

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: PRE-IMPLEMENTATION CRITERIA, PURPOSE AND SATISFACTION WITH DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This study assesses employees' perceptions of the important criteria that need to be in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action, the purpose of Affirmative Action and, their level of satisfaction with the manner in which diversity issues are communicated and managed in the organization. The study was undertaken in a public sector Electricity Department in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The population includes 100 employees in the organization, from which a sample of 81 was drawn using simple random sampling. Data was collected using a self-developed, pre-coded, self-administered questionnaire whose reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results indicate that employees felt that preparing them and managers is imperative for the successful implementation and management of Affirmative action and diversity issues. Whilst employees understood the purposes of Affirmative Action, all employees, irrespective of gender, age, language, tenure and race, are unhappy with the manner in which diversity issues are communicated and managed in the organization.

Keywords: Affirmative Action, Employment Equity, Training and Development, Diversity Management

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Introduction

South Africa and South African businesses face insurmountable challenges as a result of a past of gross unfair discrimination and inequality. Prolonged apartheid marginalized the largest segment of the South African population, that is, Blacks not just from political power but also from economic participation. During the 1920s legislation instituted by the Pact government favoured White over Black workers. During the era of apartheid, the various governments formulated and used a plethora of legislation to hinder the economic advancement of Blacks by restricting their access to jobs and to economic resources such as land, capital, technology and education. Furthermore, state budgets were allocated to enhance the development of Whites through better education, health facilities, infrastructure and housing at the detriment of all other race groups, particularly Blacks (Nkuhlu, 1993) despite South Africa being largely populated by Blacks (78%) with much smaller segments of the remaining races, namely, Whites (10%), Coloureds (9%) and Indians (3%) prior to the 1994 democratic elections (Statistics SA, 1995). In addition, gender discrimination was entrenched in the

Wage Act 44 of 1937 (subsequently 45 of 1957), which accommodated for wage differentials based on gender and, disabled people were also compromised mainly because they were left out, although discriminatory legislative provisions did exist (Thompson, 1993). These unfair practices were not only a symbolic disregard of human value, but also led to imbalances in the labour force in South Africa that did not represent its population, thereby leaving the country and businesses in a state of emergency. As a mechanism to address this challenge, South African legislation had to evolve and this led to the legislative acts, namely, Affirmative Action and the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998) that were instituted to channel and monitor the transformation process in South African businesses, not only in management echelons but in all levels of the organizational structure. These legal statutes dictated the organization's responsibility to empower and incorporate racial and ethnic groups, which were previously excluded, into management structures (Thomas & Bendixen, 2000) and to change the workforce on various levels.

Affirmative Action and the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998)

Affirmative Action, initially used in the United States to liberate minority groups, was aimed at eradicating discriminatory practices through the implementation of particular strategies to incorporate previously disadvantaged groups into all aspects of communal life (Herholdt & Marx, 1999). Herholdt and Marx (1999) add that within an organizational context, the purpose of Affirmative Action was to introduce democracy into the workplace by enabling members of previously disadvantaged groups to progress higher up in the hierarchical structure in the corporate environment. Erasmus, van Wyk and Schenk (2000) refer to Affirmative Action within the context of employment as an attempt to achieve a fair allocation of a social commodity which is aspired to, that is, a 'job'.

Hence, Affirmative Action refers to "the purposeful and planned placement and development of competent or potentially competent persons in or to positions from which they were debarred in the past, in an attempt to redress past disadvantages and to render the workforce more representative of the population, on a local and national level. Consequently, affirmative action has numerous facets" (Bendix, 1989, p. 435). The many facets of Affirmative Action include identifying people from previously disadvantaged groups with known competencies or potential to fill positions of their ability, training and developing them, providing accelerated development and monitoring the demographic profile of the workforce (Bendix, 1989). McGregor (2005) emphasizes that the key criteria for the implementation of Affirmative Action in South Africa are 'designated groups', having the right competencies or being 'suitably qualified' and nationality as the only people to whom affirmative action measures should legitimately and fairly be directed to are those previously and directly disadvantaged by unfair discrimination in the South African context. Erasmus et al. (2000) view Affirmative Action as proactive and remedial steps designed and implemented to close the gap between our apartheid past and our non-discriminatory future. This meant that businesses in South Africa had to change many operating structures which included:

- Refraining from segregating the races in all eating, recreation and work facilities.
- Equal and fair employment practices for all employees.
- Equal pay for all employees doing equal or comparable work for the same period of time and under the same circumstances.
- The design and introduction of training programs to prepare a significant number of Blacks and non-Whites for supervisory, administrative, clerical and technical jobs.

