowe, 1990, p. 47).



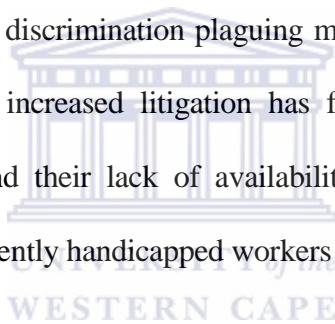
Huysamen (1995, p. 31) maintains "creating high performance in the face of relentless environmental change requires an organisation to redesign itself so that it is capable of sustaining efficient, high quality performance through time. The propensity and capability to adapt as performance requirements change must be integrated in the fibre of the organisation". Such pressures have culminated in organisations instituting changes in their performance evaluation systems, and in the adoption of performance management which is "a systematic approach to the management of people, using performance, goals, measurement, feedback and recognition as a means of motivating them (employees) to realise their maximum potential. It embraces all formal and informal methods adopted by the organisation and its managers to increase commitment and individual and corporate effectiveness. It is thus broader than performance appraisal and performance related pay, which are elements in a performance management system" (Armstrong, 1995, p.37; Bussin,1992, p. 24).



### **2.9.3. LOST OPPORTUNITIES**

In comparison with White male employees, it is postulated that women and minorities receive fewer opportunities to exert authority on their jobs, develop supportive relationships within the organisation, and become enmeshed in the informal network of friendship, power and influence. The lack of social ties between people who frequently work together could be a sign of exclusion in the organisation (Stephenson & Krebs, 1993).

Many researchers conclude that a contributing factor which has resulted in lost opportunities for qualified individuals is the cycle of discrimination plaguing minorities, women and older workers. As a result of lost opportunities, increased litigation has focused on organisational decisions involving training opportunities and their lack of availability to members of minority groups, women, older workers and more recently handicapped workers (Goldstein, 1993).



### **2.10. A MODEL OF ORGANISATIONAL FAIRNESS**

Organisations are increasingly feeling the impact of globalisation and there has hence been a substantial proliferation in the number of multinational organisations (Rhinesmith, 1991). In response, today's manager must not only be capable of functioning within this turbulent environment and pursuing multiple and diverse goals, it may also be necessary to understand and work within the boundaries of other cultures (Cascio, 1992).

Within this new environment, cultural dissimilarities between groups in organisations may produce stereotypes, feelings of psychological distance, and cultural misunderstandings. Hamilton (cited in Kreitner & Kinicki, 1992, p. 136) posits the view, "stereotyping is said to occur when a perceiver makes inferences about a person because of the person's membership in some group".

Research reveals perceptions of stereotypes associated with (White) men on the one hand and women and Blacks on the other, strongly influences the assessment of merit. These stereotypes include what women and men and Blacks are thought to be capable of and what kinds of work are suitable for them to do (Albertyn & White, 1994).

When people with different habits and world views come together in the workplace, misunderstandings and conflicts inevitably occur as a result of dissimilar languages, expectations and norms (Neale & Mindel, 1992). Workforce diversity hence calls for managerial sensitivity and commitment in addressing the needs of all employees and ensuring corporate environments are free of prejudice. This, however, requires organisational programmes and policies to reflect this commitment (Motshabi, 1993).

## **2.11. CHALLENGES OF DIVERSITY**

According to Kalimashe (2010, p. 16) if organisations do not manage diversity effectively it will result in conflict and chaos. Due to apartheid, the majority of the present managers within South African organisations grew up in segregated communities and therefore attended segregated

schools. As a result of this, they have conceptualized stereotypes about race and gender, and therefore are ineffectively prepared to deal with the diverse workforce which exists in organisations today. This may lead to increased tension in the workplace therefore resulting in numerous conflicts.

By ignoring diversity issues, it may result in costs such as time, money and efficiency. It may further lead to unhealthy tension, loss of productivity because if increased conflict, increased labour turnover (Kalimashe, 2010, p.16).

It is imperative that organisations implement strategic diversity plan and process to aid employment equity and affirmative action plans and strategies. By doing so, it will result in effective dealing of the diverse workforce within the organisation. However, there are various barriers which may influence the effectiveness of diversity programmes or initiatives. These are, failure of senior leadership involvement, complexity of diversity that is not fully understood by employees, the business imperative may not be fully understood, the organisation may have insufficient resources to implement such an initiative, there may be failure to understand the need for training initiatives and the organisational culture may operate using assimilation rather than trying to accommodate all cultures and different social groups. Organisations could also lack evaluation and feedback of changes in attitudes and behaviour after a diversity management initiative may lead to ineffective management. Training programmes are expensive and time consuming for organisations to formulate; therefore management should ensure that they measure the transfer of learning after a training session or workshop (Smith, 2008, p. 35).

Diversity factors such as ethnicity, religion, race and gender may influence South African society challenging organisations to merge different ideologies into their organisational culture (Cilliers, 2007, p. 35). According to Mfene (2010, p. 145), the major challenge of management is to create an environment in which family needs, various lifestyles and work styles are accommodated.

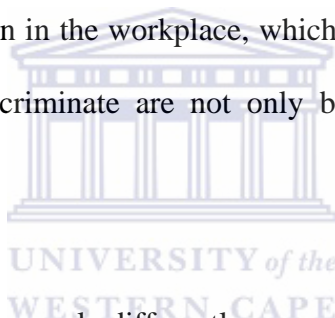
Mfene (2010, p.145) identifies three diversity challenges. These are-

- **Lower group cohesiveness-** diverse groups find it difficult to form a bond and be cohesive unlike similar groups who have things in common such as language, culture, background etc. in which they can relate to. The lack of group cohesiveness can result in a negative impact on teamwork and work performance in the organisation.
- **Communication problems-** these occur when individuals assume that the other party understands the message they are conveying when in fact they do not. This leads to misunderstandings, communication problems, inaccuracies, and inefficiencies.
- **Mistrust and tension-** individuals tend to trust and associate with other individuals who are similar to them in terms of values and beliefs. Because of this misunderstandings and mistrust may occur between individuals who do not share the same values and beliefs.

## 2.12 KEY ISSUES AFFECTING DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Key issues affecting the management of diversity according to Murrell and James (2001) include the “glass ceiling”, discrimination, sexual harassment, affirmative action, mentoring, job interruptions, career mobility, part-time work and leaves of absence. Other issues include stereotyping and ethnocentrism (Newell, 2002). DuPont (1997) concurs and labels the barriers to

sound diversity management as prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination. Factors that have been shown to influence the work-related outcomes for women and people of colour include overall corporate climate, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, occupational segregation and exclusion from mentoring opportunities (Murrell & James, 2001). These factors hinder performance and have a marked impact on perceptions. Prejudice against people comes from a belief that one's own culture, race, class or group is superior. It evolves from the belief that one's own group is right, while all other are wrong (DuPont, 1997). This concept is better known as ethnocentrism, which incorporates both positive feelings towards one's own group and negative feelings towards others (Segall, Dasen, Berry & Poortinga, 1999). Stereotypes have been responsible for much discrimination in the workplace, which has led to the origin of vast labour legislation. Organisations that discriminate are not only being unethical but may even face lawsuits.

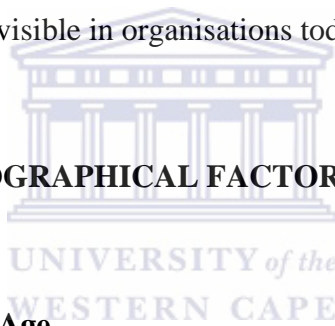


Discrimination is the act of treating people differently, unequally and usually negatively because they are members of a particular group (DuPont, 1997). Two of the approaches that are used to tackle the problems of unfair discrimination in employment, are offering equal opportunities and managing diversity. Equal opportunity suggests the solution is to treat everyone the same, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, etc (Newell, 2002). It is the organisation's responsibility to offer equal opportunities to a diverse range of employees. According to Goss (cited in Price, 1997) two fundamental reasons for this are to develop human capital and to ensure that social justice takes place. Artificially blocking the progress of any one group, will result in less than optimal use of an organisation's human capital. It can be concluded that unfair discrimination is irrational, as it limits the resource value of employees. Goss continues by stating that

organisations should have moral or ethical interest in social equality, wherein the economic benefits are secondary to this social duty. On the other hand, managing diversity emphasises treating everyone differently, in accordance with different circumstances and needs (Newell, 2002).

When equal employment opportunities are not offered, some of the above elements including prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping may form part of organisational life. These diversity barriers take place in the form of racist or sexist jokes, rude remarks or the refusal to hire or promote based on age or gender (DuPont, 1997). These are but a few of the symptoms of diversity-related problems that are visible in organisations today

## **2.13. THE INFLUENCE OF BIOGRAPHICAL FACTORS**



### **2.13.1 Work place diversity and Age**

In previous research conducted by Feldman (2001), it was also found that there is no significant difference between the age of employees and their perception of diversity policy implementation. Further investigation of this topic found research carried out by Walbrugh and Roodt (2003), reported that younger groups (<35 years) felt progressively more optimistic about Employment Equity and diversity initiatives that was implemented within their organisations than the older groups aged 36-50 years. The 50 and over age group also felt more positive towards Employment Equity and diversity initiatives that were implemented within organisations (Janse van Rensburg & Roodt, 2005). Several studies suggest that there is a significant difference

between the age of employees and work place diversity policy implementation within organisations (Beaty et al., 2007, Duweke, 2004; Feldman, 2001, Harris et al., 2007 & Mahlase, 2005).

