THE EFFECT OF AGE, GENDER, JOB LEVEL AND RACE ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

by

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I, Kgalamadi Benford Ramusi, student number 764-920-7, declare that

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is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or have quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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The effect of age, gender, job level and race on attitudes towards affirmative action

By

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Summary
The study sought to establish the effect of age, gender, job level and race on attitudes towards affirmative action. A research was conducted in a government organisation in the security cluster in one of the provinces in South Africa. Findings indicated that men and women’s disposition towards affirmative action was positive. Employees at different job levels and varying age groups were also positive towards affirmative action in general. There were significantly lower numbers of white participants and those on senior management levels such that this cannot be objectively reported. The generally positive regard employees have towards affirmative action is good for the organisation if it wants to build a cohesive culture that is non sexist and does not discriminate on the basis of job level and age.

Keywords: Affirmative action, age group, attitudes, attitudes theories, diversity, egalitarianism, equal opportunity, fairness, gender, individualism, meritocracy, prejudice, race, fairness, discrimination, self-esteem.
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH
The South African workforce comprises diverse people in terms of age, job level, race and gender. In 1999, the total labour force was estimated at about 17 million people (World Bank, 2001). At the last formal census count in 2001, the South African population stood at approximately 46 million people (Census, 2001) with 79,0 percent being African, 9,6 percent White, 8,9 percent Coloured and 2,5 percent Indian (Commission on Employment Equity, 2009) while 52 percent of the population was female (Statistics South Africa, 2002).

The South African labour market, on the other hand, is not reflecting the demographic profile of the population, with White people and men being more advantaged in education and employment opportunities (Bowmaker-Falconer, Horwitz, Jain & Taggar, 1998). According to Van der Westhuizen (1998), blacks occupy 6,0 per cent of management positions with women occupying only 5,0 per cent. In wage terms, the South African Department of Labour (1999) reported that whites receive a 104 percent wage premium over Africans and that men earn 43 percent more than women who are similarly qualified. The Breakwater Monitor Project (2000) reported that in the private sector, 80 percent of management positions are occupied by whites, of whom 79 percent are men. Whereas this reflected the 2000 data, the Commission on Employment Equity (CEE) (2009) reported in 2009 that 61,1 percent of top management positions were still held by White males in all the sectors of the economy compared to 9,0 per cent held by African males.

Against this background, the South African government introduced measures to redress these imbalances. In 1998 the Employment Equity Act was promulgated in line with the Bill of Rights as espoused in the Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1998). In terms of this legislation, employers are required to adopt measures, which are termed affirmative action measures, to give preference to designated groups in their employment and development practices (Thomas & Jain, 2004). Designated groups refer specifically to Africans, Coloureds, Indians, women and people with disabilities. These measures have given rise to a public discourse that questions whether they are still relevant today (de Klerk, 2009; Nkomonde, 2009).
Nkomonde (2009), writing in the ANC publication, *ANC Today*, asserted that despite popular views which perceive affirmative action as reverse discrimination, the policy is still relevant in the present dispensation. Addressing the trade union, Solidarity’s, conference on 15 July 2009, former state president F.W. de Klerk based his entire address on the issue of affirmative action and labelled it a morally unjustifiable practice in the present dispensation (de Klerk, 2009). In considering the underlying dynamics of the discourse, one observes two conflicting attitudes regarding affirmative action, with one in favour of and another opposing the practice. These attitudes represent widely held views among South Africans regarding the efficacy of affirmative action measures as a vehicle to bring about required equity in the workplace without unjustifiably denying other race groups the opportunities to participate meaningfully in the economy (Kravitz, 2008).

The momentum of the discourse and the recently released employment equity report of the Commission on Employment Equity (2011) necessitate ongoing research into the prevailing attitudes towards affirmative action measures in South Africa.

Zimbardo and Leippe (1991) defined attitudes as an evaluative disposition toward an object based on cognitions, affective reactions, behavioural intentions and past behaviours that can influence cognitions, affective responses and future intentions and behaviours. There are quite a number of research studies on this topic (Bell, Harrison & McLaughlin, 2000; Feather & Boeckmann, 2007; Garcia, Desmarais, Branscombe & Gee, 2005; Kravitz, 2008; Mwaba & Simbayi, 1998; Thomas & Jain, 2004) but these studies did not measure the present and prevailing attitudes in this era and in South African organisations. This is necessary because the attitudes of employees towards affirmative action impact on interpersonal relations in the workplace (Harrison, Kravitz, Mayer, Leslie & Lev-Arey, 2006) and the wider social landscape of the country as will be explained further in following chapters. One of the unintended consequences of the adoption of employment equity programmes is the polarisation of the workforce along racial and gender lines (Thomas & Jain, 2004). The research described the relative attitudes of employees towards affirmative action measures as they are applied with regard to women and blacks in South Africa, with a view to recommending measures to update current methods of handling affirmative action measures in organisations.
There is a large amount of research available from both South African and international researchers on the subject of affirmative action (Duweke, 2004; Esterhuizen, 2008; Mwaba & Symbayi, 1998) but in most of these studies, there is little regard for the role of attitude as a construct regarding affirmative action (Boetigger, Essack, Maarschalk, & Ranchod, 2007; Bowmaker-Falconer, Horwitz, Jain & Taggar, 1998; Thomas & Jain, 2004; Wilson, 2006). The tendency among researchers has been largely to study affirmative action practices, placing less of a focus on the underlying construct of attitude that gives rise to pro- or anti- affirmative action behaviours.

Attitude as a construct is more relevant for social psychology than any other academic area (Simonson & Maushak, 2001) but linking it to affirmative action makes it applicable to social interaction in organisational settings. For this study, the attitudinal dispositions regarding affirmative action as an aggregation of affective responses, cognitive actions, behaviours and behavioural intentions were considered (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991). Since not much is available in literature on employment equity in this regard, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge and open up new areas of research and interest to the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT
Despite legislative requirements, employment equity practices in organisations in the private sector have not fully appreciated and addressed the gap which exists between White males and designated groups. Ten years after the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act of 1998, despite more Africans acquiring the much needed skills, there are very few who break into the category of professionally qualified and experienced specialists and mid-management (CEE Report, 2009) let alone senior management and top management in the private sector. What are the attitudes of managers as the drivers of employment equity? The present study established the role of individual and group attitudes towards affirmative action with a view to explaining the apparent delay in its organisational implementation.
Previous studies indicated that women and Africans are more likely to hold positive attitudes towards affirmative action than men and Whites respectively (Bobo & Smith, 1994; Duweke, 2004; Kravitz & Platania, 1993; Matheson, Echenberg, Taylor, Rivers & Chow, 1994; McMillan-Apehart, 2005). This is attributable to the effect of affirmative action as it tends to favour women and Blacks. As a result, affirmative action is viewed as a matter of satisfying demographic variables of gender and race. Are the attitudes towards affirmative action group based? What are the prevailing attitudes among different race groups and gender groups? This study also described the attitudes of different groups in a particular organisation.

Thomas and Jain (2004) pointed out that legislation; compliance monitoring and good intentions are all supported by developing effectiveness criteria. One of the suggested criteria is the use of numerical goals and timetables (Thomas & Jain, 2004). Esterhuizen (2008) was of the opinion that although numerical goals are important, organisations should realise that achieving employment equity is more than just getting the numbers right. Numbers have the danger of promoting tokenism which could have a detrimental effect on the self identity and self esteem of the beneficiaries of employment equity programmes (Kravitz, 2008). The culture of the organisation plays an important role here. An organisation that values investment in the diverse cultures of its employees will find itself less intimidated by the law to improve on numbers and will regard employment equity as necessary to effectively achieve its mission (Kravitz, 2008; Krings, Tschan & Bettex, 2007). Such an organisation will set plans in place to upskill those from designated groups (Blakemore & Drake, 1996), to ensure fewer difficulties from succession transitions and to effect career pathing for the benefit of both the employees and itself (Duweke, 2004). This research aims to evaluate the notion of the use of numerical goals as the basis for employment equity compared to an emphasis on the importance of plans as the indicator of intentions. Employment equity is viewed as an ongoing process which addresses the problems of the time as they arise.

The South African government has made it possible for organisations to implement employment equity programmes through legislative frameworks that are enabling for this purpose. The Employment Equity Act of 1998 makes provision for affirmative measures to address employment imbalances created by previous social policies. In addition to this, the Skills
Development Act of 1998 was promulgated with the directive that previously disadvantaged groups be upskilled in order to, among other purposes; meet the skills requirements for employment equity goals. Despite these measures there are still large gaps between White males and designated groups as regards wages and job levels (CEE Report, 2009).

1.3. AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

1.3.1 General Aim
The aim of this study was to describe prevailing attitudes towards employment equity among employees in a public sector organisation.

1.3.2 Specific Aims
The specific aims relating to the literature review were;

- To conceptualise the constructs, attitudes and affirmative action.
- To explain the rationale for affirmative action.
- To explain the determinants of attitudes towards affirmative action.
- To explore the influence of organisational culture on attitudes towards affirmative action.
- To explain the functions of attitudes towards affirmative action.
- To explain how attitudes towards affirmative action are formed.
- To explain the framework of a model for changing attitudes towards affirmative action.

The specific aims relating to the empirical study were

- To measure prevailing attitudes towards affirmative action measures among individual employees and groups in the organisation.
- To describe the differences in attitudes between groups categorised by gender, race, age and job level.
- To identify areas of concern where individual, group or organisational processes can be improved in order to positively modify attitudes towards affirmative action.
- To conclude and make recommendations based on the research outcomes.
1.4. THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

This research was conducted within the discipline of Industrial and Organisational Psychology. The basic aim of this discipline is to understand, explain, predict and influence human behaviour in the workplace (Esterhuizen, 2008). The study falls within the subfield of organisational behaviour because its intention is to describe attitudes of individuals and groups in an organisational setting.

1.4.1 Behaviourism Paradigm

Behaviourists assume that behaviour is a response to an environmental stimulus (Ajzen, 1988). People behave in particular ways as a response to the dictates of environmental factors (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991). In this study it was assumed that attitudes are also a function of environmental factors which force people to react in certain ways. Furthermore, the position was adopted that the positive and negative attitudes towards employment equity are the results of people’s perceptions of the environment in which it is implemented, which speak to the culture of the organisation. Behaviour is the manifestation of attitudes (Bell, Harrison & McLaughlin, 2000); consequently the propensity to implement employment equity programmes, which is behavioural, will depend on attitudes of individuals and groups.

1.4.2 The Positivist Approach

This approach advocates the use of laws and a mechanistic approach to explain social phenomena (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). At the core of this approach is the aim of being objective. Those adopting this approach choose to be objective and to take a detached epistemological stance in order to deal with reality (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006). In collecting data, the researcher in this study assumed a detached stance and allowed research participants to complete the questionnaire without interference.

1.5. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design provided a framework which was used to answer the research question (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006). Babbie and Mouton (2006) referred to a research design as a way to
address the planning of the scientific enquiry. The research design in this study provided an appropriate framework for the type of research as well as the variables that are involved in the study, the unit of analysis, methods to ensure research validity and ways to ensure ethical research principles (Mouton, 2002).

1.5.1 Type of Research
This study was descriptive and exploratory and used quantitative methods of data analysis. The biographical dimensions of race, gender, age and job level were used to describe the data obtained. Descriptive research makes use of surveys to gather data and to interpret certain aspects of the research in a quantitative manner (Esterhuizen, 2008; Terre Blanche, et al. 2006). Quantitative researchers collect data in numerical format and use statistical methods to analyse it (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006).

1.5.2 The Unit of Analysis
The unit of analysis in this study was the individuals in the organisation. They are “the what” of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2006).

1.5.3 Variables
There are different types of variables but for the purpose of this study, only two are explained, namely, dependent and independent variables. The former type is the one being measured and cannot be manipulated by the experimenter while the independent is manipulated to determine its effects on the dependent variable (Howell, 2011). In this study the dependent variable comprised attitudes towards affirmative action while biographical dimensions of age, gender, job level and race are independent variables.

1.5.4 Research Validity and Reliability

1.5.4.1 Validity
The research design should enhance the validity of the study. Two types of validity can be attained here. Internal validity is achieved “when the findings are said to follow in a direct and unproblematic way from its method” (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006, p.312). It reflects the ability of
the research architecture to arrive at particular findings without hitches. External validity, on the other hand, refers to the degree to which the findings of the research can be generalised to the larger population (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006). To ensure external validity, the sample should be representative and stretch across different subtypes in the population (Esterhuizen, 2008). In order to arrive at this type of sample, all the members of the population should have an equal chance of being included in that sample (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006). Such a sampling procedure is called random sampling. This study made use of a convenience sampling procedure. Convenience sampling is a sampling technique where participants are selected because they are accessible and readily available to the researcher (Castillo, 2009).

1.5.4.2 Reliability
This refers to the consistency of the measuring instrument in yielding the same results from the same group across situations (Terre Blanche et al. 2006). This study combined items from the studies undertaken by Duweke (2004), Esterhuizen (2008) and Krigns, et al. (2007). The Cronbach Alpha for the new measure was $\alpha = .85$ for the current sample. Scores above 0.70 are acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

1.5.5 Ethical Principles
In line with the design, a survey questionnaire was used. The aim of the research was explained in a cover letter signed by a person of authority from the organisation and myself as the researcher. In this letter it was specified that respondents need not provide their names, to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The method that resulted in the selection of the respondents for the sample was also explained. There was also a statement to the effect that the respondents were not obliged to participate in the research, but the importance of the research to the respondents and the company was clearly explained. In line with the principle of beneficence (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006), the outcomes of the research were duly communicated to all the parties that were affected.
1.6. RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in three phases with the first one consisting of a literature review, which explained the concepts of attitude within the discipline of psychology and employment equity within an organisational setting, while the second phase consisted of an empirical study and the third comprised conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

PHASE 1 Literature Review

Step 1
1.1 Conceptualisation of the construct, attitude

There are a number of definitions of this construct. Oppenheim (1978, p.105) defined attitudes as “a state of readiness, a tendency to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli”. This definition suggests that attitudes are ever present in individuals and groups but are dormant most of the times, only to be triggered by a stimulus once perceived (Oppenheim, 1978). Once triggered, attitudes elicit a positive, negative, strong or weak inclination towards the stimuli.

In their classic article, Sherif and Cantril (1945) defined attitudes as components of the psychological make-up of the individual which determine that he/she shall react not in a passive or neutral way, but in a selective and characteristic way especially in relation to certain specific stimulus situations. This implies that people react in particular characteristic ways when confronted by a particular stimulus situation. These authors further state that attitudes develop from affects, behaviour and cognition. This view is held by many other researchers in social psychology (Krings et al. 2007; Luthans, 2002; Plotnik, 1999). The affective component represents the emotional response expressing an individual’s degree of inclination towards the stimuli (Sherif & Cantril, 1945). On the other hand, Sherif and Cantril (1945) further maintained that the behavioural component is a verbalised or acted outcome of an individual towards the stimuli while the cognitive response is an evaluative component of the stimuli as compared to the individual’s beliefs about the stimuli.
Plotnik (1999, p. 588) defined an attitude as “any belief or opinion that includes an evaluation of some object, person or event along a continuum from negative to positive and that predisposes us to act in a certain way toward that object, person or event”. This definition contends that attitudes are evaluative and will yield a liking or disliking of the object, person or event; the evaluation is targeted towards the object, person or event, predisposing one to approach some objects, people or events and avoid others due to corresponding negative or positive feelings about them (Plotnik, 1999).

In characterising attitudes, Sherif and Cantril (1945, p. 306) pointed out that terms such as “set, stereotype, prejudice and opinion” are regarded as denoting attitudes. These terms denote the intensity of the psychological state in relation to the stimulus. A set denotes a temporarily held attitude, while a stereotype refers to a rigid and intense attitude. Prejudice is like a stereotype but based on false information while opinion is a more objective attitude (Sherif & Cantril, 1945).