- Increasing the number of Blacks and other non-Whites at managerial and supervisory levels.
- Improving the quality of employees' lives outside the workplace in areas such as housing, transportation, education, infrastructure, recreation and health (Weedon, 1996 cited in Herholdt & Marx, 1999).

The purpose of the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998) is to achieve workplace equality by:

- (a) Promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination and,
- (b) Implementing positive measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups (black people – Africans, Coloured and Indians, women and people with disabilities) in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2003). Despite this purpose of the Employment Equity Act, Mathur-Helm (2005) found that occupying high level positions is still a rare phenomenon for South African women as its corporate environment is not yet ready to accept women as professional equals.

Israelstam (1999) contends that employment equity is the achievement of workplace fairness for all. In this way, Affirmative Action is regarded as the second arm of employment equity as it represents the implementation of special measures to make up for disadvantages caused for certain groups during apartheid. Affirmative Action and employment equity complement each other to the extent that the former seeks to correct past discriminatory practices while the latter legislates against future unfair discrimination (Nel, Gerber, van Dyk, Haasbroek, Sono & Werner, 2001).

However, there are various criticisms leveled again Affirmative Action. One of the most pressing problems associated with Affirmative Action is that which arises from its incorrect implementation (Erasmus et al., 2000; Bendix, 1989). Some businesses that adopt Affirmative Action principles do it only for the reason of increasing the placement of Affirmative Action candidates in positions. Such candidates are known as 'window-dressing' and 'tokenism' becomes an ugly word that permeates every level of the organization. Erasmus, van Wyk & Schenk (2000) noted that Affirmative Action has been criticized with respect to the criteria used to identify its beneficiaries. In this regard, provided that Affirmative Action is linked to valid selection procedures which assess relevant competencies or potential and are accompanied, where needed, by a developmental plan, the perception that Affirmative Action and its candidates are ineffective becomes a reality (Bendix, 1989).

Affirmative Action can only be successful if there is a change in the organizational culture and in individuals' attitudes. Gerber, Nel and van Dyk (1987) state that the change in the organizational culture is vital so that Affirmative Action within the areas of recruitment, selection, human resource planning and development can be undertaken as part of the organizational strategy. Organizational culture may be used to foster a sense of organizational cohesiveness and promote communication through a shared system of meaning (Furnham, 1997) amongst all groups so that the melding of differences can serve as a source of competitive advantage to the organization (Henderson, 1994; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). Strachan, Burgess and Sullivan (2004) add that the key process for implementing progressive and inclusive equity programs at the workplace is through human resource management policies that link employment diversity to organizational objectives such as productivity and profitability. According to Rankhumise (2007), valuing diversity extends beyond understanding and co-operation and should ultimately seek to improve organizational effectiveness.

Affirmative Action has created a demand for skilled black people. As a result, educated blacks are able to 'job-hop' in search of better opportunities; alternatively, they are continually head-hunted by one organization from another. In this way, a select group of the Black population advances while the rest remain in appalling socioeconomic circumstances (Bendix, 1989). Affirmative Action has opened the way for a select group of Blacks to enroll at universities but has created little change in the employment, education or income of those who need it most.

Perhaps the most serious accusation leveled against Affirmative Action is the one of reverse discrimination. Affirmative Action can be construed to be discriminatory if one party is intentionally excluded from the process. This is a contentious point to those who are expecting to be promoted after long tenure and are disappointed to find that an Affirmative Action candidate has been appointed instead. Research indicates that members who do not benefit from Affirmative Action typically view women and minorities selected through Affirmative Action programs to be less competent than those selected without Affirmative Action (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2003). Furthermore, researchers found that the use of race and gender based selection and promotion preferences can produce negative reaction in both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (Heilman, & Blader, 2000; Richard, Fubara & Castillo, 2000). However, this is only unfair if the Affirmative Action candidate is appointed at any cost and without allowing others the opportunity to compete (Bendix, 1989).