### **2.13.2 Work place diversity and Gender**

Feldman (2001) found no significant differences between males and females perceive diversity policies in terms of its implementation within organisations. Further research conducted by Beaty, Adonisi and Taylor (2007) on employees' perceptions of organisational politics in South Africa in terms of gender diversity revealed that both sexes relate similarly to issues of diversity, especially their perceptions towards the organisational politics that is created because of workplace diversity. In conclusion to their study they found that both males and females were equally tolerant of political behaviour because of the increasing awareness of the importance of equity and affirmative action legislation in the workplace (Beaty et al., 2007).

On the contrary, research performed by Duweke (2004) found that males were more negatively inclined towards the implementation of diversity policies within organisations compared to females.

### **2.13.3 Work place diversity and Race**

Duweke (2004) reported that Black employees generally felt more negatively towards diversity policies and initiatives such as Black Economic empowerment, Affirmative Action and

Employment Equity for example. Similarly it is reported in Janse van Rensburg and Roodt (2005) that Blacks viewed diversity negatively and that it created more issues around racism and discrimination. In a study conducted by Vallabh and Donald (2001) it was found that White people were generally more committed to their work and were therefore more likely to project positive attitudes and be more accepting of diversity initiatives and diversity policies.

A qualitative study done by Prince (2006) a focus group and interviews were used to determine the perceptions of managers regarding the barriers to implementing Employment Equity policies in the City of Cape Town, it was found that the majority of white females felt unfairly treated and were not in favour of such policies because they felt that as defined by the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, they were still not considered part of the designated group within their organisation. Black females felt that it was unfair that white females were part of the designated group and white females also felt that they were discriminated against in the past.

Most research generally supports the theory that employees from different race groups will experience, feel and perceive diversity and diversity issues, policies and initiatives differently (Duweke, 2004; Janse van Rensburg & Roodt, 2005; Prince, 2006).

#### **2.13.4 Work place diversity and Job Status**

Research conducted by Duweke (2004) on the role of Employment Equity in diversity found that managers felt more positive towards relationships between race groups and diversity policy initiatives and training. Similarly in research results as described by Feldman (2001) and Harris,



Rousseau and Venter (2007) found significant differences between employees from different job levels or those that have a different job status and the way they view and perceive diversity. They found that management in general had a more positive outlook about these types of diversity policies.

Harris et al. (2007), maintain that the reason managers felt positive and optimistic is because they believe that their policies and procedures are diversity-friendly. They also speculated that management portrayed a positive attitude towards diversity because they could have felt obligated to advocate diversity policies and diversity initiatives to set an example to their subordinates.

## **2.14. CONCLUSION**



In South Africa, society is rapidly changing and therefore organisations need to deal with the problems associated by this. Diversity is one of the issues which arise. This literature has indicated that diversity needs to be managed effectively. It has reviewed the concept of diversity and given a brief background on how the South African society has impacted diversity. The literature further goes on in highlighting regulatory practices and laws which organisations need to follow in order to abide by the South African government. The review highlights the benefits of diversity and examines the challenges which face diversity. Managing diversity is the ultimate step of organisations to be successful, and is the final section of this literature.

Diversity management can easily turn into a losing situation for all involved if handled improperly. If inappropriately managed, it could lead to devaluation of employees who are perceived as culturally different, reverse discrimination against members of the majority group, demoralization and reinforcement of stereotypes, and increased exposure to legal risks. When diversity is managed effectively, it facilitates better working relationships among employees, reduces costs, and increases productivity.

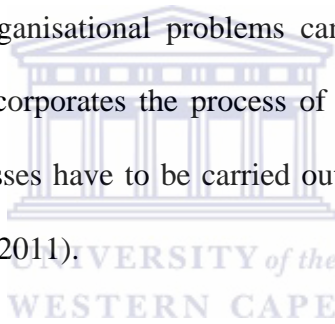


## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

Sekaran and Bougie (2010) define research as a systematic and organised effort to investigate a specific problem that needs a solution. In doing research a series of steps are designed and followed. Research involves a series of well thought-out and carefully executed activities that will enable one to know how organisational problems can be solved or at least minimized (Brijball, 2011). Research thus incorporates the process of inquiry, investigation, examination and experimentation. These processes have to be carried out systemically, diligently, critically, objectively and logically (Brijball, 2011).



#### 3.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the current research are:

- To determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on age, race, religious group, and gender in terms of the implementation of diversity policies and procedures within an organisation.

### 3.3 HYPOTHESES

A hypothesis can be defined as a logically conjectured relationship between two or more variables expressed in the form of a testable statement. Relationships are conjectured on the basis of the network of associations established in the theoretical framework formulated for the research study. By testing the hypotheses and confirming the conjectured relationships, it is expected that solutions can be found to correct the problem encountered. The hypotheses for this study are as follows:

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on age.



**Hypothesis 2:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on gender.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on race.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on job status.

### **3.4 SAMPLING DESIGN**

Sekaran (2003) defines a population as the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher would like to investigate. The sample size for this research includes 80 employees from a glass manufacturing organisation within the Western Cape. A sample is a subset of the population and it consists of some members selected from the population (Sekaran, 2003). In other words not all the members of the population would form part of the sample. Sekaran (2003) states that a sample size of thirty is appropriate for most research, the current sample size will therefore consist of thirty employees from various organisations within the Western Cape; the employees derive from various cooperate organisations within the Western Cape.



### **3.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

A non-probability sampling design was used, based on the method of convenience. “In non-probability sampling designs, the elements in the population have no probabilities attached to their being chosen as sample subjects. This means that the findings from the study of the sample cannot be confidently generalized to the population,” (Sekaran, 2003, p. 277). The advantages of making use of convenience sampling would be that it is quick, convenient and less expensive. However, convenience sampling is not generalisable at all and is seen as a disadvantage.

### **3.6. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

Sekaran (2003, p. 233) defines a questionnaire as follows: “a questionnaire is a pre-formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives”. Sekaran (2003) goes on to say that questionnaires are an efficient data collection mechanism when the researcher knows exactly what is required and how to measure the dependent and independent variables of interest.

A biographical information section was included that consisted of questions that are related to the respondents age; gender; race; number of years worked in the questionnaire, number of other organisations worked for before joining this organisation; and job status. Respondents were also requested to complete the Workplace Diversity Survey (WDS).

#### **3.6.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKPLACE DIVERSITY SURVEY**

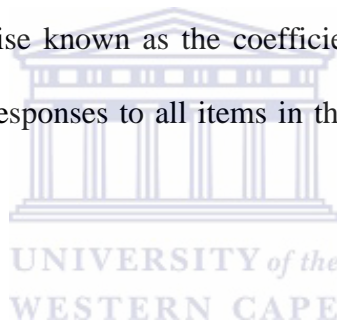
The Workplace Diversity Survey was used. The questionnaire consists of 17 questions. Questions are answered using a rating scale of 1-5 (1= disagree, 2= disagree somewhat, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree somewhat, 5=agree).

#### **3.6.2. RELIABILITY OF THE WORKPLACE DIVERSITY SURVEY**

According to Sekaran (2003, p. 204) “the reliability of a measure indicates the extent to which the measure is without bias (error) and offers consistent measurement across time and across the various items in the instrument. In other words, the reliability of a measure indicates the stability

and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the goodness of a measure.” According to Foxcroft and Roodt (2005), there are four common types of reliability coefficients:

- Test-Retest- same measure administered twice to the same group of people over a period of time.
- Alternate Form- administration of two equivalent forms of the same measure to the same group on two different occasions.
- Split-Half- coefficient is obtained by splitting the measure into two equivalent halves and then computing the correlation coefficient between the sets of scores.
- Coefficient Alpha- or otherwise known as the coefficient of internal consistency which is based on the consistency of responses to all items in the measure using Kuder-Richardson formula.

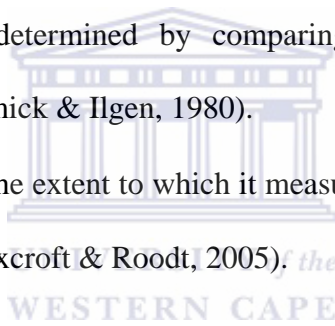


A reliability analysis was performed to determine whether the items on the workplace diversity survey (WDS) measured the five dimensions consistently (De Meuse, Hostager and O’Neill, 2007). According to De Meuse et al., (2007), Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha Score was computed for each dimension using the SPSS Version 12. If the set of four WDS items measured a single uni-dimensional construct, one would expect a high coefficient alpha score i.e. exceeding 0.7. Reliability scores ranged from 0.89 to 0.76. These results suggest that the WDS assesses the five dimensions of diversity in an internally consistent manner (De Meuse et al., 2007).

### 3.6.3. VALIDITY OF THE WORKPLACE DIVERSITY SURVEY

According to Sekaran (2003, p .207) “Validity ensures the ability of a scale to measure the intended concept.” In addition to this, there were similar findings that indicated that the items are measuring a single common underlying construct, which signifies validity. There are three common types of validity:

- Content validity- the extent to which the instrument provides a reasonably representative sample of behaviours or responses considered to comprise the domain the test is suppose to cover (McCormick & Ilgen, 1980).
- Criterion related validity- determined by comparing test scores with one or more independent criteria (McCormick & Ilgen, 1980).
- Construct validity- measure the extent to which it measures the theoretical construct or trait it is supposed to measure (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2005).