1.2 Functions of Attitudes
Attitudes serve varied functions for different people or for the same individual but in different settings. Based on Katz’s (1960) theory of attitudes, Luthans (2002) and Simonson and Maushak (2001) listed the following functions.

Attitudes serve a utilitarian function which is premised on the belief that people are motivated to gain rewards and avoid punishments from their environment (Katz, 1960). Utilitarian attitudes are responsible for ensuring positive outcomes while preventing negative ones.

The knowledge function is associated with the need to obtain meaning from the environment (Simonson & Maushak, 2001). This function presumes that people “need to gain a meaningful, stable and organised view of their surrounding” (Simonson & Maushak, 2001, p. 10). Attitudes are a standard to size up, organise and simplify perceptions of a rather complex and ambiguous environment. If people are asked to comment on employment equity, they will simply give an opinion without needing to think a lot about it because they already hold a particular attitude.
1.3 Formation of Attitudes

Attitudes are formed from interactions between the individual or group and the environment (Simonson & Maushak, 2001). This implies that internal events which form attitudes are the result of observable actions from the environment (Simonson & Maushak, 2001). Attitudes are changed through reinforcement (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991). If the environment positively reinforces certain situational dispositions, these are likely to be repeated, while the opposite also holds. Social learning theorists add that behaviour and attitudes can be formed from observing significant others and through verbal instruction (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991). People will repeat particular attitudes and behaviours if they are positively reacted to by the accompanying environmental cues.

A change in the behavioural component of attitude will lead to a change in attitude (Simonson & Maushak, 2001). Attitudes are thus reciprocally related to behaviour. A change in the disposition towards a particular situation or object, for example, a liking, which is a strong positive affect, for a particular gender may result in a change in behaviour towards that gender.

1.4 Changing Attitudes

Changing attitudes requires that we understand their motivational basis, that is, their function (Simonson & Maushak, 2001). An alternative theory is that attitude change would reflect the relationships that occur in social situations. According to this theory, there are three processes of attitude change: compliance, identification and internalisation (Simonson & Maushak, 2001).

Compliance is reward or punishment driven and results in a surface level change (Simonson & Maushak, 2001). Attitudes are altered to gain favours or positive reaction and are expressed only in the presence of the reward or punishment. Such a change never stays forever (Simonson & Maushak, 2001). Organisations may adopt affirmative action policies only to stave off the consequences of noncompliance with the employment equity law although their internal practices do not encourage the drive towards a diversified workforce, which seems to be a trend in some organisations given the current employment equity report (CEE Report, 2011).
Attitude change resulting from identification occurs at both internal and external levels but does not form part of the individual’s values; the change is dependent on the source but not on the source’s presence (Simonson & Maushak, 2001). In contrast, internalised attitudes become part of an individual’s value system (Simonson & Maushak, 2001). Thus a desired attitude change will probably take account of internalised mechanisms. An organisation may adopt diversity enhancement as part of its culture simply because the current board of directors is in favour of such an approach to dealing with equity in the workplace. A change in the board may result in a reluctant following of the approach which would then imply that the executives in such organisations only identified positively with the source, not the approach itself.

Step 2 Affirmative action
Using the objective of the Employment Equity Act of 1998 as the starting point, employment equity in the workplace would be achieved by eliminating unfair discrimination and promoting equal opportunity through proactive and positive measures to advance members of designated groups (Thomas & Jain, 2004). Employers have to identify and eliminate practices not otherwise authorised by law, that create employment barriers against persons in designated groups by instituting positive policies and practices to ensure that persons from such groups achieve proportionate representation in the designated employer’s workforce (Harvey & Blakely, 1992). This term was first coined in Canada in an attempt to distinguish it from employment equity and denotes taking a positive action to redress past imbalances in employment practices (Jain, 1994).

There are tendencies among researchers in this field to interchangeably use the terms employment equity and affirmative action (Coetzee, 2006; Durnheim, Boettiger, Essack, Maarschalk & Ranchod, 2007; Krings et al., 2007; Mwaba & Simbayi, 1998). Employment equity advocates the use of positive and proactive measures to advance members of designated groups. This implies that particular measures should be put in place to ensure employment equity. The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 categorically states that these are affirmative action measures. Thus such measures are intended to bring about employment equity.

In terms of the Guidelines for Developing an Employment Equity Plan, affirmative action measures must include the following (www.labour.gov.za):
• Measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers, including unfair discrimination, which have an adverse impact on designated groups.
• These measures should be designed to further diversity in the workplace based on equal dignity and respect for all.
• Reasonable accommodation should be made to ensure that designated groups enjoy equal opportunities and are equitably represented in the workforce.

The guidelines further state that the measures should ensure equitable representation of suitably qualified people from designated groups in all occupational categories and levels. These guiding principles suggest practising preferential treatment and pursuance of numerical goals but exclude quotas. Chief among these measures is the creation of the employability of designated groups through the development of people from such groups in cases where equity is hampered by lack of skills.

2.1 Rationale for affirmative action in South Africa
Historically, the South African labour market was distorted. Educational opportunities, skills development, managerial and professional jobs were based on race (Bowmaker-Falconer et al. 1997). South Africa is a melting pot of diverse cultural, racial and ethnic groups but the workforce composition does not reflect this diversity. Racial discrimination in the workplace was institutionalised through such legislation as the Mines and Works Act and the Industrial Conciliation Act (Bowmaker-Falconer et al. 1997).

After coming into power in 1994, the ANC adopted a number of reforms aimed at turning South Africa into a constitutional state (Bowmaker-Falconer et al. 1997). The Constitution Act of 1996, which outlawed all forms of discrimination and became the basis for all other legislation in the country, was introduced. A number of acts were passed in parliament which supported the notion of equity in the workplace, i.e. the Labour Relations Act of 1995, the Promotion of Equity and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000, the Skills Development Act of 1998 and the Employment Equity Act of 1998. It is the Employment Equity Act which forms the basis of this discussion.
In South Africa, affirmative action has been necessary since the legacy of apartheid is structural and tends to be self-reinforcing in the absence of concerted policy interventions to reverse this legacy (Bowmaker-Falconer, et al. 1997). Studies in America and Britain have indicated that employment discrimination and poor educational opportunities contribute significantly to economic costs associated with lower national output, labour market inefficiencies, higher inflation and excessive welfare costs (Bergman, 1971). It is thus to the advantage of all, the previously advantaged and disadvantaged, to take measures that will help bring about equity in the workplace and the total functioning of the economy.

2.2 Attitudes towards Affirmative Action

It would have been naive of the architects of employment equity programmes to believe that such changes would be embraced and accepted without resistance because the previously advantaged White men perceived such measures as eroding their supremacy (Wilson, 2006). Research indicates that the opposition of White people to race based preferences is motivated by new but old-fashioned racism and has less to do with prejudice and stereotyping (Kinder & Sanders, 1996; McConahay, 1982). Wilson (2006) attributes this to views among White men that affirmative action measures not only entail group based preferences but that they also do not benefit these men anymore. There is a perception of reverse discrimination as well (de Klerk, 2009). Opponents argue that affirmative action measures are not only unjust and unfair but they are also harmful to the beneficiaries because they cause them and their colleagues to question their competence (Steele, 1990).

Kravitz (2008) stated that attitudes towards affirmative action are related to several attributes of the perceiver, that is, the individual who is being assessed. There is evidence of racism with Africans being supportive, White people least supportive and Asians expressing moderate support (Harrison, Kravitz, Mayer, Leslie & Lev-Arey, 2006). Research has indicated that the effect of racism on attitudes is less in weaker employment equity programmes than in stronger ones (Kravitz & Klineberg, 2002). Both racism and sexism predict opposition to affirmative action measures while the effect of racism is moderated by the strength of the programme (Kravitz, 2008). Women are more supportive of these programmes than men, which also depends on the strength of the affirmative action measure (Kravitz, 2008).
Perceptions of fairness mediate the effects of demographic and opinion predictors (Kravitz, 1995) to the extent that opposition to these measures is often justified by statements regarding their fairness (Herman, 2005). Although this opposition may at times be justified, sometimes it is a rationalisation of prejudice (Bell et al., 2000; Krings et al., 2007).

Phase 2. Empirical Study

Step 1 Population and sample
In conducting research, quantitative methods allow for the use of a smaller group called the sample to be selected from the larger group called the population (Holton & Burnett, 2005) in order to make inferences to the larger group. In this study the population consisted of all the employees of a particular organisation from junior level workers to senior managers. The organisation is in the State’s security cluster. The sample consisted of two hundred (N=200) conveniently selected individuals. It included people from different age, racial, and gender groups as well as job levels.

Step 2 Measuring instrument
A questionnaire was constructed using items from questionnaires used in studies by Duweke (2004), Esterhuizen (2008) and Krings, et al. (2007). This questionnaire consisted of forty seven items. Factor analysis was conducted to determine inter-item factor loadings: this resulted in four dimensions for the questionnaire. The first seventeen items measured the extent of the awareness by participants of affirmative action practices in their organisation. Eleven items measured egalitarianism, which is a standpoint advocating for affirmative action and as such denoting a positive attitude towards it (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). The third dimension measured was the propensity of participants to need to protect their material interests which may be foregone or gained as a result of affirmative action. This dimension was termed self-interest and contained nine items. The last dimension measured was prejudice, with ten items.
Step 3 Data collection
Front personnel issued the questionnaires to individual staff members as they reported for duty every day until the last form was distributed. To avoid duplication where one staff member might have been issued the questionnaire twice, front office personnel were requested to ask those given the questionnaire to decline if they had previously received it. Responses to the questionnaire were then collected after fourteen days to give respondents enough time to go through it. To ensure confidentiality of responses, the questionnaires were designed and collected in such a way that respondents deposited their responses without identifying themselves to designated collection points. A collection box was placed in the front office and marked “Survey Questionnaires” for each staff member to deposit the questionnaire in.

Step 4 Data processing
The Statistics Package for Social Scientists software package was used to quantitatively analyse data. The following statistical methods were used:

Descriptive analysis
- Frequency distributions according to race, gender and job level.
- Mean scores and standard deviation of employees on the employment equity dimensions.
- Mean scores and standard deviation of different groups on the employment equity dimensions.

Inferential analysis
- T-test to compare scores of males and females.
- One-way ANOVAs between the mean scores of different groups.
- Factorial analysis to determine the interaction effect of independent variables.

4.1 Descriptive analysis
Descriptive analyses are performed to describe and summarise data through determining the distribution of scores obtained on each variable (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006).
4.1.1 Frequency distributions
These are graphic representations of the number of participants who obtained a particular score on a certain variable (Salkind, 2009). In this study, tabular representations will be used to indicate how each in the sample responded according to their demographic profile.

4.1.2 The mean
This is used to measure central tendency (Howell, 2011). It indicates the most central score in a distribution. It is the arithmetic average of all the values in a data set (Howell, 2011). It is calculated by adding all the scores in a data set and dividing it by the number of values in the set (Salkind, 2009). Mean scores were calculated on employees’ responses and also for each independent variable, namely, age, race, gender and job level.

4.1.3 The standard deviation
This is a measure of variability (Howell, 2011). Such a measure estimates the degree to which observations for a variable differ from one another (Howell, 2011). It gives an indication of how responses are scattered around the mean. This was calculated in order to determine variability of scores for the total sample and each of the demographic variables of age, gender, job level and race.

4.2 Inferential analysis
Inferential analysis enables the researcher to draw conclusions or inferences about populations from the sample data (Esterhuizen, 2008; Terre Blanche, et al. 2006). Drawing conclusions about populations, using only the sample, can at times be misleading; to overcome this, statistics are used to provide a reliable way of making interpretations (Esterhuizen, 2008; Terre Blanche, et al. 2006). This involves the selection and subsequent use of appropriate statistical tests. Use is often made of one or two sample t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) techniques to compare means between groups (Esterhuizen, 2008; Howell, 2011).

4.3 Selecting the appropriate test
The use of a particular test depends on the number of dependent variables, independent variables and groups or samples (Esterhuizen, 2008; Salkind, 2009) as well as the specific research
question. Using this as the basis, the following statistical tests and techniques are available for researchers.

4.3.1 Two-sample t-test
In this instance, there were two sample groups, and the research aim included comparing the mean of one sample group against that of another (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006). The aim was not just to compare between the two groups’ mean scores but also to determine whether there was a “real” difference between groups, resulting from drawing them from differing populations (Salkind, 2009). In this study, this test was used to compare the mean scores of female and male respondents on affirmative action dimensions. This was done to establish if there were significant differences between the groups. Again, a two-sample t-test was carried out to compare the mean scores of employees on managerial and non-managerial positions.

4.3.2 Analysis of variance (ANOVA)
ANOVA techniques are used (Howell 2011) in situations where more than two groups are studied. Use is made of the One-way ANOVA and Factorial ANOVA (Salkind, 2009). The former ANOVA technique is used to compare the mean scores of more than two groups with a single independent variable and a single dependent variable (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006), while the factorial ANOVA is used when there are more than one independent variable and one dependent variable (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006). It is used to study the separate and simultaneous effects of more than one independent variable on the dependent variable (Esterhuizen, 2008; Howell, 2009). The following analyses of variance were used in the study:

- One-way ANOVA
  - One-way ANOVA between race groups to determine any differences in attitudes amongst different racial groups.
  - One-way ANOVA between job levels to examine whether attitudes towards employment equity differ according to the job level of respondents.
• Factorial ANOVA
  - Factorial ANOVA between race and gender to determine the simultaneous effect of race and gender on attitudes towards employment equity.
  - Factorial ANOVA between race and job level to examine the simultaneous effect of race and job level on attitudes towards employment equity.
  - Factorial ANOVA between job level and gender to determine the simultaneous effect of job level and gender on attitudes towards employment equity.

Step 5 Hypotheses
A hypothesis is an expectation about differences between groups in the population or relationships among variables (Terre Blanche, et al. 2006). In this study, the following were hypothesised.

Hypothesis 1
There are no statistically significant differences between the attitudes of different racial groups on affirmative action

Hypothesis 2
There are no statistically significant differences between the attitudes of males and females on affirmative action

Hypothesis 3
There are no statistically significant differences in attitudes towards affirmative action on different job levels.

Hypothesis 4
There are no statistically significant differences between different age groups in this organisation on attitudes towards affirmative action

Step 6 Results
The report regarding the results was based on the demographic profile of the sample and the relationship between responses and the demographic variables.

To recapitulate, the aim of the study was to determine the attitudes of employees towards affirmative action within the organisation. The specific aims of the empirical study were:

- To measure prevailing attitudes towards affirmative action programmes among individual employees, groups and the organisation as a whole.
- To describe the differences in attitudes between groups categorised in gender, race and job level.
- To describe differences in attitudes towards different affirmative action measures.
- To identify areas of concern where individual, group or organisational processes can be improved to positively modify attitudes towards affirmative action.
- To make recommendations based on the research outcomes.

The demographic composition was presented and the relationships between demographic variables indicated. The representativeness of the sample was considered. The overall responses of the independent variables were also described. Comparisons between independent variables were made.

1.6.3 PHASE 3 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Step 1 Conclusion
This regards whether the study met the research aims and was included in the study.

Step 2 Limitations of the research
The limitations of a study take account of the impediments to the validity and reliability of the research. In this study, limiting factors were:

- Access to the study population and the sample
- Response rate
- Availability of literature.
Step 3 Recommendations
One of the aims of this study was to recommend to the research organisation and the research community, based on research outcomes, individual, group and organisational ways to improve attitudes towards affirmative action with a view to appreciating diversity in the workplace.

1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the background and motivation of the research. The problem statement, aims of the study, paradigm perspectives, and research design as well as research methods used in the study were explained.