Employment equity and affirmative action may seem harsh but given the extreme atrocities suffered by the majority of South Africa's population there is

no comparing the true harshness of apartheid to the necessary justification of current legislative ideals. The irony is that the country's citizens play an instrumental role in the economy and hence, the greatest challenge is to balance the dynamic realities of inequality and growth (Erasmus et al., 1998) whilst taking cognizance of the dynamics of diversity in the South African workforce and the alarming business and labour statistics:

- South Africa's population is estimated to be 53 million people. Africans make up 80% of the total population, Whites and Coloureds make up 9% each followed by Indians (3%) yet 86% of the total unemployed are Black, 2.74% are White, 9.85% are Coloured and 1.41% are Indian (Statistics south Africa, 2014 cited in African Human Capital and Labour Report: South Africa, 2014).
- There are more women (51.26%) in the population than men (48.74%) in 2014.
- Up to 2010, South Africa lost 843 804 people through emigration and gained 1 862 890 people through immigration (International Organization for Migration, 2014 cited in African Human Capital and Labour Report: South Africa, 2014).

However, as we transform workforce demographics and ensure identity-group representation, there is a greater need to move beyond (Thomas & Ely, 1996) and concentrate on how to value and manage diversity effectively (Kirton & Greene, 2000; Martins, 2000) and to truly integrate a heterogeneous workforce at all levels in the organization (Fernandez, 1991) in a way that will release maximum potential (Carrell, Elbert, Hatfield, Grobler, Marx & Van der Schyf, 1998; Wheeler & Jennings, 1994) and stimulate and develop the economy. Undoubtedly, changes in South African regulations have advocated the sharing of power and decision-making but, like Kirton and Greene (2000) and Ansari and Jackson (1995) believe, we need to extend beyond treating everyone the same to recognizing and valuing differences and treating people in ways which bring out the best in them. Similarly, Bailey (2000, p. 4) assert that diversity is "not merely the absence of discrimination; more fundamentally, it is the powerful presence of a sense of teamwork and community ... one that brings all kinds of people from different backgrounds together ... with the end result of creating a whole that is much greater than the sum of the individual parts". It is, therefore, important to align diversity with a positive and proactive business strategy to enhance organizational performance and productivity. It is also vital that diversity management is part of the organization's employment equity plan so that a facilitative environment to promote diversity is created (Muchinsky, Kriek & Schreuder, 1998 cited in Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt, 2003).

Aims of the Study

This study assesses employees' perceptions of the important criteria that need to be in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action, the purpose of Affirmative Action and, their level of satisfaction with the manner in which diversity issues are communicated and managed in the organization.

Research Design

Respondents

The study was undertaken in a public sector Electricity Department in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The population includes 100 employees in the organization, from which a sample of 81 was drawn using simple random sampling. According to Sekaran's (2003) population-to-sample size table, for a population of 100, the corresponding minimum sample of 80 is needed, thereby confirming the adequacy of the sample of 81 employees.

In terms of the composition of the sample, there were more males (59.3%) than females (40.7%). The majority of the sample was from 26-40 years (64.3%) with 27.2% being from 26-30 years, 17.3% being from 31-35 years and 19.8% being from 36-40 years. The majority of the sample is English speaking (69.1%), followed by those who are Zulu (29.6%) and North Sotho (1.3%) speaking. In terms of tenure, the majority of the employees have between 1-15 years of service (81.5%) with 29.6% of the employees having 1-5 years of service, 28.4% having 6-10 years and 23.5% having 11-15 years of tenure. Furthermore, 51.9% of the participants are Indian, followed by Black (30.9%), White (11.1%) and then Coloured (6.1%). Whilst, 69.1% are general staff, 28.4% comprise of technical specialists and 2.5% are from middle management.

Measuring Instrument

Data was collected using a self-developed, pre-coded, self-administered questionnaire consisting of two sections. Section A relate to biographical profiles (gender, age, language, tenure, race, occupational level) and was assessed using the nominal scale with precoded option categories. Section B tapped into employees' perceptions of Affirmative Action (11

items) and, their level of satisfaction with the manner in which diversity issues are communicated and managed in the organization (3 items). Section B was measured using the Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), agree (4) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire was formulated on the basis of identifying recurring themes that surfaced while conducting the literature review. These ensured face and content validity. Furthermore, in-house pretesting was adopted to assess the suitability of the instruments. Pilot testing was also carried out on 8 employees using the same protocols that were utilized for the larger study to test the process, the appropriateness of questions and employees' understanding thereof. No inadequacies were reported and the final questionnaire was considered appropriate in terms of relevance and construction.