The WDS has been found to have good face value (a desirable characteristic for a measure) which refers to how well an instrument appears to measure what it is supposed to measure (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2005). The questionnaire that was used was shown to be reliable and valid in other past studies as it has been adapted to the South African context and can be used in other studies. Therefore, it is deduced that the work satisfaction and motivation questionnaire is reliable and valid.



## **3.7. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES**

This research used both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyse the data obtained from the study. The statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to analyse and present the findings of this research by examining the formulated hypotheses of the study.

### **3.7.1 Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics aims to represent or to describe the scores or observations obtained on single variables in a summarized manner (Durrheim, 1999b). This includes a frequency distribution which is a graphical representation of the number of subjects who obtained a particular score on a variable (Sekaran, 2001). Researchers can also look at measures of central tendency such as the mean (the average score), median (central score) and the mode (the most frequently occurring score) to describe how data was dispersed (Sekaran, 2001). One could also look at the range of extreme values of scores or the variance, which is the average distance each score is away from the mean (Durrheim, 1999b).

### **3.7.2 Inferential Statistics**

Inferential statistics on the other hand is used to draw conclusions about populations on the basis of information obtained from samples. Inferential statistics are used for two purposes namely: to estimate population parameters (a value that is a property of the population, e.g. the mean) and to test hypotheses. Some examples of inferential statistics include: correlations ( $r$ ) which are used

to test for the strength of the relationship between two variables, a t-test which is used to test for differences between the means of two groups, a chi-square test which is used for the association between two nominal variables and analysis of variance (ANOVA) which can be used to test for differences between the means of more than two groups (Durrheim, 1999).

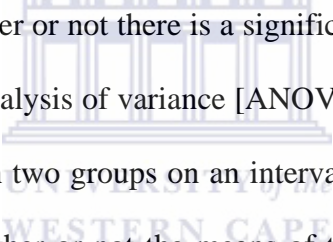
### **3.7.2.1 T-Test**

This type of analysis compares two groups with the aim of examining whether any significant mean differences exist between the two groups on a variable (Sekaran, 2001). The advantage of a t-test, according to Sekaran (2001) is that it considers the means and standard deviations of the two groups on the variable and looks at whether the numerical difference in the means are significantly from 0. The t-test was used in this study to examine whether there were any significant differences between employee and employer perceptions in terms of the implementation of diversity policies in their organisations. The results from a t-test are indicated by the t statistic (Sekaran, 2001).

The t-test is done to see if there are any significant mean differences between two groups on a variable of interest. The t-test can also be used to examine the differences in the same group before and after a treatment. It indicates whether two groups comprising of nominal variables, are significantly different from each other with regard to a particular variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

### 3.7.2.2. ANOVA

As mentioned before, ANOVA is a type of analysis that compares groups and in this research study it was specifically used to analyse and compare biographical data and hypotheses to determine whether there was any significance between the different age, race, or directorate groups in terms of the employees and employer perceptions towards diversity. Roberts (2005) contends that the advantage of this type of analysis is that all groups are weighed against each other in tandem with the appropriate variables (in Adams, 2006). The results from ANOVA are indicated by the F statistic (Sekaran, 2001).



“Whereas the t-test indicates whether or not there is a significant mean difference in a dependent variable between two groups, an analysis of variance [ANOVA] helps to examine the significant mean differences among more than two groups on an interval or ratio-scale dependent variable. The results of ANOVA show whether or not the means of the various groups are significantly different from one another, as indicated by the F-statistic” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, pp. 346-7).

In this study, ANOVA was used to assess whether employees varying in biographical profiles (age, length of service and job status) significantly differ in their perceptions of diversity management within a glass manufacturing company in the Western Cape.

### 3.8. CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the research methodology and statistical methods used to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaire. The hypotheses, sample techniques and description, and the data collection method were discussed to provide the methodology that this research proposal will take. Thereafter, data analysis was discussed which involved an elaboration on descriptive and inferential statistics. After reviewing the above literature, the research methodology that this proposal sets out to embark on is evident, clear and precise.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

After the data was collected by means of questionnaires, it was coded and quantitatively analysed using the Statistical Programme for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20. The current chapter outlines the results obtained in the study and provides a discussion of these results. The descriptive statistics computed for the study are presented first in an outline of the characteristics of the sample with regards to the variables included in the study. Thereafter, the analyses of the responses to the Workplace Diversity Survey (WDS), are presented with the aid of inferential statistical procedures. The information provided and discussed in the previous chapters will serve as a background against which the contents of this chapter will be presented and interpreted.

#### **4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

The descriptive statistics calculated for the sample are provided in the sections that follow. That is, the data pertaining to the variables included in the study, as collected by the measuring instrument employed, is summarised. In this manner, the properties of the observed data clearly emerge and an overall picture thereof is obtained.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for the Workplace Diversity Survey

Scale	Mean	Sd
Emotional Reactions	13.1	2.18
Judgement	11.2	4.32
Behavioural Reactions	9.6	3.97
Personal Consequences	14.3	2.51
Organisational Outcomes	11.5	5.94
Total	73.2	17.4

The results of the survey suggest that respondents primarily felt that they would experience personal consequences due to managing diversity (Mean = 14.3, s = 2.51). They were also inclined to react emotionally to managing diversity (Mean = 13.1, s = 2.18). However, their behavioural reactions were not as high (Mean = 9.6, s = 3.97). The total perception is relatively negative (Mean = 73.2, s = 17.4).

#### 4.2.1 Results of the biographical questionnaire

This section outlines the descriptive statistics calculated on the basis of the variables included in the biographical questionnaire. The demographic variables that received attention are as follows:

- Age distribution of the respondents

- Gender distribution of the respondents
- Race of the respondents
- Job level of the respondents

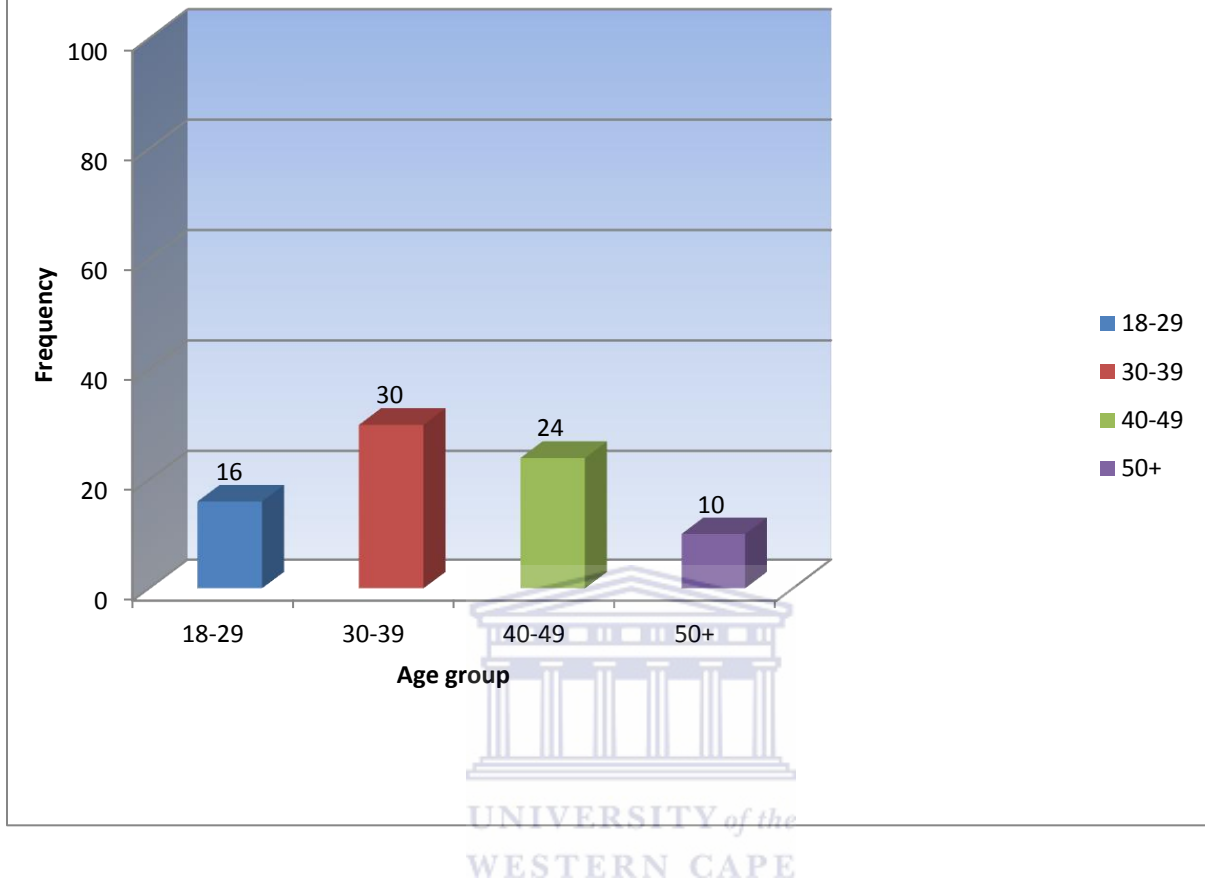
Descriptive statistics, in the form of frequencies and percentages, are subsequently presented graphically for each of the above-mentioned variables.