Chapter 2 will focus on the theory of attitudes and how this theory relates to attitudes towards affirmative action. The different concepts related to affirmative action will be discussed as well as resistance to change.
CHAPTER 2 ATTITUDES AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: A THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION
Attitudes influence perceptions towards objects and people, based on exposure to and comprehension of information, which in turn influence choice and many other social artefacts (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Attitudes have been studied widely from as far as the beginning of the twentieth century (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918) through to the present times (Fazio & Petty, 2008; Jost, Banaji & Prentice, 2004; Kravitz, 2008; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981) and are being related to other workplace variables such as affirmative action (Bowmaker-Falconer et al. 1997; Cropanzano, Slaughter & Bachilli, 2005; Harrison, et al. 2006; Konrad & Hartmann, 2001), job satisfaction and work commitment (Arnold, Silvester, Patterson, Robertson, Cooper & Burnes, 2005). Research findings have demonstrated how important attitudes are, as they relate to the variables mentioned above, but less research information is available on their relations with these variables. For example, there is a plethora of research on attitudes towards employment equity and affirmative action but much of it has only gone as far as explaining employment equity and affirmative action as concepts, with scant details on the relationship between attitudes and these variables (Mwamba & Simbayi, 1998). In this research, the effect of age, gender, job level and race on attitudes towards affirmative action was studied as well as how attitudes are formed and changed at individual level, together with the group responses to affirmative action as well as how these attitudes impact on organisations.

2.2 DEFINING THE CONSTRUCTS: ATTITUDE AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
There are a number of definitions of the construct, attitude. Eagly and Chaiken (1993, p.1) defined an attitude as “a psychological tendency which is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour”. In accordance with this definition, attitudes towards affirmative action will thus be a general evaluation of feelings of favourableness and unfavourableness regarding affirmative action (Bell, et al. 2000).

Oppenheim (1978, p.105) stated that attitudes are “a state of readiness, a tendency to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli”. This definition suggests that attitudes
are ever present in individuals and groups but are dormant most of the time, to be triggered only by a stimulus once perceived (Oppenheim, 1978) which consequently elicits a positive, negative, strong or weak inclination towards the stimuli.

The article by Sherif and Cantril (1945), as well as studies by Plotnik (1999) and others have been referred to.

In characterising attitudes, Sherif and Cantril (1945. p. 306) stated that terms such as “set, stereotype, prejudice and opinion” are regarded as denoting attitudes. From the previous chapter, it should be clear that these terms denote the intensity of the psychological state in relation to the stimulus (Sherif & Cantril, 1945).

Regarding affirmative action, Crosby (1994) indicated that it occurs whenever an organisation goes out of its way and takes action through affirmation that its practices operate without disadvantaging others based on their gender and racial identity. When certain people disadvantage others on the basis of their gender and race those disadvantaged are discriminated against. Affirmative action would thus imply organisational attempts to discourage and eradicate discrimination in employment practices.

Inferring from the definitions of attitudes and a short explanation of affirmative action, attitudes towards the latter can therefore be defined as psychological evaluations of organisational attempts at discouraging and eradicating discrimination in the workplace. This often results in such feelings as liking or disliking and favouring or disfavouring such attempts and has the potential to trigger behaviours that are positive or negative in relation to affirmative action attempts.

2.3 CONCEPTUAL EXPLANATION OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

There are at least two basic views regarding what attitudes are (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974): the set and readiness on the one hand, and affect and evaluation concepts on the other hand. Another view is perhaps what most social psychologists refer to as the tripartite model of attitudes
structure which consists of affect, behaviour and cognition (Fazio & Petty, 2008; Himelfarb & Eagly, 1974; Petty & Krosnick, 1995).

2.3.1 Set and Readiness Views
In his early review of the attitude concept, Allport (1935) noted that the term attitude involves reaction time. This implies that the time one takes to react to a particular stimulus is a function of attitudes. Attitudes, according to this thinking, would trigger a slower or faster reaction when faced with particular stimuli. Using this reasoning in affirmative action, individuals will be inclined to immediate attitudes or to display a slow build up and develop time induced attitudes. In the modern literature on attitudes, these response tendencies are called sets, not attitudes (Simonson & Maushak, 2001). In its earlier use, the term attitude was related to a tendency, set or readiness to respond to some social object.

Allport (1935) defined an attitude as a mental and neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related. The readiness aspect in this definition confirms the set view and implies that an attitude predisposes behaviour. It implies a heightened responsiveness, which is behavioural, to certain stimuli which are related to the level and intensity of arousal emanating from interaction with the stimuli. Applying this thinking to affirmative action, particular attitudes towards it will yield certain definite behaviours which are consistent with the attitude the individual holds. The degree of responsiveness to such action, the attitude, will depend on the level of emotional arousal evoked by such action.

2.3.2 Affect and Evaluation View
According to Allport’s (1935) definition, attitudes are said to be related to a state of readiness. Readiness is related to habit and other acquired behavioural dispositions (Campbell, 1963). To differentiate it from other acquired behavioural dispositions, it is important to emphasise the motivational and affective characteristics of attitudes. Using this approach, an attitude is an affective orientation for or against a psychological object (Thurnstone, 2008). At the core of attitudes are the dimensions of favourableness and unfavourableness which confirm the impact of emotional attachments for the psychological object.
Krech and Crutchfield (1948), following on this approach, viewed attitudes as enduring organisations of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual world. To some extent, this view is similar to that of a belief, which is an enduring organisation of perceptions and cognitions about some objects in the individual’s world (Krech & Crutchfield, 1948). Contrasting the two reveals that attitudes and beliefs differ with regard to the emotional and motivational components. Consequently beliefs are not emotion and motivation based, whereas attitudes are. Affective dispositions will express some extent of favourableness or otherwise toward an object while beliefs are neutral.

According to Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) stimulus-response (S-R) theorists are of the view that attitudes have particular drives or dynamic qualities. Attitude based behaviour is a response to, and motivated by, an environmental cue as argued by Doob (1947) who reported that an attitude is an implicit, anticipatory and mediating response which possesses a cue and drive producing property. This dynamic quality of attitudes energises the person and produces behaviour.

Another view is that held by Fishbein (1958) who indicated that attitudes are an implicit evaluative response towards an attitude object. When forming an attitude, people situate the attitude object or concept on an evaluative dimension. Evaluation is an embodiment of perceptions of embedded goodness versus badness or desirability versus undesirability, or the favourableness versus unfavourableness of an object.

2.3.3 The Tripartite Model of Attitude Structure
Earlier scholars such as Katz and Stotland (1959) and Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) viewed attitudes as embodied in three components of the attitude structure, namely, affection; behaviour and cognitions as shown in the following figure.
Thurnstone (2008) reported that the affective component entails emotions and feelings people experience towards the attitude object which in this instance would be affirmative action; the behavioural component concerns the actions individuals have engaged in or are inclined to engage in regarding the attitude object, which include the group dynamics that result from interaction between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of affirmative action programmes. The cognitive component encompasses the beliefs and values of people regarding the characteristics of the attitude object. In affirmative action these values and beliefs may be summed up by the egalitarianism and the individualism debates (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001).

The tripartite model of attitude structure implies some consistencies among the affective, behavioural and cognitive (ABC) components (Fazio & Petty, 2008). Many studies have been conducted (Jost, et al. 2004; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981) but there has been no agreement on the validity of the inter-correlations between and among the components, with Zanna and Rempel’s (1988) findings not supporting the veracity of the tripartite model of attitude structure.

The conceptualisation of attitudes towards affirmative action gives us the space to enquire what they are really for. Why would a large amount of research effort be exerted on this concept? There are a number of functions that have been identified which would explain why we develop attitudes and why they should be studied in such detail.
2.4 FUNCTIONS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Attitudes serve varied functions for different people or for the same individual but in different settings. Based on Katz’s (1960) theory of attitudes, Luthans (2002) and Simonson and Maushak (2001) listed the functions of attitudes mentioned earlier:

Attitudes serve a utilitarian function. Furthermore, their knowledge function is associated with the need to obtain meaning from the environment (Simonson & Maushak, 2001), as indicated previously. This function presumes that people “need to gain a meaningful, stable and organised view of their surrounding” (Simonson & Maushak, 2001, p. 10). Attitudes are a standard to size up, organise and simplify perceptions of a rather complex and ambiguous environment. If people are asked to comment on employment equity, they will simply give an opinion without needing to think a lot about it because they already hold a particular attitude.

Katz (1960), when studying the functions of attitudes, actually gave an account of how they form and metamorphose as the individual responds to the environmental cues. This means that the formation and change of attitudes relates directly to what they are developed for.

2.5 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

2.5.1 Background
Governments in many countries have promulgated legislation to prompt organisations to reduce workplace discrimination (Harrison, et al. 2006; Jain, Sloane, Horwitz, Taggar & Weiner, 2003). This legislation typically requires that organisations put in place policies that will ensure equal opportunities for different racial and ethnic groups and for men and women.

In the United States, which is considered the founder state as regards equal opportunities, Executive Order 11246 (1965) required organisations contracted to the federal state to take affirmative action measures to ensure improved access to employment opportunities for racial minorities and women (Harrison, et al. 2006). Other countries that have put in place such legislation include Canada, Australia with its Sex Discrimination Act of 1984, Malaysia,
Northern Ireland, Sweden in the Equality Act of 1980, Norway and the Netherlands (Bacchi, 1996). South Africa was no exception. Following the election of a new government in 1994 and the adoption of a more liberal constitution, the Employment Equity Act of 1998 was put in place to bring about equality and to redress past imbalance in the workplace.

The promulgation of these statutes was met with mixed reactions. There are those who view affirmative action as defeating the very same purpose it purports to support while others consider it as necessary to level the working environment (Crosby, 1994; Kluegel & Smith, 1983; Turner & Pratkanis, 1994). These contentions have not helped to contextualise the concept since the debate has been more about meaning and less about form (Bacchi, 1996). At issue is whether affirmative action is justifiable without exactly interrogating what it really is.

2.5.2 Distinguishing Affirmative Action from other Related Concepts

As already stated, affirmative action occurs whenever an organisation goes out of its way and takes action to assure through affirmation that its practices operate without disadvantaging individuals based on their gender and racial group, including ethnic origin (Crosby, 1994). It is an organisationally proactive means to deter discrimination in the workplace. It does not wait until a specific form of discrimination occurs but becomes an organisational guideline to ensure that discrimination does not take place. Affirmative action identifies target groups: those people who have historically borne the brunt of discrimination, that is, women, Blacks, Coloureds and Indians.

In implementing affirmative action the organisation is obliged to determine the availability of qualified persons from the target group in the labour market and see if it employs the proper number of such persons given their presence in that market (Crosby, 1994). In the absence of reaching the required level of employment in numbers or if evidence of under-utilisation of targeted groups becomes apparent, an organisation must devise and implement procedures to correct the problem. This correction would require organisations to articulate timetables for implementation and to set evaluation and monitoring systems in place for determination of progress.
In the United States, the then president Lyndon Johnson, in articulating the mandates of Executive Order 11246, declared that “a affirmative action programme is a set of specific results-oriented procedures to which a contractor commits itself to apply good faith effort and the results of these procedures are equal employment opportunity” (Holloway, 1989, p. 10). Affirmative action thus includes setting down procedures which will help ensure that targeted groups are brought in. The procedures so devised illustrate some form of effort in good faith, implying that affirmative action should also speak to the morals of leaders in organisations.

Procedures so envisaged are plans which advocate special recruitment procedures, training programmes, selection and promotion criteria (Crosby, 1994). It is these targeted dispensations when dealing with particular groups that have sparked much controversy and contention.

Affirmative action plans have also met with their own controversies. Some are not able to withstand legal challenges as was evident in Germany’s Eckhard Kalanke vs. Freie Hansestadt Bremen (http://homepage.univie.ac.at) and Martin vs. Wilks in the US where the court held that “it is possible for members of the non-designated groups to challenge the legality of an affirmative action plan adopted by an organisation even if the plan had been adopted prior to their own association with the organisation” (Crosby, 1994, p. 18).

A recent test case in South Africa is that of Bernard vs. SAPS (www.saflii.org.za) where the judge held that “the Employment Equity Act and Employment Equity Plan must be applied with due regard to fairness and the individual's Constitutional rights to equality. It is no longer sufficient to simply set up numbers and leave it at that. Due regard has to be given in each case to the circumstances surrounding that case and if applicable be open to flexibility”. It is these cases among others that are still fuelling the debate around affirmative action as opposed to equal opportunity.

2.5.2.1 Affirmative action and equal opportunity

According to the US federal law, the main aim of affirmative action is to usher in equal employment opportunities as alluded to earlier on in President Johnson’s declaration. The
insinuation here is that affirmative action is a vehicle that delivers such an opportunity. Affirmative action is thus different from the said opportunity because where affirmative action is the means; equal employment opportunity is the end. Their differences lie in the following.

An equal employment opportunity is passive (Crosby, 1994); it requires nothing from the organisation, no plan, no monitoring and no remedial action. It only requires the absence of acts of discrimination. This kind of opportunity assumes that the world we live in is fair and the playing field is level (Crosby, 1994). On the other hand, affirmative action assumes that an organisation needs to be proactive in dealing with issues of equity. It recognises that decades of discrimination have created an uneven playing field and that without any doubt, corrective measures are needed (Crosby, 1994).

Such an opportunity holds that it is a privilege to intend to implement affirmative action measures. It assumes that the intention to be fair is sufficient for fairness to become a reality (Crosby, 1994). Affirmative action presumes that an organisation must bestir itself; it must show initiative and take efforts to ensure that the fairness it desires becomes actualised. An organisation may not just proclaim its non-discriminatory stance but must take steps to make its stance real (Crosby, 1994).

Affirmative action places the locus of attention on the system as a whole, while the equal employment opportunity places this on the individual. In making its assumptions, such an opportunity posits that discrimination occurs because an individual, such as a male, makes an unfair or unjustified distinction between other individuals, such as male and female employees, while affirmative action assumes that discrimination can occur in the absence of ill will or prejudice on the part of any individual who is in the organisation (Crosby, 1994). A disparate treatment can simply result from the gender or racial composition of the workforce or a workgroup. According to Cosby (1994), being in the numerical minority in a workgroup can lead to feelings of psychological strain whereas being in the numerical majority can be psychologically assuring. Similarly, treating all groups in a similar way may result in a disparate impact on the various groups.
Equal employment opportunity practice requires that organisations must ignore gender and race in their employment practices. This is not the approach of affirmative action. Affirmative action expects organisations to consider race and gender in the composition of their workforce. Both equal employment opportunities and affirmative action value the principle of gender and racial fairness but the former require that gender and racial group be ignored. Affirmative action on the other hand considers that recognising the existence of gender and racial differences is the first step to both gender and racial fairness.

Affirmative action and equal employment equity both operate on a belief in merit. Both recognise that it is possible to distinguish between achievements of greater, and those of lesser, merit. This implies that according to equal employment principles, assessment of performance and subsequent predictions of future performance will be accurate if they disregard the assigned status characteristic of gender and race. Affirmative action posits that such assessments and predictions will be more accurate and possibly more valid if they consider the circumstances and background of the people involved (Crosby, 1994).

From the above it is clear that the two systems are not the same but that there is some convergence of thought regarding their stance on fairness and merit. Affirmative action is a way to accomplishing the goal of equal employment opportunities for all race and gender groups.

2.5.2.2 Affirmative action and fairness
An issue that is also critical in affirmative action is its perceived fairness. Resistance towards it is often based on the perception that it is not fair (Vermeulen & Coetzee, 2006). The basic tenet of fairness is “treat people the same”. Proponents of this thinking believe in a just world where people get what they deserve and conversely deserve what they get (Hafer & Olson, 1989). To these proponents of fairness, affirmative action seems to be the opposite. It is regarded as giving one group an unfair advantage over the other in employment practices. They term it reverse discrimination.

Its advocates see it as justifiable to call for the sacrificing of a portion of an individual’s rights for the sake of social justice (Crosby, 1994). They perceive it as reconstructive and add that it
“safeguards the rights of individuals by correcting for the largely unattended influence of privilege” (Crosby, 1994, p. 28). It is a moral obligation of organisations to correct past imbalances. In this sense, the core of affirmative action is correction. It has as its objective the preferential treatment of previously disadvantaged groups to bring about equity in the workplace. In this treatment, affirmative action will have to be selective. This means that people from those groups which have been seen as being advantaged will not benefit as individuals and groups from affirmative action and will thus become discriminated against.