Research procedure

The research was only conducted after ethical clearance was obtained for the study and upon completion of the pilot study.

Reliability of the questionnaire

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. The items were reflected as having a high level of internal consistency and reliability, with the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha being 0.781.

Statistical analysis of the data

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum) and inferential statistics (t-test, ANOVA) were used to evaluate the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Employees' perceptions of the important criteria that need to be in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action were assessed using a 1-5 point Likert scale (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics – Employees’ perceptions of the important criteria that need to be in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action in the organization

Perceptions of important criteria that need to be in place before implementing Affirmative Action	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Training and developing disadvantaged groups to enable them to function effectively in the workplace and to ensure proper implementation of Affirmative Action.	3.8	1.1	1	5
Properly equipping managers to be able to manage a diverse workforce.	4.1	0.9	1	5
Preparing employees for the implementation of Affirmative Action and to be able to work in a diverse workforce.	4.2	0.8	1	5

From Table 1 it is evident that employees strongly feel that preparing them for the implementation of Affirmative Action and to be able to work in a diverse workforce is imperative before the implementation of Affirmative Action (Mean = 4.2). Employees also feel that it is imperative to prepare managers to be able to manage a diverse workforce (Mean = 4.1). Whilst training and

development of disadvantaged groups to ensure the proper implementation of Affirmative Action is acknowledged (Mean = 3.8) it is not viewed as the most important criterion.

Employees’ perceptions of the purpose of Affirmative Action in the organization was assessed using a 1-5 point Likert scale (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics – Employees’ perceptions of the purpose of Affirmative Action in the organization

Perceived purpose of Affirmative Action	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Aims at achieving the equal treatment of all people.	4	1.4	1	5
Focuses on correcting historical injustices.	4	1.2	1	5
Focuses on upliftment strategies to empower previously disadvantaged people.	4	1.2	1	5
Aims at enabling previously disadvantaged groups to share in the prosperity, opportunities and facilities of the country.	4	1.1	1	5
Aims at incorporating Affirmative Action as a long term career management intervention.	4	1.0	1	5
Aims at enhancing productivity levels.	4	1.1	1	5
Aims at recognising and managing a diverse workforce.	4	1.0		
Aims at addressing the skills shortage in the company and in South Africa.	4	1.3	1	5

Table 2 indicates that employees perceive the various purposes of Affirmative Action in exactly the same way without viewing one as being any more important than the other. The mean score value of 4 against a maximum attainable score of 5 also shows that employees strongly believe that Affirmative Action has the 8 purposes as listed in Table 2.

Employee perceptions of the important criteria that need to be in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action and the purpose of Affirmative

Action were assessed in terms of their biographical profiles (gender, age, language, tenure, race) respectively.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in biographical profiles (gender, age, language, tenure, race) regarding the important criteria that need to be in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action and the purpose of Affirmative Action respectively (Table 3).

Table 3. ANOVA/t-TEST: Important criteria that need to be in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action and the purpose of Affirmative Action and biographical data

Biographical Variable	T	F	Significance (p)
Gender	-1.087		0.280
Language	-4.549		0.000*
Age		1.581	0.155
Tenure		0.408	0.842
Race		7.418	0.000*

* p < 0.01

Table 3 indicates that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in gender, age and tenure regarding the important criteria that need to be in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action and the purpose of Affirmative Action respectively. However, male and female employees and employees who speak English and Zulu differ significantly in their perceptions regarding

the important criteria that need to be in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action and the purpose of Affirmative Action respectively, at the 1 % level of significance. Hence, hypothesis 1 may be partially accepted in terms of language and race. In order to assess exactly where these differences lie, mean analyses were undertaken (Table 4).