#### **4.2.1.1 Age distribution of respondents**

The subjects' responses as regards their age are presented graphically in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1: Age of respondents**



From the frequency distribution presented in Figure 4.1 it may be deduced that 37.5% of the respondents were in the age group 30-39 ( $n=30$ ), with a further 30% being in the age group 40-49 ( $n=24$ ). While those in the age group 18-29 comprised 20% of the respondents ( $n=16$ ), only 12% were over 50 years of age ( $n=10$ ).



#### 4.2.1.2 Gender distribution of the respondents

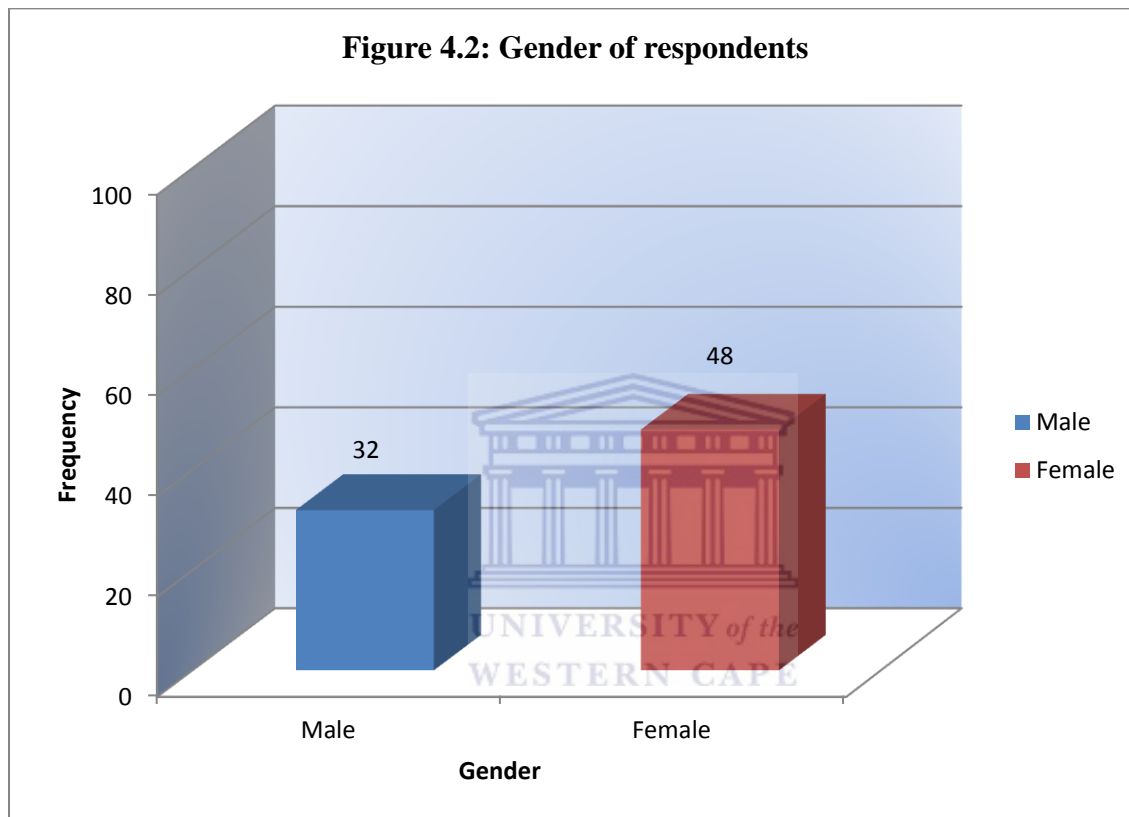


Figure 4.2 presents a graphical representation of the gender distribution of the selected sample. As can be seen from Figure 4.2, the majority of the respondents are female. More specifically, 60% (n=48) of the subjects are women, while only 40% (n=32) are male.

#### 4.2.1.3 Race of the respondents

The distribution of the sample with regards to race is presented graphically in Figure 4.3.

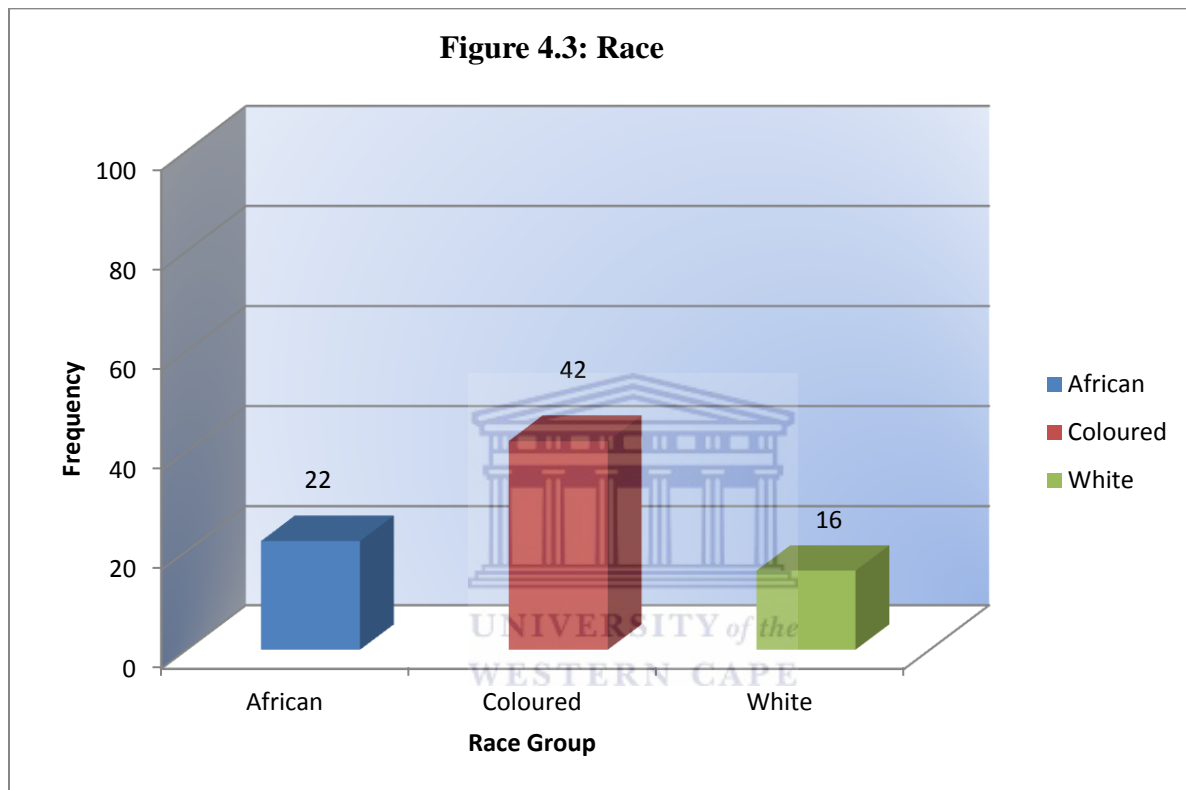
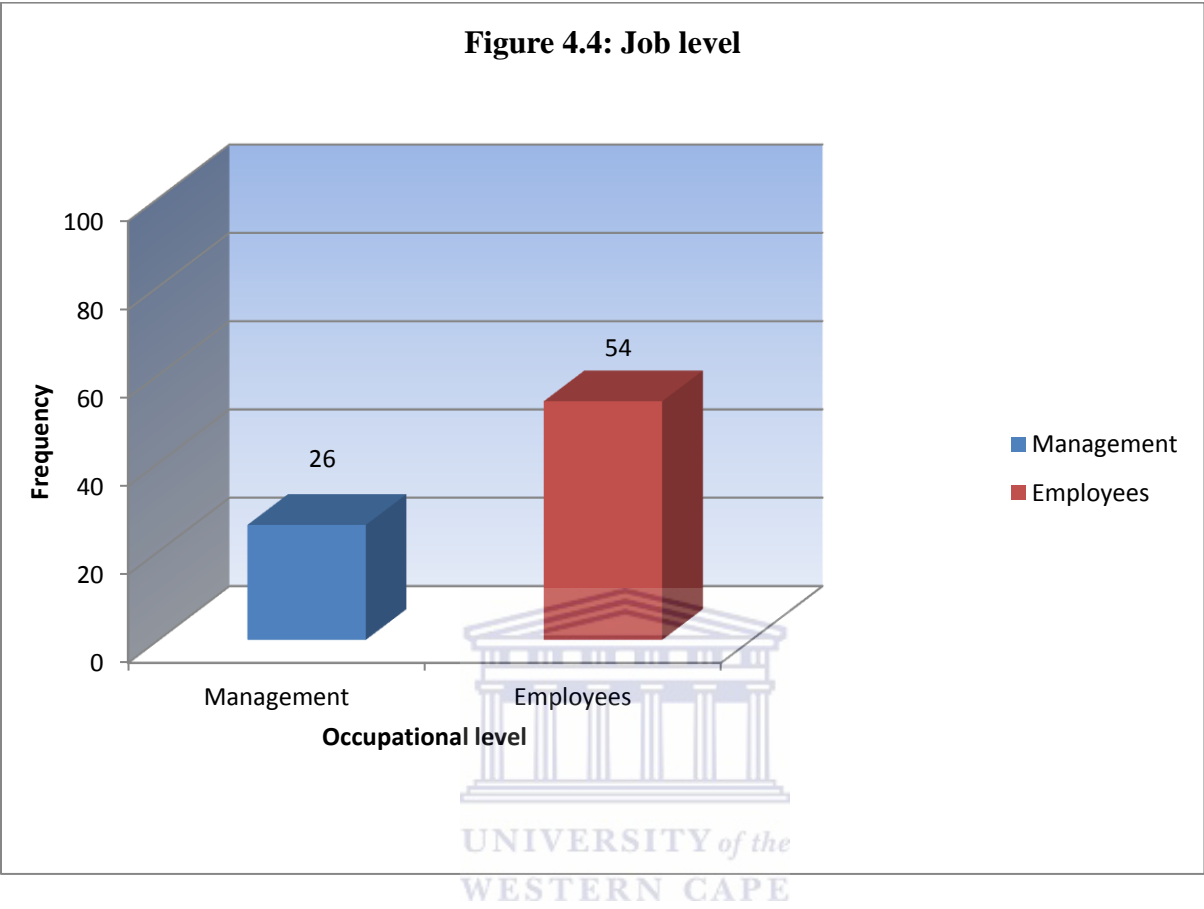


Figure 4.3 indicates that 52.5% (n=42) of the sample were Coloured, 27.5% were African (n=22), and 20% of the participants were White (n=16).