A question that needs to be answered is whether this discrimination is fair or unfair. According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Constitution Act of 1996) no person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth. It further lays down that discrimination on one or more of these grounds is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair (Constitution Act of 1996), thus implying that there can be fair discrimination.

The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 qualifies the above assertion that there can be fair discrimination. It says that it is not unfair discrimination to take affirmative action measures which are consistent with this act (Employment Equity Act of 1998).

2.5.2.3 Affirmative action and diversity

The passing of affirmative action legislation as well as the development of such policies and the quest for employment equity in organisations has changed the composition of the labour force with more blacks and women and people of different cultures and nationalities coming together for a common goal. These alterations in the workforce therefore necessitated an approach that would see members of this cosmopolitan society working in synergy despite their differences (Bacchi, 1996). Diversity management was regarded as a means available to organisations to harness these differences (Bacchi, 1996). In its approach, diversity management entails recognising and valuing differences in the workforce.
Many organisations perceive diversity management as a second generation equal employment opportunity (Teicher & Spearitt, 1996), considering it a response to affirmative action and anti-discrimination legislation. This view is contentious because, on the contrary, diversity management is actually a response to organisational change which is brought about by affirmative action and the quest to bring equity into the workplace (Teicher & Spearitt, 1996).

The coming together of different cultures, women and Blacks, Coloureds and Indians into traditionally reserved positions in the workplace has called for a new way to repackage various equal employment, work and family initiatives. Legislation that prohibits discrimination only enables an environment fit for the adoption of particular affirmative action measures and is a platform allowing for the inclusion of diverse people. Diversity management then becomes a consequence of affirmative action as organisations are no longer mono-racial, mono-gendered and consequently mono-cultural. It only recognises the different racial, gender and cultural groups in the organisation (Keil, 2005).

Much on this topic will be discussed later as we try to answer the question of “where to after affirmative action?” but it is argued that we should agree that affirmative action or employment equity is not diversity management and the three concepts cannot be substituted for one another.

2.6 DEVELOPMENTS IN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The background was discussed earlier. Of more importance in this discussion is the Employment Equity Act of 1998 since it is the basis of affirmative action. This act is necessary in South Africa because as Bowmaker-Falconer, et al. (1998) put it, apartheid and employment discriminatory practices would have been self-reinforcing in the absence of legislation.

2.7 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION MEASURES AVAILABLE TO ORGANISATIONS

The Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998 states that affirmative action measures are measures designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups benefit from equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels
in the workforce of a designated employer. These measures, which may also be plans or programmes, must be designed in such a way that they include:

- Measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers, including unfair discrimination, which adversely affect people from designated groups
- Measures designed to further diversity in the workplace based on equal dignity and respect of all people
- Making reasonable accommodation for people from designated groups in order to ensure that they enjoy equal opportunities and are equitably represented in the workplace of a designated employer
- Measures to ensure the equitable representation of suitably qualified people from designated groups in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce
- Measures to retain and develop people from designated groups and to implement appropriate training measures as envisaged in the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998.

The act further states that affirmative action measures include preferential treatment and numerical goals but exclude quotas. At the same time, the act prohibits practices by designated employers designed to put in place barriers that have the effect of excluding people from non-designated groups (EEA, 1998). It is thus not the intention of the legislature to practise reverse discrimination. Any such reverse discrimination can as such not be ascribed to legislation but to the application of this act. It is often distorted to negatively affect members of the non-designated groups.

Organisations have the final say regarding the types of affirmative action measures they put in place but Cropanzano, et al. (2005) and Harrison, et al. (2006) suggest the following programmes.

2.7.1 Control Plan
A control plan is one in which past discrimination is reversed without the use of any of the prescriptions of affirmative action (Cropanzano, et al. 2005). The hiring decision is purely based on test scores and past experience. Thus merit is the basis of this plan and no regard is given to affirmative action requirements. This plan, however, will not be suitable in situations like South
Africa because affirmative action receives legislative recognition, unlike the situation in the United States where, despite legislation, organisations may seek not to implement affirmative action without many ramifications because it is not a constitutional prerogative. It is in effect not an affirmative action plan even though some authors regard it as such.

2.7.2 Eliminate Discrimination Plan

The elimination of discrimination plan requires of organisations to desist from practices that lead to discrimination or perceptions of discrimination either in favour of or against members of the designated groups (Cropanzano, et al. 2005). This plan would not consider who is being hired in a hiring situation or promoted in a promotion one. It is colour as well as gender blind because the human resource decisions reflect the unbiased nature of the outcomes. It is also a plan that disregards affirmative action legislation.

2.7.3 Preferential Treatment Plan

The preferential treatment plan advocates for members of the designated groups and requires that recruitment, training, promotion and tiebreak situations preferably advance members of them (Cropanzano, et al. 2005; Harrison, et al. 2006). A tiebreak occurs when, in a decision making process, a tie exists between a member of the designated group and a member of the non-designated group. Preferential treatment would then have it that where members of the designated group are involved, preference be given to them over others. This plan is in line with affirmative action legislation and both race and gender sensitive.

2.8 STANDPOINTS ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND RESULTANT ATTITUDES

Social categories channel people into structured sets of life-experiences and social relations (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). A gender stratified society will contain people grouped into men and women while a race stratified society will group people into cultural groups. Social categories then become social constructions that emanate from group membership. The outcome of this stratification is normally the existence of social classes characterised by inequality. Men and women and different racial groups perceive their social world differently, which is ascribable to the categories which are socially engineered (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). As regards
affirmative action, Konrad and Hartmann (2001) suggest four standpoints which are the basis of people’s attitudes towards it.

2.8.1 Egalitarianism
In egalitarianism people believe that inequality is not good for society. Egalitarians believe that inequality is a result of inherent imbalances in a society and that rewards should consider the past experiences of the marginalised groups in society, i.e. women and blacks in the South African context. They argue that merit may not be the basis for decision making in employment practices since the systematic discrimination against certain sections of society unfairly disadvantaged them and any attempt at using merit would be perpetuating the course of discrimination further (Konrad & Spitz, 1990).

Since affirmative action programmes are there to reduce inequality, egalitarians are more likely to support them. Research shows that women are more egalitarian than men (Konrad & Spitz, 1990). This is so because since women are victims of previous discriminatory practices, they regard affirmative action as a means to meet their material interests and place them on a par with men. Konrad and Hartmann (2001) suggested that this can be ascribed to the accommodating and nurturing nature of women.

Typical masculine thinking is associated with valuing dominance, prowess, success and status, while women tend to comply with the feminine orientation which expects them to be nurturing and altruistic (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). Feminine ideology is at the heart of egalitarianism since its basis is caring and providing for the needs of all members of society irrespective of meritocracy (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001).

2.8.2 Individualism
Individualism is the belief that a person’s chances in life are determined by their demonstrated ability and individual effort (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). Individualists argue that life chances are mainly a function of the internal factors and attributes which the individual possesses and bear no relation to external factors (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). They consider affirmative action as unnecessary since it interferes with a well functioning meritocracy.
Men and whites are more likely to be individualistic because from their privileged background, men and whites undergo fewer experiences of discrimination on a gender and racial basis respectively (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). It is for this reason that they display little awareness of the barriers that women and blacks experience to attaining status due to historic exclusions from certain positions, mostly of power. Consequently, men and whites are more likely to develop beliefs that “individual effort and ability are the major forces influencing life outcomes” (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001, p. 419).

2.8.3 Belief in the Existence of Discrimination

It is widely argued that people who believe that discrimination is prevalent in society are more likely to support affirmative action as a means to bring about equality (Konrad & Spitz, 1999). Conversely, those who perceive no discrimination would not see any need for affirmative action as the status quo regards all people as being equal and treated equally. Men are less likely to notice women as discriminated against, and similarly whites will not perceive discrimination against blacks (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). This is attributable to a self-serving bias which attributes higher status to one’s own ability and merit rather than unearned advantage (Konrad & Spitz, 1999).

Konrad and Hartmann (2001, p. 410) stated that “privileged groups may be unaware of their unearned advantages and assume that all people have access to the resources they need to compete successfully in the labour market”. They presume that all people are treated the same and with the same deference and respect. They do not experience discrimination and, as such, believe that discrimination is not the actual problem in society. As marginalised groups, however, women and blacks are more likely to experience gender and racial disrespect and discrimination and will probably believe that discrimination does exist.

2.8.4 Traditional Attitudes towards Women and Black People

Those with traditional stereotypical attitudes consider women and men to be suited to different types of activities as White people may do about Black people. These prejudiced people would hold negative attitudes towards affirmative action (Konrad & Spitz, 1999). They view affirmative action as placing women and blacks into positions they are unfit to perform in.
Affirmative action, as a means to reverse discrimination, is consequently viewed as reverse discrimination and a sure way to make organisations perform poorly. Research indicates that stereotypes lead to negative attitudes towards affirmative action programmes for both women and blacks (Konrad & Spitz, 1999).

2.9 DETERMINANTS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

According to Krings, et al. (2007) attitudes towards affirmative action can often be attributed to socio-political factors and individual differences. Perceptions of fairness and justice are also responsible for such attitudes (Coetzee, 2005). Egalitarians will view affirmative action as good and necessary whereas individualists will hold different attitudes (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). Self-perception also determines attitudes towards it (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001).

Inter-individual differences regarding prejudice and identity underlie gender differences in attitudes towards affirmative action (Krings, et al., 2007). These inter-individual differences on psychological dimensions of prejudice, self-esteem race self-concept and gender self-concept were found to mediate the relation between gender and race and attitudes toward action of this type (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). The following are the specific determinants of attitudes towards affirmative action as detailed by different researchers (Feather & Boeckman, 2007; Konrad & Hartmann, 2001; Kluegel & Smith, 2001; Krings, et al. 2007).

2.9.1 Strength of the Affirmative Action Programme

Affirmative action programmes are classifiable into hard and soft categories. The classification, which is based on perception, depends on the relative weight of demographic status and merit (Krings, et al. 2007). Soft programmes are merit based while strong programmes are based on the demographic status of the beneficiary. Hard measures often attract more controversy than soft ones since soft ones are perceived as much fairer. Hard programmes are regarded as violating the principles of fairness. It is this perception which results in people holding negative attitudes towards them (Krings, et al. 2007).
2.9.2 Individual Differences
As mentioned, (Krings, et al. 2007) point out that women and blacks are beneficiaries of affirmative action programmes, so their positive attitude reflects the self-interest affirmative action programmes have for them. Belonging to a demographic group is related to beliefs and perceptions about the group differences in attitudes towards affirmative action. Demographic group differences are often mediated by psychological aspects such as prejudice, self-esteem and self-concept.

2.9.3 Prejudice
Literature abounds with findings that racism and sexism are related to opposition to affirmative action (Tougas, Beaton & Veilleux, 1991). Open racism is now no longer practised and is obscured by a more subtle form called symbolic racism. Traditionally, prejudice presupposed that certain categories of people are biologically inferior and also possess inherent personalities that make them inferior (Tougas, et al., 1991). Symbolic prejudice is therefore the opposite of this belief. It represents a “coherent belief system that combines negative affect with conservative ideology based on the idea that discrimination is no longer an obstacle to low status groups and that any disadvantages are due to their own unwillingness to take responsibility for hard work” (Krings, et al., 2007, p. 590).

Symbolic prejudice is related to resistance to affirmative action. Modern prejudice, as it is also called, mediates gender and race differences in attitudes towards affirmative action. Tougas, et al. (1991) stated that across various cultural and national contexts, men scored higher on different measures of prejudice toward women than women do towards men. Some research found that male academics held negative attitudes towards affirmative action because they do not believe that women academics experience discrimination (Krings, et al., 2007). From the above, it can be inferred that disbelief in discrimination is akin to denial and a core element of symbolic prejudice.

2.9.4 Self-esteem
There are gender differences in self-esteem, with men recording higher self-esteem than women (Kling, Hyde, Showers & Buswell, 1999). Research indicates how self-esteem relates to attitudes
towards affirmative action, with one study reporting that respondents with lower self-esteem exhibit tendencies to believe that their self-interest is likely to be negatively affected by affirmative action in the workplace (Kling, et al., 1999)

Related to self-esteem is social identity which posits that people would have positive regard for in-group members over out-group members in order to bolster their self-esteem (Krings, et al. 2007). Low self-esteem in men may result in less positive attitudes towards women and, consequently, dislike for affirmative action programmes that favour women and perceive them as discriminating against men. This discrimination is often perceived at personal and group level. The collective effect will thus be that persons with low self-esteem display negative affect towards affirmative action (Krings, et al. 2007).

2.9.5 Self-concept
Self-concept refers to the cognitive and perceptual image of the self in relation to the environment within which one is situated. Konrad and Hartman (2001) stated that people who possess a positive self-concept normally hold a positive attitude towards affirmative action programmes in general. This they attributed to a more positive outlook about the self and the environment and a tendency to agree that the environment can never be perfect. Regarding gender, feminists were found to display more positive attitudes towards affirmative action than chauvinists (Konrad & Hartman, 2001). Racial identity was also found to be associated with attitudes towards affirmative action. Whites who have less qualms interacting with blacks were found to have been more likely to support affirmative action (Konrad & Hartman, 2001).

2.10 THE UNDERLYING EFFECTS OF ATTITUDES ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION; ORGANISATIONAL, GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL DYNAMICS

Attitudes towards affirmative action affect the way individuals behave as well as group dynamics in organisations. The effect is such that if attitudes towards affirmative action are positive, they manifest in good organisational citizenship behaviours while negative attitudes tend to adversely affect the organisation. Herholdt and Marx (1999), Nacoste (1994), Turner and Pratkanis (1994),
as well as Werner (2010), suggested the following effects at organisational, group as well as individual level.

2.10.1 Organisational Effects
At macro-level, affirmative action and resultant attitudes impact on the organisation (Herholdt & Marx, 1999). Aspects of the organisation which are likely to be affected include its culture and climate, productivity, leadership and values.

As alluded to above, attitudes towards affirmative action can affect and are affected by the organisation’s culture and climate. Organisational culture refers to “a system of shared assumptions held by members which distinguishes one organisation from others” (Werner, 2010. p. 25) while the organisational climate consists of the recurring and variable patterns of behaviour, attitudes and feelings that characterise an organisation (Ivancevich, Konopaske & Matteson, 2005). Culture is deeply embedded and is related to the values the organisation holds. One organisation may value diversity and as such come to value affirmative action as a vehicle to bring about workforce diversity while another may be highly masculine and thus accord little value to the need to nurture people from disadvantaged groups. Climate on the other hand is peripheral and is an indication of the daily interactions in organisations (Moerdyk & van Aardt, 2003).

One value dimension of culture is the competitiveness which is preferred in a masculine culture (Werner, 2010). Affirmative action may invoke in beneficiaries renewed competition for resultant opportunities for advancement and promotion, which will augur well for the organisation since new and creative ways to attract such opportunities may be adopted by beneficiaries.

Herholdt and Marx (1999) posited that non-beneficiaries may manifest resentment and dislike for certain affirmative action measures because they challenge the way things used to be done, which resonated with the previous organisational climate. Those who have been benefiting from segregational employment practices may “long for the good old days” due to the perceived challenges to their material interests and personal gains.
The following are negative reactions to which organisations turn when there are attempts to attain employment equity in the workplace as identified by Herholdt and Marx (1999).

- **Exclusion**

By this action, the organisation attempts to keep diverse people out despite their inclusion. This means that despite being appointed to affirmative action posts, beneficiaries are excluded or marginalised from certain organisational activities, which then disempower them. This is akin to tokenism.