Table 4. Mean Analyses for the influence of Language and Race on employee perceptions of the important criteria that need to be in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action and its purpose

Biographical Variable	Category	Mean	Std. Dev.
Language	English	3.536	0.721
	Zulu	4.216	0.560
Race	African	4.222	0.549
	White	3.152	0.662
	Indian	3.604	0.740
	Coloured	3.600	0.420

Table 4 reflects that Zulu speaking employees rated the criteria that need to be put in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action and the purposes of Affirmative Action more highly than English speaking employees. Furthermore, whilst African employees rated the criteria that need to be put in place prior to the implementation of Affirmative Action and its purposes the highest (Mean = 4.222) White employees rated these aspects

the lowest (Mean = 3.152), thereby reflecting a wide mean difference whilst the rating of Indian and Coloured employees lies midway in between (Mean = 3.604 and 3.600 respectively).

Employees' level of satisfaction with the manner in which diversity issues are communicated and managed in the organization were also assessed using a 1-5 point Likert scale (Table 5).

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics: Employee level of satisfaction with the communication and management of diversity issues in the organization

Dimension	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Satisfaction with the communication and management of diversity issues	2.45	0.625	1	4

Table 5 indicates that employees are not satisfied with the manner in which diversity issues are communicated and managed in the organization. This is reflected in the wide deviation between the mean score value of 2.45 and a maximum attainable score of 5.

The study also assess if employees varying in biographical profiles differ in their level of

satisfaction with the communication and management of diversity issues.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction of employees varying in biographical profiles (gender, age, language, tenure, race) regarding the communication and management of diversity issues (Table 6).

Table 6. ANOVA/t-TEST: Level of satisfaction with the communication and management of diversity issues and biographical data

Biographical Variable	t	F	Significance (p)
Gender	1.342		0.184
Language	-0.214		0.832
Age		0.196	0.072
Tenure		0.665	0.651
Race		0.274	0.844

Table 6 indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of employees varying in biographical profiles (gender, age, language, tenure, race) regarding the communication and management of diversity issues. Hence, hypothesis 2 may be rejected. With a mean level of satisfaction of 2.45 against a maximum attainable score of 5, it can then be concluded that all employees, irrespective of gender, age, language, tenure and race, are unhappy with the manner in which diversity issues are communicated and management.

Discussion of Results

Employees strongly feel that preparing them for the implementation of Affirmative Action and to be able to work in a diverse workforce is imperative before the implementation of Affirmative Action. Rankhumise (2007) maintains that the success of preparing the employee through training and development depends on the commitment and support from top management and the lack thereof may result in demoralizing the mentors and trainees and, hinder all efforts. Likewise, Motileng, Wagner and Cassimjee (2006) emphasized the importance of organizations ensuring sustained commitment to make the function of the affirmative action policy explicit and to create a shared culture in the workplace. Van Rensberg and Roodt (2005) found that perceptions of employment equity are significantly linked to organization-related commitment. Employees also feel that it is important to prepare managers to be able to manage a diverse workforce (Mean = 4.1). Likewise, Mayikana (2003) identified that a key aspect within the framework of Affirmative Action is to educate managers about their developmental role and teach them how to mentor and coach effectively. In the current study, it was also found that whilst training and development of disadvantaged groups to ensure the proper implementation of Affirmative Action is acknowledged, it is not viewed as the most important criterion. Greef and Nel (2003) and Rankhumise (2000) found that affirmative action appointees are not given proper training to perform in their functions and if a training intervention takes place, the time allocated is limited. This is ironic as training and development is a major contributory factor in the Affirmative action appointee successfully undertaking new roles and without it, obstacles will

be encountered due to the historical injustices caused by the apartheid system (Rankhumise, 2007).

Table 2 indicates that employees perceive the various purposes of Affirmative Action in exactly the same way without viewing one as being any more important than the other:

- Aims at achieving the equal treatment of all people.
- Focuses on correcting historical injustices.
- Focuses on upliftment strategies to empower previously disadvantaged people.
- Aims at enabling previously disadvantaged groups to share in the prosperity, opportunities and facilities of the country.
- Aims at incorporating Affirmative Action as a long term career management intervention.
- Aims at enhancing productivity levels.
- Aims at recognising and managing a diverse workforce.
- Aims at addressing the skills shortage in the company and in South Africa.

Although the purposes of Affirmative Action are well known to employees, research shows that selection decisions are regarded as being less fair when affirmative action is used as a justification for the decision than when no justification was used at all (McMillan-Capehart, 2005; McMillan-Capehart, Grubb & Herdman, 2009). Motileng, Wagner & Cassimjee (2006) found that employees experienced affirmative action positively as a mechanism that provides employment opportunities but encounter numerous challenges and obstacles.