#### 4.2.1.4 Job level of the respondents

The job level of the respondents is presented graphically in Figure 4.4.



From Figure 4.4 the following may be deduced: The majority of the sample, 67.5% (n=54), were employees, with those in management constituting 32.5% of the respondents (n=26).

### 4.3 INFERENCE STATISTICS

In the sections that follow the results of the inferential statistics employed in the study are presented. For the purposes of testing the stated research hypotheses, the t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were utilized. With the aid of these statistical techniques conclusion are drawn with regards to the population from which the sample was taken and decisions are made with respect to the research hypotheses.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on gender.



**Table 4.2: Gender differences in perceptions of managing diversity**

	Male	Female		
	Mean	Mean	t	P
<b>Managing diversity</b>	76.5	59.2	-3.295	0.000**

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 4.2 depicts the t-test with respect to perceptions towards managing diversity based on the gender of respondents. The results indicate that there are statistically significant differences ( $t = -$

3.295,  $p < 0.01$ ). The results furthermore indicate that females are more positive towards managing diversity (Mean = 59.2) as compared to their male counterparts (Mean = 76.5).

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on age.

**Table 4.3: ANOVA: Perceptions towards managing diversity by age**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	P
<b>Between groups</b>	12048	2	411.474	0.456	0.001**
<b>Within groups</b>	1931.645	2	471.142		
<b>Total</b>	3577.543	4			

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 4.3 depicts the ANOVA with respect to perceptions towards managing diversity based on the ages of respondents. The results indicate that there are statistically significant differences ( $F=0.456$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) in perceptions towards managing diversity based on age.

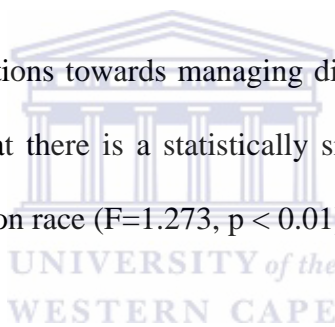
**Hypothesis 3:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on race.

**Table 4.4 ANOVA: Perceptions towards managing diversity by age race**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	P
<b>Between groups</b>	1965.864	1	491.466	1.273	0.001**
<b>Within groups</b>	34363.757	2	386.110		
<b>Total</b>	36239.621	3			

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

The results with respect to perceptions towards managing diversity based on race are shown in Table 4.4. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards managing diversity based on race ( $F=1.273$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).



**Hypothesis 4:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on job status.

**Table 4.5: ANOVA: Perceptions towards managing diversity by job status**

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P
<b>Between groups</b>	1546.924	2	386.731	0.810	0.615
<b>Within groups</b>	42501.552	2	477.546		
<b>Total</b>	44048.476	4			

Table 4.5 shows the ANOVA with respect to perceptions towards managing diversity based on job level of respondents. The results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference ( $F = 0.810, p > 0.05$ ).

#### 4.4. RELIABILITY OF THE WORKPLACE DIVERSITY SURVEY

**Table 4.6 Reliability of the Workplace Diversity Survey**

Workplace Diversity Survey	Number of items	N	Cronbach
WLCQ	20	80	0.809

The reliability of all the variables within the study is shown in the above table. This reliability is determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The reliability for the questionnaire was calculated to be 0.809, which exceeds the accepted level of 0.7 according to Sekaran and Bougie (2010).

#### 4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the most salient findings which emerged from the study investigating perceptions of 80 employees within a glass manufacturing company towards managing diversity. The results were graphically presented and descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were

tabulated and discussed. The next chapter provides a discussion of the results, and presents the findings in relation to previous research. Conclusions which can be drawn are presented and recommendations to individuals and organisations are highlighted.





## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this study was to whether there were differences in employee perceptions of diversity management based on selected biographical characteristics within a glass manufacturing company in the Western Cape. As workplace diversity increases in organisations so will the possibility of problems among different cultures. Leaders who understand this upfront can help temper the adverse effects on the staff and on the organisation as a whole. An examination of the reasons for diversity management indicates that, since diversity is a fact of life, the negative results of not managing diversity and the possible advantages that could be derived from it if managed effectively, make the management of diversity inevitable.

This chapter presents an overview of the most important findings of the research performed. In order to contextualize the research, comparisons are drawn with available literature in various settings. The remainder of the chapter provides the conclusions that can be drawn from the research as well as recommendations for future research.

## 5.2. DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

The results of the survey suggest that respondents primarily felt that they would experience personal consequences due to managing diversity (Mean = 14.3,  $s = 2.51$ ). They were also inclined to react emotionally to managing diversity (Mean = 13.1,  $s = 2.18$ ). However, their behavioural reactions were not as high (Mean = 9.6,  $s = 3.97$ ). The total perception is relatively negative (Mean = 73.2,  $s = 17.4$ ).

The sample comprised primarily of respondents who were in the age group 30-39 ( $n=30$ ), with a further 30% being in the age group 40-49 ( $n=24$ ). The majority of the respondents were female ( $n=48$ ), with Coloured respondents comprising 52.5% of the sample. The majority of the sample, that is 67.5%, were lower level employees.

## 5.3. INFERENCE RESULTS

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on age.

According to the statistical results of the current study, there was a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity based on age. Hence, the null hypothesis would be rejected.

In previous research conducted by Feldman (2001), it was also found that there is no significant difference between the age of employees and their perception of diversity policy implementation. Further investigation of this topic found research carried out by Walbrugh and Roodt (2003), reported that younger groups (< 35 years) felt progressively more optimistic about Employment Equity and diversity initiatives that was implemented within their organisations than the older groups aged 36-50 years. The 50 and over age group also felt more positive towards Employment Equity and diversity initiatives that were implemented within organisations (Janse van Rensburg & Roodt, 2005).

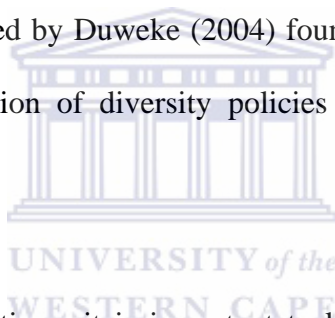
Most of the available research corroborates the findings in the current research findings in which it is reported that there was a significant difference between the age of employees and work place diversity policy implementation within organisations, (Beaty et al., 2007, Duweke, 2004; Feldman, 2001, Harris et al., 2007; Mahlase, 2005).

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on gender.

From the results attained of the current study it was found that there is a significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on gender. Hence, the null hypothesis would be rejected.

Research undertaken by Feldman (2001) reports no significant differences between males and females perceive diversity policies in terms of its implementation within organisations. Further research conducted by Beaty, Adonisi and Taylor (2007) on employees' perceptions of organisational politics in South Africa in terms of gender diversity revealed that both sexes relate similarly to issues of diversity, especially their perceptions towards the organisational politics that is created because of workplace diversity. In conclusion to their study they found that both males and females were equally tolerant of political behaviour because of the increasing awareness of the importance of equity and affirmative action legislation in the workplace (Beaty et al., 2007).

On the contrary, research performed by Duweke (2004) found that males were more negatively inclined towards the implementation of diversity policies within organisations compared to females.



As diversity increases in organisations, it is important to know the effects of changes in the gender demographics within organisations on diversity acceptance. Traditional research considers women in the workforce as they relate to or affect male-dominated areas such as leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2007). However, women are now participating in the workforce in greater numbers than ever before and are beginning to obtain upper-level management positions within organisations (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

These changes may have an impact on diversity programs because prior research has shown that women tend to be more empathic toward different ethnicities and cultures than men do; therefore, they may be more accepting of diversity initiatives (Cundiff & Komarraju, 2008;

Wang et al., 2003). Men and women have been found to be different on topics such as acceptance of women in authority positions (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000), prejudice based on sexual orientation (Kite & Whitley, 1998), and cultural/ethnic perceptions (Wang et al., 2003). In all of these areas, women are more accepting of disadvantaged groups. Similarities between genders have also been found for rating men on managerial characteristics (Schein, 2001), rating women with dependent characteristics (Banaji, Hardin, & Rothman, 1993), and on levels of ethnic-based prejudice (Snellman & Ekehammer, 2005).

Furthermore, past research on empathy toward different ethnic/cultural groups found that no differences existed between women and men on one dimension of cultural empathy, specifically empathic perspective taking (Cundiff & Komarraju, 2008; Wang et al., 2003). Because of conflicting sources of information between the sexes in relation to diversity topics, more research is necessary to get a better understanding of how gender relates to attitudes toward diversity programs.