- **Denial**

The organisation in this instance ignores available talent from designated groups despite evidence of their success in carrying out organisational activities. The organisation fails to recognise this group’s abilities and fails to reward them accordingly through promotions and monetary incentives.

- **Suppression**

In suppression the organisation encourages different groups to suppress their differences and to adapt a way of thinking and behaviour that seeks conformity. All race and gender groups are expected to think and behave similarly irrespective of their differences. Women would face similar working conditions to men despite the former being obliged to take more time off to effect a work-family balance. There is less regard for diversity in such organisations.

- **Assimilation**

The organisation here attempts to clone those who differ, to adopt the ways of thinking and behaviour of the dominant group. This will involve the acculturation of weaker groups in favour of the culture of the stronger one. Women may be encouraged to perform physically challenging tasks despite their natural physical differences from men. In this approach, the weaker groups lose identity and become swallowed into the way of doing things of the stronger groups.
Tolerance

Tolerance implies that the organisation acknowledges the right of others to exist while making little effort to maximise full and meaningful interaction between groups. Although there is full acknowledgement by each of the group members of the existence of those groups, interaction is limited to the minimum and the organisation takes little effort to maximise it.

These are all negative attitudes and relate to the culture of the organisation. To counter these tendencies, Herholdt and Marx (1999) suggested that the organisation culture must be the focal point for transformation. Such changes should see to the appreciation of diversity and tolerance of differences while sowing trust in the ability of individuals to effectively perform in their allocated responsibilities. The resentment non-beneficiaries manifest often leads to lower morale and negative work ethics. This, according to Herholdt and Marx (1999), often negatively affects their productivity. Symptoms of discontent and dissatisfaction such as employee disengagement, absenteeism, heightened accident rate and inclination to leave employment may occur (Herholdt & Marx, 1999).

Beneficiaries on the other hand may develop tendencies to compete for available opportunities of advancement. Herholdt and Marx (1999) indicated that this competition instils positive work behaviours and ethics which are generally good for productivity and thus the organisation as a whole. Fear of failure and the need to prove oneself, which are positively related to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), may spur affirmative action beneficiaries positively and contribute positively to their performance and productivity.

The converse of this occurs when beneficiaries develop an assimilation reaction. This is evident when they are pressurised to conform to non-beneficiaries’ ways; for instance, when women, for example in selection procedures, are expected to perform as men without considering their inherent differences.

2.10.2 Group Dynamics

In essence, affirmative action must not result in problematic social interactions and relations between members of the target group and the non-target group, but it seems the opposite is
happening (Nacoste, 1994). Such programmes seem to increase target group members’ vulnerability to negative feedback from non-target group members (Nacoste, 1994). As Nacoste (1994) put it, members of the non-target group tend to dissociate themselves from members of the target group to the extent that those from the target group perceive themselves as mere recipients of help. The stigma and labelling associated with being mere recipients creates a sense of resentment and ultimately, the need to dissociate oneself from the target group (Nacoste, 1994). This may be one of the reasons for affirmative action beneficiaries not to consider themselves as such, thus creating a tendency to denial.

The first intergroup psychological dynamic is the tendency to intergroup classification in response to affirmative action (Carter & Forsyth, 2007). In a minimal group, it is easy for individuals to conjure up intergroup classification (Tajfel & Turner, 1987) while in a realistic group, a potential intergroup classification is associated with conflict over scarce resources and leads to a subjective group differentiation (Nacoste, 1994).

In every encounter, members of the target group and non-target group bring with them beliefs about affirmative action. These beliefs are in fact policy schemas about it. As Nacoste (1994, p. 88) explains, a policy schema contains the “individual’s beliefs about the evaluation of the features of the procedures used to implement a policy”, which in this case is affirmative action. Individuals end up holding ideas based on the image of the affirmative action procedure and the amount of weight that is assigned to qualifications and group membership to affect employment decision-making. Any deviation from the expected schema becomes a confirmation of that long held schema and serves as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Turner & Pratkanis, 1994).

The following conditions are conducive for the development of policy schemas (Nacoste, 1994):

- The structure of the interaction context (competitive vs. cooperative interaction)
- The gender or racial composition of the setting
- The topic under discussion
- The interactional goal of the interactionists.
Nacoste (1994) suggested that the following have the potential to activate schemas associated with affirmative action:

- The significance of interactants’ membership of the subjective policy group
- The salience of the effect of the subjective policy on self-interest.

Policy schemas have the effect of their content guiding an individual’s policy processing and orientations to particular interactions. If this content contains negative procedural evaluations, target group members will be more vulnerable to negative feedback from members of the non-target group (Nacoste, 1994). Non-target group members will be prone to behaviours that seek to distance themselves from members of the target group. Eventually this leads to strained social contacts and relations. The result will be apprehension (Nacoste, 1994) on the part of the target group members, reinforced by the interaction distance of the non-target group members.

Policy schemas can be mediated by the confirmation or disconfirmation of the beliefs. A confirmation of the belief or its disconfirmation, depending on the policy schema held, affects the identity negotiation occurring during social interactions (Nacoste, 1994) and results in propagating some form of self-fulfilling prophecy. Beliefs that are discordant from the schema have the potential to mediate the policy schema and affect the polarity of the distance (Nacoste, 1994).

2.10.3 Intrapersonal Effect

Affirmative action and preferential selection may manifest either beneficial or adverse consequences for the recipient at intrapersonal level. If this is the case, the overriding goal of affirmative action and preferential selection should be the maximisation of benefits while minimising the adverse effects (Turner & Pratkanis, 1994).

At times, affirmative action is viewed as help by the beneficiary (Turner & Pratkanis, 1994). This means that had it not been for such action, the recipient feels that they would not have been accorded the opportunity to be selected to such a position. The inclination to view affirmative action as help unfortunately leads to adverse consequences for the recipient. Turner and Pratkanis (1994) suggest that this inclination may potentially create self-threatening experiences.
In terms of this suggestion, there are three conditions which foster the perception that affirmative action is threatening.

Affirmative action will be threatening if its implementation conveys and reinforces negative self-related messages (Turner & Pratkanis, 1994). Such messages insinuate that the recipients are not adequately qualified and are inferior to the extent that they cannot obtain a job without the assistance of the organisation’s affirmative action. Immediate reactions to such insinuation are negative self-perceptions of ability (Turner & Pratkanis, 1994), and often these affect performance. Often this is reinforced through long-held stereotypes that perceive women and Black people as inferior despite their qualifications (Tougas, et al., 1991)

Self-threatening affirmative action will also contrast, and be in conflict, with societal norms and values. Societal norms and values are expectations which are generally accepted in society as the arbiter in situations of choice (Turner & Pratkanis, 1994). Perceptions of unfairness in the arbitration of a selection decision elicit feelings of non-accomplishment in the recipient (Turner & Pratkanis, 1994). Gender stereotyping and adverse racism and gender stereotypes evoke such feelings in the recipient.

Affirmative action that fails to emphasise benefit to the recipients is more likely to be perceived as self-threatening (Turner & Pratkanis, 1994). Affirmative action should confirm the recipient’s future success and minimise the dependency affect. It must remove barriers that will hinder success and advancement.

Behavioural consequences for the individual manifest in defensive tendencies such as learned helplessness if there is no chance to alter the situation, low self-help initiatives and inclination to dependency as well as a high degree of self-protection against perceived opponents to the individual’s rise to success. This model can be illustrated graphically as in the following page.
Figure 2 A model of affirmative action as help: Antecedents and consequences of self-threatening self-supportive affirmative action

Source: Turner & Pratkanis (1994, p.58)
2.11 THEORIES OF FORMING AND CHANGING ATTITUDES

A number of theories underpin the formation of attitudes and how they change (Albrecht, Chadwick & Jacobson, 1987; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). These are classified into cognitive consistency, learning, social judgement and functional theories (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

2.11.1 Cognitive Consistency Theories
People are assumed to be at peace with themselves and their environment when there are consistencies between their beliefs, bits of knowledge and/or evaluations (Azjen, 1988; Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974) of attitude objects or issues. A discrepancy occurs when there is misalignment between these three areas. Inconsistencies are unpleasant and require some cognitive efforts to bring back equilibrium (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

In terms of this thinking, the driving force behind attitude change and formation is, in fact, that of the unpleasant inconsistencies. Cognitive consistency theories are therefore based on drive-reduction models of behaviour in which the adoption of a particular attitude is aimed at reducing the disagreeable effect of inconsistency (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Efforts to change attitudes will in effect be efforts to reduce inconsistency (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). According to Albrecht, et al. (1987) consistency theories are classified as balance, congruity, affective-cognitive consistency and dissonance theories.

Applying this thinking to affirmative action, for individualists, it can be postulated that employment practices which deviate from considerations of merit and use other criteria in employment decisions like selection and promotion will be inconsistent with their bits of knowledge and values (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). Egalitarians on the other hand will perceive inconsistencies when employment practices, on the face of apparent inequalities, do not recognise the existence of these inequalities. There will be psychological efforts from these groups to move towards restoring these perceived disparities (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).
The balance theory is based on relations between the person or a group of persons and the attitude object, which in this instance is affirmative action. It was originally construed by Heidi (1958) and stated that there are two generic types of relationships between the person and the attitude object: sentiment relations and unit relations (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

The sentiment relations express all forms of sentiments or affect, for instance, liking or disliking, loving or hating, admiring and approving or disapproving while the unit relations express togetherness or some form of belonging like closeness, similarity, possession or being part of the attitude object (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Sentiment relations and unit relations may be positive or negative. This explanation can be applied to affirmative action in which sentiment relation is evident in cases where beneficiaries of affirmative action programmes may like or dislike a particular programme while unit relations are noticeable when non-beneficiaries associate affirmative action with discrimination and thus disown it.

According to this thinking, balance occurs when there is consistency between sentiment relation and unit relation (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Consistency in this instance is attained when both the sentiment and unit relations are positive or negative. A positive sentiment relation and a negative unit relation produce an imbalance. Applied to affirmative action, a balance occurs when there is a positive approval of affirmative action and a resultant embracing of its spirit. Conversely, it is an imbalance to embrace the spirit of affirmative action yet still not approve of it in practice. Likewise, there is a balance when an individual or group disapproves of affirmative action and goes on to reject it as discriminating.

Basically, this theory assumes that balanced states are stable but imbalanced ones are not (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). When a state of imbalance occurs, the psychological tension created motivates the perceiver to restore the balance cognitively by changing relations. Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) stated that for instance, in imbalanced states, balance can be created by altering the relationship between the person or group of persons and the attitude object.
The balance theory predicted that a person’s attitude towards an attitude object depends on the source that is linked with that object. In terms of this prediction, attitudes will be favoured when the source of such an attitude is favoured and will conversely be negative when the source is less favoured. Individuals will be attracted to or feel positive toward people they perceive to feel as they do about objects and issues but will also feel negative toward people they perceive as disagreeing. Perceived attitudinal similarity produces interpersonal attraction.

Like other models of attitude formation and change, this model has its limitations. One such is that it fails to take into consideration the degree of liking or disliking and unit relationship (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). It is also inadequate regarding the relevance or importance of the elements and relations to the perceiver. Given these limitations, it will probably not be feasible to make quantitative predictions of the degree of change of attitudes. There is also a difficulty with the interpretation of the negative unit relationship because the model does not state if it is to be treated as the absence of a positive relationship or the opposite of a positive relationship.

To overcome these limitations Albrecht, et al., (1987) stated that the model was extended to include more elements and to examine the degrees of balance. The effects of persuasive communication were further included.

According to Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) some people cognitively engage in the following ways to resolve imbalances.

- Denial – denying the relationship in the system even when it is apparent

- Bolstering – adding elements that are in a balanced relationship to an existing element in the structure. This occurs when, for example, despite the perceived negative impact of affirmative action on non-beneficiaries, they may like the diversity it brings to the workplace. Bolstering does not eliminate imbalance but, rather, merely reduces it.

- Differentiation – one of the elements in the system is split into two elements which are related in opposite ways to other elements in the system and negatively related to each other.
Transcendence – combining elements into larger, more superordinate units, which form a balanced structure.

The above modes are hierarchically organised with denial occurring first, followed by bolstering with some kind of second attempt at denial, thereafter differentiation, with transcendence coming last (Abelson, 1959). The way these cognitive reactions are ordered is based on the assumption that people attempt the least effortful resolution and move on to those that require more effort. Effectively, this implies that denial and bolstering require less cognitive effort compared to differentiation and transcendence.

Whereas balance theory deals with unit relations and sentiment relations, congruity theory focuses on evaluative relationships (Himelfarb & Eagly, 1974). It is basically similar to the balance theory but looks at a person’s evaluation of the source and the concept, where the source in affirmative action may mean organisational leadership or legislation and the concept, affirmative action itself. In trying to predict evaluative efforts, the model takes into account the extent of evaluation and makes specific predictions about changes in the evaluation (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

In terms of this model, congruity is said to occur when a source and a concept, like affirmative action, that are positively associated, are accorded exactly the same evaluation and when a source and a concept that are negatively associated have precisely the same evaluations attached to them (Himelfarb & Eagly, 1974). To test congruence, the source and concept are each evaluated on a semantic differential scale with scores ranging between -3 and +3. Where the source and the concept are related by a positive assertion, then congruity exists if the scores obtained are exactly the same. A negative assertion creating congruity will see scores that are exactly the same but opposite in sign (Himelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

The above can be illustrated by an example, if the score for the source and concept each equals +1, such that source score = +1 and concept score = +1, congruity exists, as does positive assertion, while a negative assertion is created where for instance the source score = +1 and the
concept score = -1 (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). According to this theory, anything not adhering to this rule creates incongruity. A +2 source favouring a +1 concept is incongruous although in the balance theory it is balanced.

Incongruity elicits the need for change: this model predicts how much attitudes towards the source and the concept should change in order to restore congruity (Albrecht, et al., 1987). The degree of congruity is the function of pressure to change each of the elements, while the pressure to effect such change is equal to the distance between the present location of the element and its point of perfect congruity (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). The said point for an element is the location it would be required to assume to achieve congruity if the location of the other element is not changed.

The amount of change for each element depends on the amount of polarisation, with the result that in a situation where polarisations are greater, there is a high incidence of resistance to change. This amount of change of an element equals the amount of pressure to change, weighted by the degree of polarity of the other element.

According to Albrecht, et al. (1987) this theory’s limitation is that it can be undermined by incredulity. Incredulity occurs in situations where there is extreme incongruity. It results in some form of disbelief, a denial reaction, not an attitude change.

The congruity and balance models adopt the same view: that where a liked source favours a disliked concept, there will be an increase in the degree of evaluation of the concept (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). In converse, a liked source which disapproves of a liked concept produces a decrease in the evaluation of the concept. In other words, disliked sources induce a decrease in the evaluation of liked things that they favour and an increase in disliked things that they disfavour. Attitudes towards the source and the concept change with the occurrence of incongruity.

Seen from this angle, Himmelfarb & Eagly (1974) stated that a source that is positively viewed will need to have its evaluation lowered by associating itself with positions or causes that are
evaluated less favourably. Tannenbaum (1966) showed in his study that if two concepts are linked by either positive or negative assertions to a single source, a change of attitude towards one of the concepts produces a change in evaluation of the source, which then produces an alteration in attitudes toward the concept.

Another model is the affective-cognitive consistency theory, which is concerned with the consistency between people’s overall attitude or affect toward an object or issue and their beliefs about its relationship to their more general values (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974), that is, consistency in relationship between attitude or affect and beliefs and values. This model will speak in particular to the stances people adopt over affirmative action since they are value based, i.e. egalitarian and individualistic. In this model, subjects evaluate and rate a series of values from favourable to unfavourable. Thereafter, they rate again their beliefs on the strength of the attitude object in furthering (+) or hindering (-) the achievement of each of the values rated above. To arrive at an overall index of the cognitive structure associated with a given attitude object, the favourability score of each value is multiplied by its perceived instrumentality score (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). This model, therefore, uses the means-end relationship between the object or issue and the achievement of desired or undesired values or goals. Once the favourability score is multiplied by its perceived instrumentality score, the products are summed to determine the cognitive structure.