In this study, Zulu speaking employees rated the criteria that need to be put in place before the implementation of Affirmative Action and the purposes of Affirmative Action more highly than English speaking employees. Furthermore, whilst African employees rated the criteria that need to be put in place prior to the implementation of Affirmative Action and its purposes the highest (Mean = 4.222) White employees rated these aspects the lowest (Mean = 3.152), thereby reflecting a wide mean difference whilst the rating of Indian and Coloured employees lies midway in between (Mean = 3.604 and 3.600 respectively). Fryer and Loury (2005) recommend that economic reasoning and common sense be used to diffuse myths and misconceptions in the racial Affirmative action debates. De Witte (2003) stresses that if organizations

want to remain competitive, they have to incorporate black economic empowerment.

All employees, irrespective of gender, age, language, tenure and race, are unhappy with the manner in which diversity issues are communicated and managed. Aberson and Haag (2003) found that individuals who believed that Affirmative Action outcomes resulted in increased diversity displayed greater support for Affirmative Action policies and practices. Kirby and Richard (2000) found that the success of diversity management programs has to do with employee beliefs about the programs being fair and equitable. Mor Barak (2000) contends that although organizations are including diversity goals in their strategic planning and are changing organizational policies, they are still inadequate. The process of achieving effective diversity management focuses in a limited capacity mainly on the internal process of the organization yet organizations need to expand the diversity view to include not only the organization itself but the larger systems that constitute the environment so that they create 'the inclusive workplace' and collaborate across cultural and national boundaries and focus on global mutual interests (Mor Barak, 2000). Likewise, Baker (2002) maintains that the changing nature of organizations and the growing need to manage a diverse workforce means that organizations have to identify, deploy and perhaps, help develop more effective interpersonal, organizational and inter-organizational communication strategies. Lerner and Grobler (2006) emphasize the importance of viewing communication as a strategic means rather than a tactical tool when engaging in Employment Equity communication. Despite democracy and legislation, there has been slow progress in the implementation of the Employment Equity Act in that it has been ineffective in eliminating prior disparities and underrepresentation (Booyesen, 2005) and, employment equity in the private sector has been slow (Mde, 2005). Whilst Selby and Sutherland (2006) maintain that there has been success in achieving employment equity at senior management level, they note that more aggressive transformation strategies are needed to accelerate the rate of transformation. Furthermore, despite the enormous strides that South Africa has made in promoting and advancing women in the workplace, the Catalyst (2004, cited in Mathur-Helm, 2005) indicates that women are still under-represented in corporate boardrooms, with only 7.1% women directors in the country, compared to 8.4% in Australia, 11.2% in Canada and 13.6% in the US with similar trends being experienced in China where equality is still an elusive ideal and women still face tremendous challenges in climbing up the managerial ladder (Cooke Fang, 2004) and the UK where gender inequalities in employment is found to exist (Durbin & Fleetwood, 2010). However, Carvalho, White and Machado-Taylor (2013) found that in Australia the existence of equal opportunities frameworks and

Affirmative Action policies may have an influence in increasing top managers' awareness of their roles in improving women's representation in management teams.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The results indicate that whilst cognizance is given to affirmative action and employment equity and its purpose in organizations, its implementation is not effective and employees are not satisfied with diversity management in the organization. More aggressive change interventions are needed to enhance the rate of transformation and employees and managers need to be properly prepared for the transformation. Managers need to be educated about their developmental role when implementing affirmative action and employment equity. It is recommended that the organization and management demonstrate sustained commitment and support to the transformation agenda and create a shared culture in the workplace that takes cognizance, not only of including diversity goals in their strategic planning but also the global environment in order to succeed in adopting a holistic diversity view. In addition, more effective and strategic communication has to be adopted by managers who need to use economic reason and logic when engaging in transformation discussions at all levels in the organization.

Recommendation for Future Research

This study assesses the preparation for, and implementation of, Affirmative Action and Employment Equity solely from the employee's perspective. In order to obtain a holistic perspective, future studies need to also incorporate the managerial perspective into evaluating the implementation of the transformation agenda in the organization.

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