Gender has been found to have an influence on intentions to attend diversity training and perceptions of the need for such programs. However, additional research that would address gender differences in more specific learning constructs, such as knowledge gain, attitude change, and skill enhancement, is warranted. Furthermore, it would be of interest for researchers to examine the association between increases in female leaders and effectiveness of various diversity programs.

Results reveal an interesting difference between attitudes toward diversity groups such as gender, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status and attitudes toward various sexual orientations (bisexual, lesbian, and gay men). The attitudes toward diverse sexual orientations were rated as a separate factor than all the other attitudes toward diversity groups examined in this study. Although an expansion of this component was not a priority in this article, additional research should consider the differences between attitudes toward these types of diversity groups to examine how and why these might differ. Furthermore, we did not examine attitudes toward heterosexuality, and such information would allow for the examination of whether attitudes toward socially normed sexual orientation status would be included with attitudes toward homosexuality.

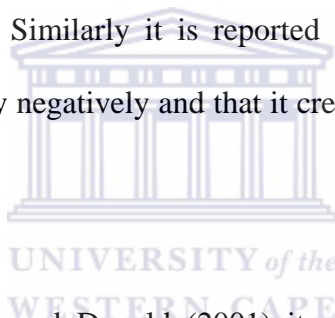


Contrary to similar gender and ethnicity research, Soni (2000), reports no significant difference was found between female and male employees in their receptivity to diversity. However, gender did mediate the impact of ethnicity on receptivity to diversity in that male Asian Americans reported significantly greater receptivity to diversity than Caucasians, while female Asian Americans did not.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on race.

The results emanating from this research study found that there was a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management between the different race groups. Hence, the null hypothesis would be rejected.

Duweke (2004) reported that Black employees generally felt more negatively towards diversity policies and initiatives such as Black Economic empowerment, Affirmative Action and Employment Equity for example. Similarly it is reported in Janse van Rensburg and Roodt (2005) that Blacks viewed diversity negatively and that it created more issues around racism and discrimination.

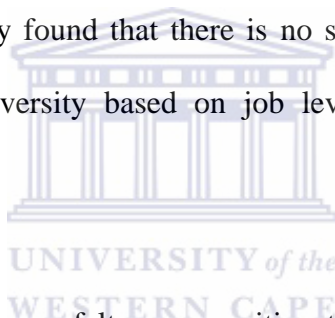


In a study conducted by Vallabh and Donald (2001) it was found that White people were generally more committed to their work and were therefore more likely to project positive attitudes and be more accepting of diversity initiatives and diversity policies. A qualitative study done by Prince (2006) a focus group and interviews were used to determine the perceptions of managers regarding the barriers to implementing Employment Equity policies in the City of Cape Town, it was found that the majority of white females felt unfairly treated and were not in favour of such policies because they felt that as defined by the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, they were still not considered part of the designated group within their organisation. Black females felt that it was unfair that white females were part of the designated group and white females also felt that they were discriminated against in the past.

Most research found generally supports the theory that employees from different race groups will experience, feel and perceive diversity and diversity issues, policies and initiatives differently (Duweke, 2004; Janse van Rensburg & Roodt, 2005; Prince, 2006).

**Hypothesis 4:** There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions towards diversity management based on job status.

The findings of this research study found that there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions towards managing diversity based on job level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.



Duweke (2004) reports that managers felt more positive towards relationships between race groups and diversity policy initiatives and training. Similarly in research results as described by Feldman (2001) and Harris, Rousseau and Venter (2007) found significant differences between employees from different job levels or those that have a different job status and the way they view and perceive diversity. They found that management in general had a more positive outlook about these types of diversity policies.

It is noted by Harris et al., that the reason managers felt positive and optimistic is because they believe that their policies and procedures are diversity-friendly. They also speculated that management portrayed a positive attitude towards diversity because they could have felt



obligated to advocate diversity policies and diversity initiatives to set an example to their subordinates.

#### **5.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS**

Diversity is beneficial to both employees and the organisation as a whole. Although the organisation and its employees are interdependent, respecting individual differences can increase productivity. Diversity in the workplace can reduce lawsuits and increase marketing opportunities, recruitment, creativity, and business image (Esty, Griffin, & Schorr-Hirsh, 1995).

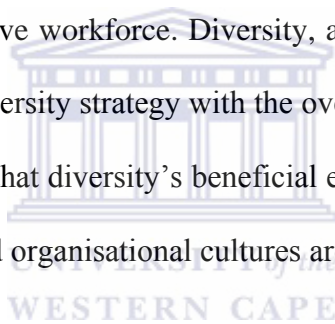
In an era when flexibility and creativity are keys to competitiveness, diversity is critical for an organisation's success. Also, the consequences (loss of time and money) should not be overlooked. Organisations need to evaluate and identify areas where diversity training and policies can be implemented to achieve a greater awareness and understanding in the workplace.

The organisational culture is influenced by the growing diverse workforce in terms of gender, race, age, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation and so forth. Regulatory practices and laws are forcing organisations to implement Employment Equity, Affirmative Action, Black Economic Empowerment and Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment plans and policies to regulate past injustices in the workplace (Basset-Jones et al., 2007).

Managers must understand discrimination and its consequences. Managers should also recognize their own cultural biases and prejudices (Koonce, 2001). Diversity is not about differences among groups, but rather about differences among individuals. Each individual is unique and does not represent or speak for a particular group. Managers must be willing to change the

organisation if necessary (Koonce, 2001). Organisations need to learn how to manage diversity in the workplace to be successful in the future (Flagg, 2002). This can be done if managers within organisations implement diversity policies into every aspect of the organisations functions and purpose. The success of these policies depend on top management how they respond. The more positive management is the more positive employees are likely to be towards the implementation of diversity policies and initiatives.

Politically, morally and economically, there is an obligation on business to examine their character and identity, and in turn, their strategies, policies and practices, in order to accommodate a diverse, all inclusive workforce. Diversity, as a business imperative, challenges today's leaders to incorporate a diversity strategy with the overall strategic intent of the business. Richard and Johnson (1999) posit that diversity's beneficial effects are more likely to be realised when firms' business strategies and organisational cultures are compatible.



#### **5.4.1. ORGANISATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES**

Managing diversity will increasingly become a strategic business issue for many organisations as they seek more creative ways of pleasing customers and differentiating themselves from competitors. Many organisations will have to put into place practices that enable people with different styles of thinking and relating to work together creatively and productively. In order for diversity initiatives to deliver, implementation must be based on a comprehensive management of change strategy (Dodds, 1995).

These programmes need to be designed to manage diversity in a comprehensive attempt to change the culture of an organisation so that all employees can contribute to the productivity and profitability of the organisation (Caudron, 1992). Hence, organisations are increasingly providing for the use of quality improvement teams to tackle the problem of retaining competent, though underutilised employees, with the objective of ensuring each employee has the opportunity to participate fully, to grow professionally and to develop to the highest level (Feldman et al., 1994).

Organisations are faced with additional pressures to ensure that their employees are optimally utilised. It is against this backdrop, that a commitment to human resource training and development, management training and development and organisational development becomes necessary (Armstrong, 1995). Robbins (1998) suggests that diversity management presupposes the introduction of alternative work schedules, diversity training and mentoring programmes.

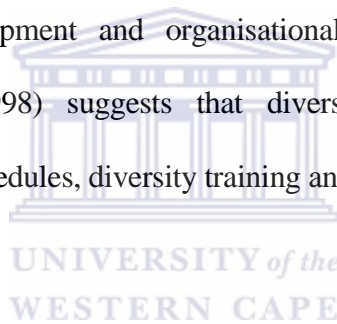


Figure 5.1: Implications for managing diversity



Source: Robbins (1998)

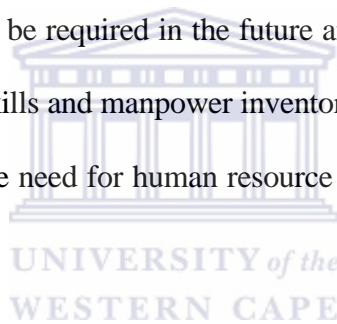
#### **5.4.1.1. MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Since managing diversity is contingent on managerial capability, one of the most pressing issues facing organisations today involves the process of management training and development. Management development involves the process of "gradual, systematic improvement in the knowledge, skills, attitudes and performance of those individuals in an organisation who carry management responsibilities" (Kirkpatrick, 1978, cited in Viedge & Taffinder, 1986, p. 28).

The reason for this is "without conscious management development, managers run the risk of operating in outmoded ways" (Viedge & Taffinder, 1986, p. 29). Hence, management development is the logical means for overcoming this kind of obsolescence. Moreover, a commitment on the part of managerial level personnel to human resources training and development is required.

#### **5.4.1.2. HUMAN RESOURCE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

According to Armstrong (1995), an organisation's training strategy should largely be determined by its human resource plans, which in turn are derived from its overall strategies. The plans should indicate the types of skills that may be required in the future and the numbers of people with those skills who will be needed, that is, skills and manpower inventories need to be developed. These will allow organisations to determine the need for human resource training and development (Peterson, 1992).



Development training for women and minorities is one of the most effective steps an organisation can take to remedy the paucity of women and minorities at senior levels, and can help these groups into non-traditional areas of work (Paddison, 1995). Human resource development is defined as "the integrated use of training and development, organisational development and career development to improve individual, group and organisational effectiveness" (McLagan, 1989, p. 52).