A positive index means that there is a predominant belief that the object furthers the attainment of positive values, whereas the opposite also holds. This theory postulates that a person’s affect towards an attitude object or evaluation of the object is consistent with this cognitive structural component. When there is inconsistency between the two beyond a certain level of tolerance, the individual becomes motivated to reduce the inconsistency and alters either one or both components to bring about consistency.

According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993) changes in the affective component resulting from alterations in the cognitive component are effected through persuasive communication. In other words, such communication relays information that portrays how the attitude object or issue furthers the attainment of certain desirable ends. Consistent with this thinking is the fact that
altering the perceptions of the attitude object’s relationship to valued goals brings about a change in attitudes (Petty & Krosnick, 1995). Changes in the affective component produce changes in the cognitive component in order to create consistency between the two (Petty & Krosnick, 1995). After a persuasive communication, the subjects realign their beliefs so that they are consistent with the changed attitude.

Dissonance theory is the brainchild of Festinger (1957) and explains dissonance through relevance of bits of knowledge to one another. In terms of this theory bits of knowledge can be either relevant or irrelevant to each other (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Relevance is said to exist when one cognition or bit of knowledge means something with respect to the other as far as the observer is concerned, while irrelevance occurs when this does not happen (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Relevantly related bits of knowledge may exist in consonance or dissonance. Dissonance occurs when one element implies the converse of the other (Albrecht, et al. 1987). In other words, in the frame of reference of the perceiver, one element does not fit in well with the other (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). An example would be the case of a manager, whose organisation is a designated employer in terms of the employment equity law but still does not implement it, knowing full well that this should be done. The non implementation and the knowledge that it should be implemented are dissonant. This theory may be said to be based on logical consistency but it is in effect based on psychological consistency since what seems dissonant to one individual may be consonant with another, thereby indicating the effect of personal or individual differences on attitude formation and change.

The extent of dissonance varies in magnitude (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). The total amount of dissonance is a function of the proportion of relevant elements that are dissonant with one another relative to the total number of consonant and dissonant elements, each weighted by the importance of the elements for the person (Albrecht, et al. 1987). Dissonance is a state of psychological tension which motivates the organism to try and reduce it. The amount of pressure to reduce dissonance depends on the magnitude of dissonance aroused (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). In reducing dissonance, the organism may change the elements or behaviour related to the elements, alter the importance of the element, add consonant elements or cause dissonant elements to be irrelevant to one another (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).
Complete reduction of dissonance is not always possible since elements are prone to resisting change (Albrecht, et al. 1987; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Resistance to change occurs because in a system, an alteration in one element creates an imbalance, incongruence or dissonance, and thus a ripple effect of change, until homeostasis is attained (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). All other elements have to readjust in order to bring about a new state of consonance. Hence a change in one element unsettles the system and leads to dissonance with other elements. Another attempt at reducing dissonance may take the form of the system not being willing to take in any information that would increase dissonance.

At certain points, people engage in behaviour that is contrary to their attitudes. This is called counter attitudinal advocacy (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). To counter the dissonance effect, the individual will try to justify their behaviour. Justification is tantamount to adding consonance to an already dissonant situation. When there is less justification, the amount of dissonance increases (Albrecht, et al. 1987). In the event where every dissonance reduction mechanism is limited to attitude change, the individual will alter their attitude to make it more consonant with behaviour. The amount of change depends on the amount of dissonance aroused and is related to the amount of justification for the counter attitudinal action. As the amount of attitude change increases, the amount of justification for the counter attitudinal action decreases and vice versa. The more the person justifies the action, the less the amount of attitude change (Albrecht, et al., 1987).

To obtain maximum attitude change, it will be necessary to give the person the amount of justification that is sufficient to effect engagement in counter attitudinal action. There are basically two cognitive elements in a counter attitudinal situation (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993): behaviour and existing attitude. It is baffling that attitude, not behaviour, changes. The cognitive element of behaviour will not alter because it is made up of one’s knowledge of a recent and salient behaviour (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). It is ingrained in the memory and will, as a result, be difficult to distort (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The implication is that behaviour commits a person to the element corresponding to the act.
According to Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) the cognitive element most likely to alter is one corresponding to the initial attitude. This element can be changed to reduce dissonance. The following are variables that will influence the amount of justification (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974):

- Reward
- Threat of punishment
- Effort expanded in engaging in behaviour. The more the effort, the less the justification.
- Attractiveness of the source or agent.

Another approach to dissonance as a source of attitude change argues that when one is exposed to an opinion different from one’s own, that person will experience dissonance (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The magnitude of this dissonance is the extent of disagreement between one’s opinion and the opposing one. It should, however, be considered that attitude change is not only the function of discrepancy size for the purpose of reducing dissonance. One other variable that is responsible for the discrepancy size is the credibility of the communicator (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Derogation of the communicator rather than change in attitude will help reduce dissonance as discrepancy size increases (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

Dissonance can also stem from a situation requiring choice (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). In such a situation, people experience conflict as a result of the number of alternatives they must choose from. After a choice decision, the perceived positive features of the rejected alternatives and the perceived negative features of the accepted alternative create dissonance (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). The magnitude of dissonance in this instance is a function of the following:

- the degree to which the alternatives are close in overall attractiveness
- the number of rejected alternatives
- the functional dissimilarity of the alternatives.

This thinking does not prove that dissonance is reduced by attitude change rather than conflict resolution arising from decision making.

Selective exposure to information is another way of reducing dissonance (Ajzen, 1988). Information recipients normally expose themselves to information that is consistent with their
beliefs and avoid those which are inconsistent with the latter. In this way, the individual seeks consonant information while avoiding dissonant information; the greater the magnitude of dissonance, the greater the tendency to seek supportive information and avoid non-supportive information (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

The basic definition of the dissonance theory was seen to have its flaws (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). There was a disadvantage regarding the implications of one bit of knowledge or element for another or its converse. Secondly, it was found that it was difficult to determine the importance of the elements. In reducing dissonance, it was discovered that it is difficult to choose the mode of reduction.

Researchers then looked at the role of commitment in dissonance theory (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). When people make decisions to act or behave in particular ways, they become committed to the behaviour. Dissonance and consonance between elements and the behaviour acted out are the function of commitment. Commitment increases the inclination to resist changing the element in order to reduce dissonance.

2.11.2 Learning Theories
Consistency theories rely a great deal on the notion that there already exists a cognitive structure along which consistency and inconsistency are evaluated (Albrecht, et al., 1987). They concern themselves with the changes that occur in the structure resulting from inconsistency within the existing structure or between the elements and the structure (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). The question would then be how cognitions, affective relationships and evaluations come into being. The answer lies in the theory that all these are acquired through a learning process.

There is consensus in the behavioural circle that attitudes are acquired but there is little research on how this takes place (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Attitude formation and change through learning are explained mostly in terms of the psychology of learning. This area of psychology posits a number of theories. These differ as a result of the way they conceptualise the process of learning and the conditions that are required for learning to take place. The following are the different learning based approaches to the study of attitude formation and change.
The conditioned learning theory argued that learning principles can be applied to the formation and alteration of attitudes (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). It posited that attitudes are implicit evaluative mediating responses that can be established using conditioning procedures (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974) as envisaged through Pavlovian procedures.

Using the Pavlovian model, the conditioned stimulus (CS) is continuously paired with an unconditioned stimulus (UCS) (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). In terms of this approach, the CS is a neutral stimulus since prior to learning, it evokes no response while the UCS evokes a response, which is the UCR once applied. A continuous application of the combined UCS and CS evokes a conditional response (CR). The CR is normally a fraction of the unconditional response (UCR) and is evoked in anticipation of a UCS. According to this theory, stimuli can acquire evaluative meaning, thus also becoming an attitude object. In affirmative action, certain measures may be negatively perceived by individuals or groups, but when paired with certain stimuli such as reward or punishment, they may be perceived differently. Reward or punishment will then evoke positive or negative emotional reactions. After an attitude has been established regarding an affirmative action measure, it can be used as an unconditional stimulus to establish attitudes towards other stimuli or, in this example, measures.

According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), Fishbein (1961) and Rhine (1958) proposed concept formation approaches to the formation and change of attitudes. This model suggests how people acquire various conceptions or beliefs about the attitude object. They emphasise how our belief about an object determines our evaluation or attitude towards the attitude object. In this model, the stimulus to which a common mediating response is learned forms a concept.

Applying this thinking, an attitude toward an object like affirmative action will be formed when stimuli elicit a common mediating evaluative response that becomes conditioned to the concept. The concept now acquires an attitude due to its evaluation in the stimuli. Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) further argued that we can therefore learn the concept without any attitude. The implication is that attitudes are formed once there are stimuli that invoke an evaluative response. As is the case with learning theories, attitude strength after acquisition is a function of the
consistency with which stimuli of the same evaluation are associated with the concept. Counter-conditioning will have the effect of evoking resistance to change.

Building on Rhine’s (1958) model, Fishbein (1961) argued that concepts that became associated with the attitude concept through learning make up the person’s beliefs about the concept. To acquire a belief about an object, one has to learn to associate the attitude object with the concept. The strength of the belief is determined by the degree of association between the two. This thinking accorded little consideration to the effects of mediating concepts. Fishbein’s (1961) approach stated that established attitudes can be changed by altering the strength of various beliefs about the object. The stronger the belief about the object, the more difficult it will be to change the attitude towards the object.

The model suggests the following ways to alter attitudes (Fishbein, 1961):

1. Changing the strength of associations between the attitude object and the associated characteristics
2. Creating new beliefs
3. Changing the evaluations associated with the characteristics that are associated with the concept.

Of the three possible means to alter attitudes, changing the evaluations is the most difficult since they are well established and enmeshed in other associated conditions.

Bem (1967) devised the theory of self-perception and its role in attitude formation and change (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Haemmerlie & Montgomery, 1982). According to this theory, people develop attitudes by observing their behaviour and concluding that attitudes might have been responsible for such behaviour (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). This is contrary to regular knowledge that attitudes precede behaviour.

Eagly and Chaiken (1993) reported that in terms of Bem’s (1967) approach, people make use of their recent behaviour, which is different from their earlier attitudes, to infer their current attitudes. Contrasting with the normal behavioural sciences approach, Bem (1967) argued that people do not develop attitudes from discrepant internal feelings and their actions. Rather,
repeated stimuli from the environment which are in response to perceived cues from the individual become the basis for learning in such a fashion that every time the stimulus is perceived, a particular behaviour ensues.

This can be illustrated by way of an example. An organisation may come to see the importance of preferential employment practices for disadvantaged groups when certain stimuli, for example a wage subsidy for preferential hiring, are present, because the Department of Labour at that time requires data to process the wage subsidy. Thus, argued Bem (1965, 1967), “particularly if internal cues might signal an inner state that is weak, ambiguous or unpredictable, people will rely on their own behaviour as guide to interpreting their inner state” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; p. 539).

Observers of behaviour, the self or outsiders, take into account not only the behaviour itself but also the conditions under which it takes place (Bandura, 1981; Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). In some instances behaviour causation is located outside of the individual, in which case such behaviour is attributed not to the characteristics of the person but to external environmental processes. Accordingly, behaviour that is not attributed to external environmental factors will best be revealing one’s attitudes as well as other dispositions and tendencies, argued Bem (1967) in (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

2.11.3 Social Judgement Theory
Sherif and Hovland (1961) posited that a person’s own stand on an issue is an anchor with which attitudinally related stimuli are judged. This implies that people take an initial stance over an attitude issue or object, and that all subsequent opinions are evaluated using that initial stance as an anchor. This is related to mental schema that we form and later use as our points of reference to deal with particular situations. Egalitarians develop particular values which serve as an anchor to judge future situations just as individualists do.

Views that emerge subsequent to the anchor are ordered on an attitudinal continuum whose dimensions can be said to consist of three categories or latitudes (Sherif & Hovland, 1961): acceptance, rejection and non-commitment. The latitude of acceptance reflects the range of
opinions that the individual finds acceptable, while the latitude of rejection is the range in which the individual finds the opinions objectionable.

In the latitude of acceptance, the opinions best characterise the individual’s own stance, whereas opinions in the latitude of rejection will definitely not be accepted by the individual. The individual may adopt an ambivalent stance which is in the latitude of non-commitment. In this latitude, the individual will neither accept nor reject the opinion. Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974) further suggested that the widths of a person’s latitudes and the location of their preferred positions regarding an issue determine how the individual will evaluate and judge the particular attitude issue or opinion.

An opinion that falls in the individual’s latitude of acceptance is deemed to be assimilated by the individual (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). As a result it is evaluated as fair and unbiased. This should prove the case with the beneficiaries of affirmative action measures, on a speculative basis for the moment. In the latitude of rejection, an opinion is contrasted. It is evaluated as unfair and biased because it falls wide, away from the individual’s stance (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

To have the effect of changing attitudes, an opinion should fall within the latitude of acceptance. This implies that within the said latitude, the greater the discrepancy between the initial position of the individual and the position propagated in the opinion, the greater the attitude change (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974) while, for the latitude of rejection, the greater the discrepancy the lesser the chance of change. Change is much easier when messages fall within the latitude of acceptance or at the beginning of the latitude of rejection (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

2.11.4 Functional Theories
The first functional theory on attitudes formation was explained earlier when the functions of attitudes were explained. This theory is advocated by Katz (1960). The second is Kelman’s three processes of opinion change (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Katz’s (1960) theory is inward and relates to the intra-individual personality functions while Kelman’s (1958) is more outward and interpersonal.
Kelman’s (1958) theory suggests three processes of opinion change, namely, compliance, identification and internalisation (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). These processes are based on their motivational basis for engagement in a particular relationship which results in specific behaviours. Himmelfarb and Eagly (1974, p. 45) further emphasised that, “the processes differ according to whether change is at a superficial overt response level or at a deeper level that involves more durable change integrated with a person’s significant role relationship or with his values”.

Compliance is at surface level. People comply to gain a favourable reaction from the influencing agent and as a result the individual values the effect of the opinion response and adopts the induced opinion regardless of what their private values are (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Opinion change emerging in this way is superficial and temporary because it only needs to appease the influencing agent and to forestall an unpleasant effect (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

Identification is said to be prevalent when opinion is changed to help the self to “establish or maintain a positive self-defining relationship with the influencing agent” (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974, p. 45). This type of attitude change depends on the relationship between the individual and the influencing agent. Although the altered attitude is accepted and adopted both privately and publicly, it will be discarded once the relationship between the individual and the influencing agent is discordant. Such an attitude is not integrated into the individual’s value systems even though it is publicly and privately owned up to. It need not be monitored as in the compliance process.

In internalisation, an opinion is adopted because it resonates well with the individual’s value system (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). The individual considers the opinion to be representing their values and beliefs well. The change in opinion is not dependent on the influencing agent (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974).

From the above it is quite clear that attitudes are formed or changed to serve the egoistic nature of the individual and to assist the individual to maintain particular relations with their environment. A common thread in these models is that there are environmental variables which
impact on individuals and help define their attitudes, which in this instance are favourable towards affirmative action

2.12 RESISTANCE TO ATTITUDE CHANGE

The implementation of new ways in an organisation often creates uncertainties which challenge the predictability of future interactions and personal dispositions. Moving from “the way things are done here” means moving out of our comfort zones into areas we have never experienced before. Petty, Tormala and Rucker (2004) ascribe this to perceived future inconsistencies between our known world and the envisaged future state. Often, the uncertainty experienced drives people to resist attempts that move them from their comfort zones. There are a number of reasons people will not need to change their attitudes in any change situation.