Prekel (1987) posits the view that the development of any human resources requires inputs from at least three sources: the management of the company, the supervisors of the people concerned, and the individuals themselves. When dealing with a group of people previously overlooked and

underutilised such as Blacks, women and the handicapped, it is even more essential to ensure that each member of the development team contributes actively to the growth process. By identifying, understanding and tackling the challenges facing these groups in their careers, employers can ensure that valuable skills are developed and optimally utilised in order to create a polyvalent workforce (Muchinsky, 1990).

#### **5.4.1.3. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

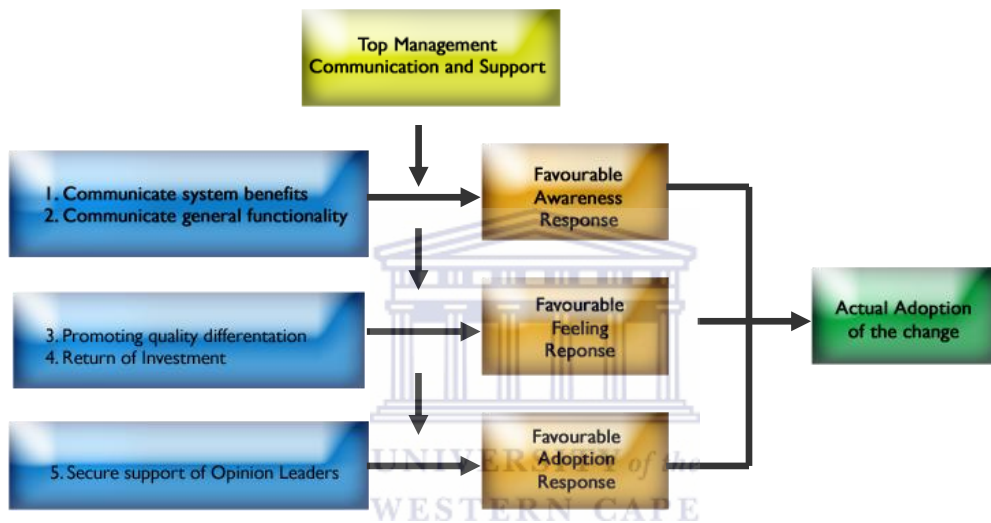
Human resource development and management development initiatives necessitate a process of organisational development, which is defined as "a method for facilitating change and development in people (styles, values and skills), in technology (greater simplicity or complexity) and in organisational processes (relationships and roles)" (Huysamen, 1995, p.31). Along with the pursuit of human values, organisational development is a set of techniques for improving the effectiveness of organisations. Several issues pertaining to managing diversity need to be strategically identified by organisations wishing to manage diversity effectively in order to enhance productivity. These are outlined below.

### **5.5. COMMUNICATION REGARDING THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY**

Prior to embarking on programmes to manage diversity, it is deemed expedient for an organisation to understand what constitutes diversity, and signify the importance of managing diversity to its internal and external environment. In conjunction with this, an analysis of the relevant dimensions

which need to be managed effectively, needs to be done. Moreover, the inclusion of a statement regarding diversity in its mission statement would communicate an organisation's commitment in this area (Greenhaus & Callanan,1994). This is depicted in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2: The importance of communication in managing diversity



Source: Greenhaus and Callanan (1994)

Such a policy may communicate to individuals an organisation's concern with maximising the potential of all employees regardless of cultural or demographic characteristics, in which everyone is viewed as a valued contributor to the organisation (Fyock, 1991). The results of prioritising the dimensions of diversity that are important should be used throughout all phases of planning, implementing and evaluating programmes for working through diversity.

### 5.5.1. UNBIASED HIRING SYSTEMS

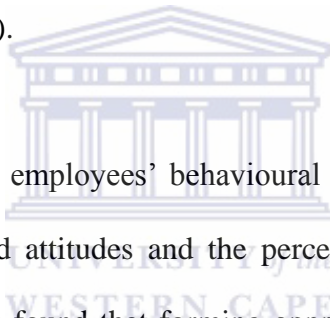
In the light of the demands that workforce diversity is placing on modern organisations, organisations need to guard against discriminatory hiring practices and engage in proactive recruiting practices to locate the most talented applicants from all groups within society (Kreitner & Kinicki, 1992). The clearer and more job related hiring systems are, the more they will enhance employee productivity and perceptions of fairness.

Challenging the trend to label diversity training as ineffective, Kulik and Roberson (2008) assessed the impact of diversity training across a variety of contexts including: knowledge obtainment, change in attitudes, and skill enhancement. They found that diversity training has a positive impact on knowledge in both academia and organisational settings and on individuals' global attitudes toward diversity. In their literature review, they found that the problem with diversity training is in changing specific attitudes toward diverse groups, such as changing attitudes specifically about African Americans; changes in skills were still uncertain at this time. Interest in various diversity programs logically should be related to attitudes toward diverse groups. Just assessing attitudes, though, is not enough when it comes to predicting whether people will want to attend or assist with diversity initiatives because attitudes have been found to not necessarily predict behaviours (Ajzen, 2001).

However, explicit intentions toward executing certain behaviours are predictive of actually enacting those behaviours (Ajzen, 1991). The concept of behavioural intentions toward diversity training in this study is consistent with Ajzen's (1991) recommendations for constructing



planned behaviour instruments. Ajzen (2006) postulates that human action is guided by three kinds of considerations: beliefs about the likely outcomes of the behaviour and the evaluations of these outcomes (behavioural beliefs), beliefs about the normative expectations of others and motivation to comply with these expectations (normative beliefs), and beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behaviour and the perceived power of these factors (control beliefs). (p. 1) In other words, an individual's behavioural intentions develop from their behavioural, normative, and control beliefs about a certain phenomenon. Consequently, the theory of planned behaviour depicts a way to conceptualise and measure behaviours in relation to different contextual areas and norms, such as organisational diversity related behaviours (Wiethoff, 2004).



Wiethoff (2004) hypothesized that employees' behavioural intentions toward diversity training resulted from their training related attitudes and the perceived need for training within their organisational context. Cox (2001) found that forming appropriate training materials depended on the target demographic group, their knowledge of basic attitudes, and their acceptance of diversity topics. Examining past research, differences across diverse groups are evident for ethnocultural empathy levels (Cundiff & Komarraju, 2008; Wang et al., 2003). For example, differences in ethnic/cultural empathy were found when comparing ethnic minorities with majority group members and by gender.

In other words, women and ethnic minority groups report higher levels of ethnic/cultural empathy. Gender, therefore, is an important factor in these cases because it may relate to attitudes toward acceptance of diversity training content. Accordingly, leaders and human

resource personnel need to understand how diversity dimensions affect different outcomes in regards to diversity training. For instance, training a group of executives, traditionally male, may need different content and focus than a mixed-gendered or a homogeneous female group of leaders.

Since effectively working through diversity is a strategic imperative for success in a highly competitive global environment, short-term and long-term responses to diversity must address three challenges, namely, availability, fairness and synergy. This involves unleashing and taking full advantage of the latent potential of groups (Worchel, Wood & Simpson, 1991).

### **5.5.2. IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL DIVERSITY ISSUES**

Managing diversity requires organisations to conduct a culture assessment to ensure that their culture is congruent with strategic objectives of the organisation. Such an assessment could provide organisations with the impetus to ascertain what elements of the culture need to be altered and to create opportunities for all employees to develop in their careers and contribute effectively to the organisation (Cascio,1992; Greenhaus & Callan, 1994).

### **5.5.3. DIVERSITY TRAINING**

There are various types of training programs which organisations can use. However there are two types of training which are most popular. These are awareness and skill-building. As the name suggests, awareness introduces the topic of managing diversity and generally includes

information on workforce demographics, the meaning of diversity and various exercises. This allows employees to realise relevant issues and raise their own self-awareness. The skill-building training provides more detailed information on cultural norms of different groups and how they may affect work behaviour. This aids in creating awareness of various cultures. It is imperative for some form of training to be introduced in the organisation, as it brings about success.

Many organisations implement training programmes on managing diversity to assist their organisations to become more sensitive to diversity issues (Stephenson & Krebs, 1993). Race and gender awareness training allows for aspects of corporate culture that inhibit flexibility to be identified and addressed (Feldman et al., 1994).

Various types of training programmes can be useful components of the diversity management process. These include programmes aimed at helping employees to develop positive attitudes towards diversity, as well as bridging cultural gaps (Launer, 1995). External consultants and in-house trainers can assist by conducting sessions that help employees raise their levels of awareness about the issues of diversity in their workplace, some of which may be directed at learning about the cultural norms of different geographical groups (Jackson & Associates, 1992).

#### **5.5.4. SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

As women comprise an increasing proportion of the workforce, cognisance needs to be taken of special issues pertaining to women's rights in the workplace. This would necessitate employees interacting with previously underrepresented groups on a broader scale. According to South,

Bonjean, Markham and Corder (cited in Kreitner & Kinicki, 1992, p. 333), "under many circumstances including intergender interaction in work groups, frequent contact leads to cooperative and social relations".

However, inter-gender interactions do not always produce desirable outcomes. Within contemporary organisations, sexual harassment has become a serious problem, and as such demands proactive management intervention. The prevalence of sexual harassment within the workplace necessitates a strong policy statement which defines sexual harassment, indicates its seriousness, and specifies the consequences for perpetrators, if necessary (Greenhaus & Callanan, 1994).

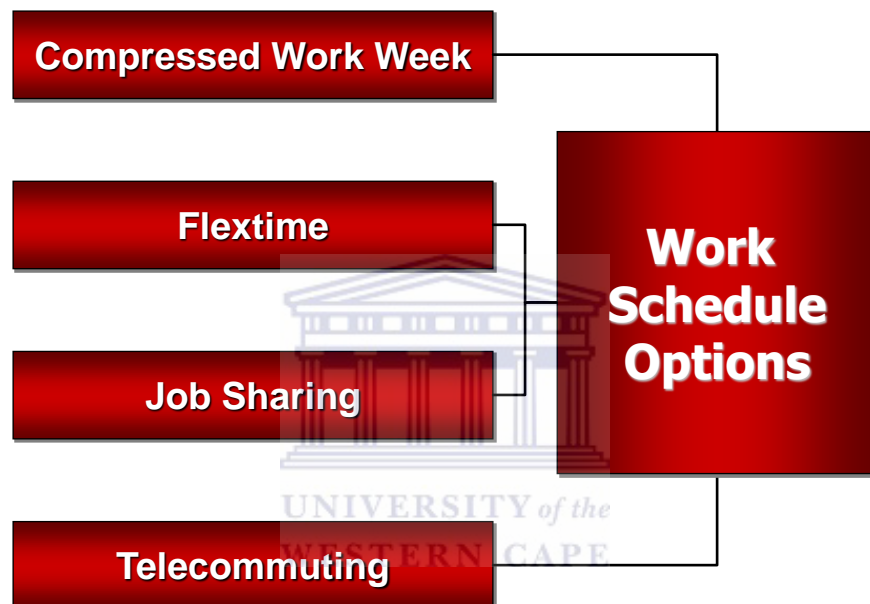
#### **5.5.5. FULL UTILISATION OF CAREER SYSTEMS**

Career growth is enhanced when employees actively manage their careers and when organisations provide support in the form of performance appraisal and feedback systems, mentoring, training and development programmes, job redesign, developmental assignments, and promotion planning (Beach, 1991).

By managing diversity, organisations attempt to create a culture in which all employees can benefit from such support and grow in their careers, and in which individuals are not disadvantaged because of their cultural background. Hence, "managing diversity is a comprehensive managerial process for developing an environment that works for all employees" (Thomas, 1991, cited in Greenhaus &

Callanan, 1994, p. 302). In response, organisations have embarked on numerous strategies to accommodate for these changes. These are depicted in figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: Work scheduling options



Source: Robbins (1998).

### 5.5.6. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

It is critical of the organisation to value differences and to bring about positive change in the workplace. It is important that organisational culture must be the basis of any positive change to occur, otherwise any diversity initiatives or training, will be unsuccessful and an expense to the

organisation. It is an imperative task of management to relay the organisational culture effectively to each employee, and to communicate their commitment to a culture that supports fair and equitable practices (Smith, 2008).

“Organisational culture is a group of ruling ideas that include ways of reasoning, ways of acting, common shared values, codes of behaviour and ethical standards, which are formed and developed over a long period of time with the active consensus of their leaders and influenced by the social environment as the background” (Seymen, 2006, p. 305).

### **5.5.7 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**



It is important for management to be proactive in managing conflict in the organisation as it is one of the various aspects of diversity management. Conflict should be dealt with immediately and appropriately, depending on the severity of the situation. When the organisation do not learn from conflict and allow conflict experiences to linger negatively, it will result in poor levels of outcomes (Smith, 2008).

### **5.5.8 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

For organisations to remain competitive and to have effective planning, human resource development is essential. Organisations spend a lot of money and time in finding talented

individuals, then train and develop them therefore it is important for them to retain their employees. Performance management enables the organisation to develop employees. In order for performance management to be successful especially in a diverse workforce, it is important that all employees are treated as unique individuals. By doing so, each employee will have different strengths, weaknesses, problems and training needs. A problem might occur with performance management when a manager has to evaluate a subordinate. If the subordinate is different from them, and there is any degree of racism or sexism throughout the performance management process, a resistance towards diversity related initiatives is likely (Smith, 2008).

It is important for the organisation to have continual feedback and to conduct audits. Feedback will help employees to realise their strengths and weaknesses and see where they can improve. It could assist employers in noticing any areas where they need to train and develop their employees. Auditing is a method of evaluating the effect of diversity initiatives. The information gathered by both feedback and the audits will help management in determining whether their initiatives are doing what they are supposed to, and if they have brought about any change in employees attitudes, perception and behaviour (Smith, 2008).

### **5.5.9 POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

It is a key factor of effective diversity management to ensure that organisational policies should explicitly forbid prejudice and discriminatory behaviour. It should be included as part of the employee manuals, organisation's mission statement, and code of conduct etc. It is also important for diversity to be included in the strategic business objectives of the organisation (Smith).

#### **5.5.10. LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

It is important for leaders to set a good example to employees with regards to handling diversity as they are 'role models'. They should exhibit strong commitment and emotional intelligence when addressing cultural issues and differences, as well as deal with any barriers which restrict them from managing diversity effectively and efficiently. It is quite valuable for small business owners who hope to establish a healthy environment for their employees who come from various cultural backgrounds. By doing so, it allows the owners to exercise significant control over their business (Smith, 2008).

Martin (1991,cited in Greenhaus & Callanan,1994) observed that a lack of commitment and responsibility throughout the organisation was a major impediment to the successful management of organisational diversity. Cox and Blake (1991) maintain top management support and genuine commitment to cultural diversity is crucial. Leadership at all levels requires an understanding of the importance of managing diversity to the productivity of the organisation and the appreciation of the similarities and differences between members of different cultural groups (Caudron, 1992).



An organisation seeking to manage diversity effectively should ideally develop a vision of multiculturalism that is central to the organisation's mission and communicate that vision to all of the organisation's constituencies; eliminate discrimination in hiring; identify the most salient issues that interfere with effectiveness in the diverse work environment; provide opportunities for employees to understand and appreciate differences among people; address significant language conflicts; develop and implement effective sexual harassment policy; ensure that its career policies and systems do not give unfair advantage or disadvantage to members of different cultural groups; develop family-responsive programmes and policies; and exercise consistent leadership and accountability for diversity throughout the organisation (Greenhaus & Callanan, 1994).

However, "creating and maintaining the enthusiasm necessary to keep alive the vision of a multicultural team working well requires a great deal of effort from all concerned (Neale & Mindel, 1992, p.38). In the final analysis, Pfeffer (1994, p. 9) argues, "...people and how we manage them are becoming more important because many other sources of competitive success are less powerful than they once were. Recognising that the basis for competitive advantage has changed is essential to develop a different frame of reference for considering issues of management and strategy. Traditional sources of success-product and process technology, protected or regulated markets, access to financial resources and economies of scale-can still provide competitive leverage, but to a lesser degree now than in the past, leaving organisational culture and capabilities, derived from how people are managed as comparatively more vital".

## **5.6. CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this research was to determine whether diversity policies were effectively implemented in organisations within the Western Cape. The literature gained when investigating this topic identified whether or not these policies were successful. It is further emphasised that diversity policies should be implemented to make employees aware of differences and if it is implemented successfully it will be conducive in bringing positive change in employee's behaviour within organisations (Basset-Jones, Brown & Cornelius, 2007).

The methodological research design was strictly adhered to. The study produced no significant findings due the limitations encountered while conducting the research. Some of the limitations were that the sample size was too small and not representative of the population. Another possible limitation is that the motivation of the employees could have been low due to the lack of incentives therefore they are not as willing to answer the questionnaires. Analysing the general answers of the questionnaire it was noted that many of the responses were varied. According to Hostager and De Meuse (2002), they found that employees that were exposed to diversity policies felt more optimistic towards diversity.

Furthermore it could be that the anxiety and ill feelings of apartheid and diversity could still breed uncertainty amongst employees and their responses (Romney, 2008). Romney (2008), further states that the word diversity itself still seems to create confusion and uncertainty. Somehow individuals know the meaning of diversity with regards to producing documents, research etc. but when it comes to diversity within human relations; individuals are clueless of what diversity really is. Often individuals do not concern themselves with diversity within their organisations. This self-doubt could influence the validity of the research findings. Diversity still

seems to be a sensitive subject for most employees and according to Romney (2008), many employees prefer to remain neutral when questioned about diversity. Management also seems to portray a positive outlook when it comes to diversity in order to convey their organisations in a positive light. The researcher further states that individuals tend to be dishonest about their true feelings and perceptions of diversity in the workplace to avoid conflict.

The current research could have included more biographical data in the questionnaire such as educational levels, and income levels in order to gain more information of the participants. The research could have also included other methods of data gathering such as interviews or focus groups. This would have aided the research if there were any discrepancies in the questionnaires and give more meaningful results.



## **5.7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The sample size that was used is too small and not a true reflection of the population. A larger more representative sample should be used to get a fairer and relatable estimation of results gathered from the research conducted. Also by getting a larger sample there it would increase representation and thus might have yielded different results. Another point is that researcher can have more control of who actually participates in the study. The generalisability of the findings of the study would increase and improve the probability of the results to the population.

Future research could make use of qualitative research to allow more open ended answers and could thus reveal new and different results, instead of only using a quantitative research

approach as in this study where only questionnaires were used to attain responses. Future research could include research to find out the climate, productivity and culture of the organisation before diversity policies were implemented and after diversity policies were implemented if those variables changed within the organisation. Another factor that could be considered for future research is the relationship of employees at work and how diversity has influenced it in anyway.