2.12.1 Reasons for Resisting Change of Attitudes towards Affirmative Action

Werner, Bagrain, Cunningham, Potgieter and Viedge (2010) stated that resistance to change can occur at individual, managerial and organisational level and suggested the following reasons for it:

2.12.1.1 Individual reasons

- Fear of the unknown
- Potential challenge to material personal interests such as decreased promotion potential
- Fear of rejection by a powerful ingroup
- Distrust in the process and of management

2.12.1.2 Management reasons

- Fear of loss of authority and status
- Exposure of previous inadequate approaches and behaviours
2.12.1.3 Organisational reasons

- Cost, time and effort required in change
- Deep-rooted organisational culture
- Bureaucracy
- Previous commitments and agreements with powerful lobby blocs like trade unions

2.12.2 How Resistance to Attitude Change Develops

Resistance to attitude change implies motivation to retain current attitudes. This may not necessarily be the motive behind the desire to maintain the attitude but there may be other motivators.

When individuals seek to restore freedom, they resort to reactance (Brehm, 1966), which is a stubborn refusal to change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). Another motive is found in Festinger’s (1957) consistency theory where altering attitudes will lead to inconsistencies between beliefs and expected behaviours. When people believe that their current attitudes are correct and accurate, they are more likely to resist changing them (Petty & Wegener, 1999).

Research has shown that resistance to attitude change follows particular mechanisms (Gilbert, 1993; Killeya & Johnson, 1995; Zuwerink & Devine, 1996). Counter-arguing or unfavourable thinking counteracts and reduces attitude change (Petty, Ostrom & Brock, 1981). Attitude bolstering — a tendency to selectively generate and use information that supports one’s attitude stance — also reduces the propensity to change while selective attention to or avoidance of attitude congruent information has also been found to increase resistance (Frey, 1986). An ever present source of resistance is the change recipient’s predisposition to the source. A source that is derogated is more likely to fail to induce change while negative affect and irritation with the source and the message can also increase resistance (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979).

2.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter sought to define the constructs, attitudes and affirmative action. This was followed by conceptualising attitudes towards affirmative action as these stem from the definitions.
Attitudes have been found to be related to the readiness of individuals towards engaging in particular behaviour. An attitude contains some emotional as well as evaluative components. Attitudes are in essence structured in terms of affect, behaviour and cognition.

People use attitudes to derive particular personal gains. This is also the case with attitudes towards affirmative action. When these threaten personal gains, they are more likely to be negatively perceived than when they support personal material enhancement. If not properly managed, attitudes towards affirmative action may develop into a negative organisational, group as well as individual, culture and have dire consequences for the social landscape of the country. Social polarisation and gender or racial silos are often results of miscommunication of the reasons for particular actions.

It must further be understood that legislative requirements for affirmative action must not be taken as sacrosanct where merit is overlooked. Valid decision procedures are often objective in employment decisions and must emphasise competence over quotas. Training becomes important to aid previously disadvantaged groups to function optimally in situations they were not previously exposed to.
CHAPTER 3 ARTICLE

The effect of age, gender, job level and race on attitudes towards affirmative action.
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ABSTRACT

Orientation: Workplaces were previously less accessible to Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and women. Legislation was promulgated to redress the imbalances which resulted from the social engineering that saw men and White people dominating influential positions in the workplace. This legislation, the Employment Equity Act of 1998 (Employment Equity Act (EEA), 1998), was met with different feelings among various participants in the marketplace. These feelings reflect the varying attitudes people hold towards affirmative action and those measures implemented to redress previous segregating employment practices.

Research purpose: The objective of this study was to investigate the prevailing attitudes about affirmative action among men and women of diverse age groups at different levels in a public sector organisation in one of the security oriented departments of the government.

Motivation for the study: The study sought to explore the underlying attitudes towards affirmative action and whether these attitudes are mediated by race, gender age and job level. This survey was deemed necessary because every year after the release of employment equity data by the Department of Labour in South Africa, there is much debate about the willingness of organisations’ managers to address the equity requirements of the legislation.
Research design, approach, and method: A survey and a convenience sampling procedure were used. An instrument adapted from other previous research studies was applied, while descriptive as well as inferential statistics were used to report and interpret the data.

Main findings: There were generally positive attitudes towards affirmative action amongst men and women as well as amongst people at different job levels across varying age groups. This augurs well for the organisation since any initiatives directed at affirmative action will further enhance the already solid foundation of knowledge and the positive attitude that employees already display regarding affirmative action.

Practical implications: The positive regard and knowledge of employees with respect to affirmative action can be used to the advantage of the organisation to advance diversity at all job levels across different age groups in it. Employees at management level, especially those at senior level, could benefit from further development and training on diversity.

Contributions: This study contributes to knowledge of attitudes towards affirmative action. It recommends a model that can be applied in managing such attitudes. This model has not been tested previously but can be used in future research to evaluate its utility in managing attitudes towards affirmative action and increase knowledge on this subject.

Key Words: Attitudes, affirmative action, attitude theories, equal opportunity, fairness, diversity, egalitarianism, individualism, discrimination, prejudice, self-esteem.
The world over, countries have come to appreciate and embrace the diverse groups and cultures in their companies and organisations (Kleugel & Smith, 1983). Legislation that sought to redress imbalances stemming from past segregating employment practices was passed in such countries as the USA, the UK, Australia, Malaysia, and many others (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). South Africa was no exception. The advent of democracy has opened an opportunity for the recognition of the cultural melting pot that is South Africa.

Legislation in South Africa required that organisations put in place measures to address imbalances (EEA, 1998). These are termed affirmative action measures. Affirmative action is meant to favourably offer opportunities to designated groups among a country’s population (Crosby, 1994). In South Africa, the Employment Equity Act of 1998 (EEA, 1998) categorises members of designated groups as women, blacks and the disabled. It identifies blacks as people of African origin, coloureds and people of Indian origin (EEA, 1998). Members of the designated groups are generally called previously disadvantaged groups (PDGs) or individuals (PDIs). Previous employment practices have been discriminatory against these groups (Boetigger, Essack, Maarschalk, & Ranchod, 2007; Bowmaker-Falconer, Horwitz, Jain, & Taggar, 1998) and thus some positive bias in recruitment, promotion, training and development in favour of these groups can be regarded as a form of redress for previous unfair employment practices.

Affirmative action elicits different responses from various people and groups (Coetzee & Van der Merwe, 2010; Konrad & Hartmann, 2001; Kravitz & Platania, 1993; Krings, Tschan & Bettex, 2007; Stewart & Perlow, 2001). These responses reflect typical attitudes that people hold regarding this subject (Himmelfarb & Eagly, 1974). Such attitudes are indications of disconfirmation or confirmation of the attitude object. Either they will like the attitude object or dislike it, or be in favour of it or disfavour it (Coetzee & Van der Merwe, 2010). In the present study this makes affirmative action the attitude object since it is the object of liking or disliking.

Favouring particular groups in employment, training and development practices in organisations has not generally been perceived positively among all members of the population (Kravitz, 2008) as was the intention of the legislature. Critics argue that affirmative action spawns a victim
mentality, encourages stigmatisation of the previously disadvantaged groups and violates the fundamental democratic ideals of fairness, justice and meritocracy while advocating a systematic reverse discrimination against the previously advantaged (Steinbugler, Press & Dias, 2006). Those advocating for affirmative action view it as a step towards eliminating prejudice and discrimination, aiming ultimately to eliminate gender and racial inequality (Steinbugler, et.al. 2006). They perceive it as a way of recognising and appreciating the diverse nature of a country’s population. Put in the context of the current article, these differing views can be said to embody the different attitudes of people towards affirmative action.

These attitudes can influence organisational sensitivity to racial and gender diversity (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Miller, Maner & Becker, 2010; Tougas, Crosby, Joly & Pelchat, 1995). For example, a male-dominated organisation will tend not to consider the need to adjust the working conditions of women in order to meet their family responsibilities, while a race-dominated one may well undermine the ability of particular race groups (Tougas, et al., 1995). Polarisation along racial and gender lines, which is responsible for race- and gender-based silos, will ensue and affect the overall functioning of the organisation (Esterhuizen, 2008). Making these attitudes known will enable organisations to introduce measures to manage them.

Previous research in South Africa concentrated on affirmative action as a concept (Duweke, 2004; Esterhuizen, 2008; Thomas & Jain, 2004). Few researchers have investigated the role of attitudes in affirmative action (Boetigger, et al., 2007). The prevailing debate regarding the efficacy of such action as an appropriate mechanism to ensure racial and gender representativeness cannot be ignored. In this research the attitudes people hold towards affirmative action as individuals and as groups were investigated, as well as how these affect organisational functioning. The attitudes of men, women, blacks and whites towards affirmative action were explored and described. In addition, this research brought into the open the attitudes of those in management positions towards affirmative action and sought to reveal whether age plays any role in these attitudes.

The aim of this research was to describe the prevailing attitudes towards affirmative action in a particular public sector organisation. The organisation was chosen because of its accessibility;
Attitudes are described as a psychological tendency to evaluate a particular entity or object with some degree of favour of disfavour (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Attitudes towards affirmative action will thus entail psychologically evaluating the favourableness or unfavourableness of affirmative action (Bell, Harrison, & McLaughlin, 2000). Sherif and Cantril (1945) indicated in their classic article that attitudes are related to the reaction of individuals and groups when they perceive the attitude object. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) further stated that people react in particular, characteristic ways to the attitude object. This implies that those in favour of affirmative action, i.e. those with positive attitudes towards it, will react differently from those who disfavour it and have negative attitudes towards it. The essence of these differences in reaction is their effect on individual and organisational functioning (Kravitz, 2008).

As stated earlier, affirmative action involves measures that are put in place in employment practices to address imbalances caused by previous discriminatory practices in employment. Such measures include preferential practices in recruitment, training and development as well as promotion. Such redress advocates exercising preferences for the previously disadvantaged groups (Boetigger, et al., 2007) Preference for one group implies that other groups will be less preferred in employment practices. The reaction of the less preferred group will not necessarily be similar to that of the preferred one. Women, as constituting one of the previously disadvantaged groups, will tend not to react to affirmative action in the same way that men will (Bacchi, 1996). At the core of these reactions are three components which constitute the attitude structure.

Attitudes are embodied in three components, namely, cognition, affect and behaviour (Fazio & Petty, 2008). The cognitive component of attitudes concerns the beliefs and values people hold, which are innate. The affective component, on the other hand, encompasses the feelings and
emotions of people about the attitude object (Fazio & Petty, 2008). From this explanation, reactions to affirmative action can be said to relate to how it affects the beliefs and values held. Behaviour is the outcome of the appraisal of the cognitive and affective component and implies the reaction alluded to in the above instances. The behavioural component has implications for organisational behaviour since it is the acting out of innate feelings and values regarding the attitude object, in this case affirmative action.

Standpoints towards action of this kind may be classified into egalitarian and individual beliefs. Egalitarians believe that there is no equity or equality in society and, for this reason; merit alone is not enough to redress these inequities and inequalities in the workplace (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). They acknowledge the effect of previous segregationist developmental practices against particular population groups and suggest that workplace practices must also acknowledge that remedying them will take longer (Konrad & Spitz, 1999). Egalitarians are thus prone to view affirmative action positively. Research has indicated that women and blacks are more likely to be egalitarian than men and whites (Konrad & Spitz, 1999; Sealy, 2010).

Individualists, as opposed to egalitarians, argue that human beings’ internal processes, of ability and effort, are important to determine employment decisions (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). They view affirmative action as interference in a well functioning system of meritocracy. Men and whites have been found to be more individualist than women and blacks (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001; Konrad & Spitz, 1999).

Personal experiences of discrimination in the workplace influence the attitude towards affirmative action (Feldman, 1988). People who have personally experienced discrimination are more likely to support affirmative action initiatives than those who did not (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). This is the case because people who have never experienced discrimination are inclined not to believe in its existence or may be ambivalent towards the plight of the previously disadvantaged (Feldman, 1988). They perceive all people as being treated equally and consider that there is no need for affirmative action. Research results have indicated that men and whites are likely to see women and blacks respectively as less discriminated against (Konrad & Spitz, 1999).
Individuals and groups may exhibit stereotyped dispositions towards the roles of men and women (Resendez, 2002). Such stereotypes are fixated into traditional roles of women and men and we often do not notice these roles changing, owing to the demands on the modern career woman and family man. These prejudiced people argue that affirmative action puts women in positions that will see them failing (Naidoo & Kongolo, 2004; Steinbugler, Press & Dias, 2006). Both men and women fixated on stereotypical gender roles are likely to display negative attitudes towards affirmative action (Konrad & Spitz, 1999).

Attitudes in this regard are related to the strength of the affirmative action programme, individual differences, prejudice, self-esteem and self concept (Krings, Tschan & Bettex, 2007). Strong affirmative action measures such as preferential hiring are likely to be disliked by whites and men while soft ones like training and development have been found to be accepted by men and women as well as whites and blacks (Krings, et al. 2007). In more general terms, hard measures such as preferential recruitment and promotion are likely to be disliked by members of non-designated groups while members of designated groups will prefer them over soft ones (Krings, et al., 2007). This is attributed to men and whites perceiving that preferential recruitment and promotion erode their livelihood and thus challenge their self-interest (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001).

Women and Blacks are beneficiaries of affirmative action and their positive regard for it stems from the self-interest derived from affirmative action (Bobo, 1998). At the individual level, the fact that it deprives Whites and men leads to their disfavouring affirmative action. As previous beneficiaries, men and Whites find affirmative action eroding their chances of increased earnings from vertical career moves, and thus leading to a stagnant standard of living. In terms of this thinking, men who view vertical positions in organisations as an extension of their power find affirmative action challenging their masculinity (Kling, Hyde, Showers & Buswell, 1999).

Resistance to affirmative action and its acceptance have been found to be related to sexism and racism (Tougas, Deaton & Veilleux, 1991). Gender and racial prejudice presuppose that members of certain racial and gender groups are inherently incapable of carrying out certain tasks (Resendez, 2002). Any failure of members of prejudiced groups in their allocated tasks is
often ascribed to their inherent incapability and not to other factors (Stewart & Perlow, 2001). Those in this category of thinking do not believe that discrimination occurs but that it is this inherent lack of capability that renders them unemployable or unpromotable (Kravitz, Klineberg, Avery, Nguyen & Lund, 2000). By implication, men might consider women as inferior and incapable of carrying out certain tasks while Whites may expect Blacks to fail in their duties due to their inferior race.

Kling, et al. (1999) reported that men possess higher self-esteem than women. Krings, et al. (2007) also found that people with lower self-identity tend to emphasise group membership and consider others as out-group members in order to increase their self-esteem. Low self-esteem among men may cast women into the out-group and cause men to dislike affirmative action measures that favour women.

The last determinant of attitudes towards affirmative action is self-concept (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001). Self-image relates to how the individuals perceive themselves in relation to the environment they find themselves in. People with positive self-concept have been found to positively regard affirmative action (Konrad & Hartman, 2001). Their gregarious outlook on life makes them realise that the world can never be perfect and they will thus tend to hold egalitarian beliefs.

Attitudes towards affirmative action have implications for individual, group and organisational behaviour (Lewis, 2009). They influence organisational culture and climate. Organisations that value diversity will experience fewer employment equity problems as compared with those which do not. In masculine organisations (Werner, Bagraim, Cunningham, Potgieter, & Viedege 2010), affirmative action may invoke competitive tendencies which may go well with organisational aims if healthy. Herholdt and Marx (1999) found that positive competition among employees instils positive work behaviours.

Affirmative action has its own social ramifications. Nacoste (1994) warned against the vulnerability of the target group to negative feedback from the non-benefiting group. One problem stemming from this social interaction is dissociation, which occurs when particular
members of a group are labelled and stigmatised (Nacoste, 1994). Often, the target group is stigmatised as mere recipients of favours which may result in resentment towards affirmative action by the targeted group (Nacoste, 1994).

Beneficiaries of affirmative action also manifest resentment towards it. This is particularly true when they perceive it as help (Turner & Pratkanis 1994). When viewed as help, affirmative action adversely affects recipients. Turner and Pratkanis (1994) stated that this inclination has the potential to create self-threatening experiences. According to Turner and Pratkanis (1994) self-threatening experiences contrast with beliefs long held about the self and societal norms. Gender stereotyping and symbolic racism afford some examples of self-threatening experiences. When viewed as help, affirmative action confirms dependency and the individual perceives future success to hinge on the help model (Turner & Pratkanis, 1994).

In general, the above literature review indicates that men are more likely to hold negative attitudes towards affirmative action while women are more likely to have positive ones. Blacks will generally have positive regard for affirmative action while Whites will by and large hold negative attitudes towards it. It does not distinguish between men as either Whites or Blacks and women as such, nor does it distinguish between Whites as women or men.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

**Research approach**

Attitudes are typically researched quantitatively, using surveys and questionnaires to collect quantitative data (Oppenheim, 1978). Biographical variables of age, gender, job level and race are thereafter used to describe the data obtained. According to Esterhuizen (2008) and TerreBlanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006), descriptive research may quantitatively analyse data obtained through surveys and questionnaires. In essence, this research is both explorative and descriptive since it explored and described prevailing attitudes towards affirmative action according to demographic dimensions of age, gender, job level and race.
Research method

[Research participants] The research took place in one of the government departments in the security cluster in the Limpopo province. The province is divided into districts. There were eight safety facilities in the district in which the research took place. All facilities participated in the research. Permission to conduct the research was first obtained from the national head office of the organisation; this was communicated to the provincial office which then filtered the permission through to districts and individual facilities.

A convenience sampling procedure was used. Two hundred questionnaires were issued to research participants. Out of these, one hundred and thirty eight responses were received, thus yielding a response rate of 69 percent. The characteristics of participants were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>19-35 years</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-45 years</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46-65 years</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job level</td>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisory</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the majority of participants were blacks (88.4 percent). This subgroup will not be reported on due to the extreme differences in proportions. There were fewer women than men. Despite the percentage of women in the sample being lower than that of men (31.9 percent), the sample can still be considered representative in terms of gender. Younger employees in the age group 19-35 years who took part in the study were in the majority at 45.7 percent of the sample. Fewer people at senior management level took part in the research (2.9 percent) than employees in the lower entry level position (45.7 percent).
**Measuring instrument**  The instrument used by Duweke (2004) and Esterhuizen (2008) was revised to suit the current study. As it stood, the instrument used by these researchers did not sufficiently measure prevailing attitudes towards affirmative action but was instead evaluative of organisational affirmative action practices (Duweke, 2004; Esterhuizen, 2008). Items from Krings, Tschan and Bettex (2007) were added to this instrument. This was necessary because the instrument used by Krings, et al. (2007) contained dimensions which were more in line with psychological constructs of attitudes.

Reliability as well as validity evaluations were conducted on the questionnaire. Reliability evaluations indicated an overall Cronbach Alpha of 0.85.

After reliability evaluation, the second step was to determine the validity of the measuring instrument. One such approach is the determination of whether the assessment technique is theoretically sound, and that it is similar to the factor structures used by other techniques in measuring the construct (Moerdyk, 2009). A factor analysis was then performed on the measure. Factor analysis consists of methods of clustering related variables. Each of the clusters consists of a group of variables whose components correlate more highly with them than they do with variables outside their clusters (Moerdyk, 2009). These clusters are then called dimensions.

The extraction method used was Principal Component Analysis (PCA) while the rotation method is the Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation (Vermeulen & Coetzee, 2006). Rotation converged in 9 iterations. Components 1,2,3 and 4 were included in this research report because their average loading values are higher than 0.7 (Vermeulen & Coetzee, 2006). The PCA did not include questionnaire items 1-17 because they were included not to measure attitudes but to diagnose whether participants were aware of affirmative action practices in their organisation. Component 1 thus represented the dimension Egalitarianism, while component 2 was Self-interest and 3 was Prejudice. Thus, from the Rotated Component Matrix, component 1 becomes 2 in this explanation while 2 become 3 and so on. The following dimensions were then found to be valid for the study.
Awareness of organisational affirmative action (AA) practices
It would not have been possible to arrive at a meaningful conclusion about attitudes towards affirmative action without first establishing whether research participants have knowledge of affirmative action practices. Organisations have to train their employees about such practices in order for them to be aware of it. This aspect was covered by items 1-17 in the measure with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.929.

Egalitarianism
Egalitarianism items measured the extent of belief in the existence of inequality. Egalitarians believe that society is not equal. This dimension contained ten items with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.84. This dimension was also measured with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, as in the dimension above.

Self-interest
Self-interest in this context refers to the material interest an individual or a group stands to gain or forego from implementing affirmative action (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001; Krings, et al. 2001) This dimension consisted of eight items and had a Cronbach Alpha of 0.67.

Prejudice
This dimension covers both the gendered and racially stereotypical views people have of different others (Williams, Jackson, Brown, Torres, Forman & Brown, 1999). It was measured by six items. The inter-item reliability was favourable with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.71 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

[Research procedure] Approval to conduct the research was first lodged with the national office of this department. After the approval was received this was forwarded to the provincial office as a national instruction. The provincial office then instructed the individual facility managers to cooperate in this regard. It is necessary to describe the nature of the command structure in order to appreciate how instructions are carried out in this department. Each province is divided into districts. There are on average eight facilities in each district. A provincial instruction can be implemented without first going through the district.
Each of the eight facilities in the district was allocated twenty-five questionnaires. Front office personnel were instructed to issue the questionnaire to every second employee as they reported for duty in all shifts until all allocated questionnaires were taken up. There were at least two shifts in each facility with some facilities operating three shifts. Attached to the questionnaires was a covering letter explaining the purpose of the research as well as the rights of the participants and giving the date by which completed questionnaires were to be returned. A copy of the approval letter from the national office to conduct the research was also attached to the questionnaire. A box for depositing completed questionnaires marked “Completed Questionnaires” was placed in the reception foyer of each facility. Completed questionnaires were collected after fourteen days.

[Statistical analysis] Quantitative data analysis techniques were used for this research. The computer software, Statistics Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) (Levesque, 2007), was used to analyse data. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated to determine relationships between variables (Howell, 2011). Mean scores were also calculated on employees’ responses while frequencies were also reported for each independent variable, namely, race, gender, and job level. Standard deviations were calculated as well, in order to determine variability of scores for the total sample and each of the demographic variables of age, gender, job level, and race. Frequency distributions for the different subgroups were determined and presented.

In order to make inferences on the results, t-tests as well as analysis of variance (ANOVA) were carried out. A two-sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of female and male respondents on affirmative action dimensions. This was performed to test if there were significant differences between the groups.

ANOVA techniques were used for the following:

- To test if there are significant differences between male and female participants on the affirmative action attitudes dimensions
To test if there are significant differences between different job levels on the affirmative action attitudes dimensions

To test if there are significant differences between race groups on the affirmative action attitudes dimensions

To test if there was any significant difference between participants of different age groups on the affirmative action attitudes dimensions.

RESULT

Descriptive statistics, Cronbach’s Alpha and Pearson correlations of the instrument are reported in Table 2.

**TABLE 2:** Descriptive statistics, Cronbach’s Alpha and Pearson correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>AAOAA Practices</th>
<th>Egalitarianism</th>
<th>Self-Interest</th>
<th>Prejudice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOAA Practices</td>
<td>47.17</td>
<td>9.86</td>
<td>0.929</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarianism</td>
<td>68.38</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>0.844</td>
<td>0.267**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-interest</td>
<td>25.48</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td>-0.243**</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.707</td>
<td>0.190*</td>
<td>0.507**</td>
<td>-0.232**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inter-correlations between dimensions**

Information in Table 2 shows that the instrument obtained adequate Cronbach Alphas on all the dimensions except that of self-interest with α = .675. This Cronbach Alpha is not greatly below the accepted norm of α = .70 (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995) and thus it was not necessary to exclude it. It can thus be concluded that the results obtained from this research are reliable.

Data obtained, as reflected in Table 2, show that awareness of organisational affirmative action practices correlated statistically significantly and positively with egalitarianism (r=.267; p = .002). There is a statistically significant negative correlation between awareness of organisational affirmative action practices and self-interest (r=-.243; p = .004). There was a low correlation between egalitarianism and self-interest (r= -.003; p= .975). This correlation is too small to make interpretations in this regard.
Profile of the sample on affirmative action attitudes dimensions

In order to arrive at a meaningful interpretation, the profile of the sample on the different dimensions was determined. Testing the distribution of the dimensions revealed that scores on all the dimensions were normally distributed except for prejudice. As a result, non parametric tests, the Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney Tests, were performed on prejudice for the different groups whereas t-Tests were run for the other two dimensions. This is fully discussed in paragraphs below. The individual demographic profiles of the sample as it related to the different dimensions of the attitudes towards affirmative action were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness Of Organisational AA Practices</td>
<td>Male(N=88)</td>
<td>Female(N=44)</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45.95</td>
<td>49.82</td>
<td>10.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarianism</td>
<td>68.43</td>
<td>38.32</td>
<td>5.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-interest</td>
<td>26.07</td>
<td>24.32</td>
<td>4.539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 indicates that the mean score of men (45.9) on awareness of organisational affirmative action practices was significantly lower than that of women (49.8). Both men and women displayed a similarly high positive outlook on the dimension, Egalitarianism (p= .898). Men reported a higher mean score (68.43) than women (68.32) but this difference was not statistically significant. Men recorded higher inclinations to self-interest given their higher mean score (26.07) while women had a lower mean score on this dimension (24.32). However, this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 4 presents an analysis of variance that was performed to compare the means of men and women. This revealed a significant difference in the means of men and women as regards awareness of organisational affirmative action practices (F = 4.677, p = 0.032). In other words, the null hypothesis is rejected. There were significant differences between men and women on the dimension of awareness of organisational affirmative action practices. Unlike the situation in this study, Krings, et al., (2007), using chi-square tests, found that women and men did not differ in knowledge of affirmative action practices or programmes (\( \chi^2 s < 3.2 \)). For egalitarianism, the analysis of variance showed that the mean of the total scores for the different groups was not significantly different at p < 0.05 or p< 0.01 with F = 0.016 (p=.898). As a result, the hypothesis
cannot be rejected. There is no significant difference between men and women on the dimension, egalitarianism. For the dimension, self-interest, $p = .059$ which showed that there was no statistically significant difference between groups at $p = 0.05$.

**TABLE 4**: ANOVA Table for men and women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOAA Practices</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>437.879</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4837.879</td>
<td>4.677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>12170.364</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>93.618</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarianism</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.379</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.379</td>
<td>1.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>3003.136</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>23.101</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Interest</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>89.571</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>89.571</td>
<td>3.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>3117.132</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>24.629</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table (Table 5) presents the mean score differences between the different job levels in the sample on the various dimensions of affirmative action attitudes. The sample was divided into job levels to determine whether there were differences in attitudes between people at different job levels. There were four such levels identified for this purpose, namely, entry, supervisory, middle management as well as senior management level. The number of senior managers who took part in the research was too small ($N = 4$) to be used in drawing conclusions and making inferences. Middle level managers had a higher mean score as regards awareness of organisational affirmative action practices (50.42). Of all job levels, senior managers recorded the lowest mean score (44.75). Supervisory level employees obtained the highest mean score on egalitarianism (70.24). Entry level employees who participated in this research obtained a higher mean score (25.81) as compared to other job levels. Senior managers obtained the lowest mean score (22.50).

**Table 5**: Mean scores of job level on AA attitudes dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension/Job Level</th>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Supervisory</th>
<th>Middle Management</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOAA Practices</td>
<td>45.85</td>
<td>9.477</td>
<td>48.12</td>
<td>12.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarianism</td>
<td>67.59</td>
<td>5.298</td>
<td>70.24</td>
<td>3.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Interest</td>
<td>25.81</td>
<td>5.118</td>
<td>25.56</td>
<td>4.407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following applies to Table 6. Group means differences were tested through analysis of variance. There were statistically significant differences between groups on different job levels on the dimension, awareness of organisational affirmative action practices (p=.265). The null hypothesis is consequently rejected. For egalitarianism, analysis of variance indicated no significant difference between groups at different job levels on attitudes towards affirmative action with F=2.301, p=.643. The null hypothesis can thus not be rejected. The same can be said for the dimension, self-interest. There was no significant difference between groups on this dimension (F=1.341, p=.081). The null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Table 6: ANOVA table for job levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOAA Practices</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>400.426</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>133.475</td>
<td>1.341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>10750.85</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>99.545</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarianism</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>161.039</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>53.680</td>
<td>2.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2519.381</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>23.328</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Interest</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>41.869</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.956</td>
<td>0.560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2667.699</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>24.932</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table illustrates that there is no significant mean difference between the different age groups with respect to the awareness of organisational affirmative action practices dimension. The total mean for the group is 47.57 on this dimension. The participants also indicated low differences on egalitarianism with an average mean of 68.60. The same can also be said for self-interest, with the highest mean score being that for the 46-65 years age group at 27.26.

Table 7: Mean scores of age groups on AA attitudes dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension/Job Level</th>
<th>19-35 years</th>
<th>36-45 years</th>
<th>46-65 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOAA Practices</td>
<td>47.52</td>
<td>8.754</td>
<td>48.45</td>
<td>10.528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarianism</td>
<td>68.44</td>
<td>4.778</td>
<td>69.12</td>
<td>4.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Interest</td>
<td>24.67</td>
<td>5.298</td>
<td>25.23</td>
<td>4.907</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of variance for the group on awareness of organisational affirmative action practices revealed F=0.343 with df(2,128). At p<0.05, the critical value=3.07 and (F)0.343<3.07. Thus there is no statistically significant difference between the various age groups on this
dimension. They are equally aware of the organisational affirmative action practices. The null hypothesis therefore cannot be rejected in this instance (p=0.711). On egalitarianism, analysis of variance showed that F=0.390 with df(2,128). At p<0.05, the critical value = 3.07 and (F)0.390<3.07. There is no significant variation between different age groups on this dimension and as a result, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The ANOVA test on self-interest revealed that F=2.608 with df(2,128). For a significance level above 0.05 (p= .078), the critical value for this statistic is 3.07; 2.608 is less than this. The null hypothesis is thus not rejected. There is no significant difference between the different age groups on this dimension.

**TABLE 8: ANOVA Table for age groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOAA Practices</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>67.590</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.795</td>
<td>0.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>12624.471</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>98.629</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egalitarianism</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>17.520</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.760</td>
<td>0.390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2872.038</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>22.438</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Interest</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>128.371</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>64.185</td>
<td>2.608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>3126.160</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>24.615</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dimension, prejudice, required that nonparametric tests be run on it. The Kruskal-Wallis as well as the Mann-Whitney tests were used in this instance. The Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests are nonparametric tests that do not rely on parameter estimation or exact distributional assumptions (Howell, 2011). A chi-square test was run on the scores of employees at different job levels on the dimension, prejudice and revealed $\chi^2(3) = 0.462$, p<.05. There is no statistically significant difference between the different groups on this variable and as such the null hypothesis is not rejected. Still, there was no statistically significant difference between the scores of employees in different age groups and the null hypothesis was thus not rejected.

**Table 9: Kruskal-Wallis test on prejudice and job level, race and age group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AA Dimension</th>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice</td>
<td>Job level</td>
<td>0.642</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age group</td>
<td>0.769</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.681</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The probability of the result as regards the attitudes of male and female participants on the dimension, prejudice was $p = .016 \ (p < .05)$. This implied that there were statistically significant differences between the attitudes of male and female participants on this dimension. The null hypothesis could thus be rejected. This is illustrated in this table.

**Table 10:** Mann-Whitney Test on Prejudice and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prejudice</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice</td>
<td>1426.5</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION**

The aim of the research was to explore and describe the role of gender, race, job level and age on attitudes towards affirmative action. Findings on the effect of race on attitudes towards affirmative action could not be achieved due to the small sample size of White respondents. In addition, race comparisons could not be made for the same reason. As a result, the insignificant number of White participants in the study would affect generalisation of the research results where race is concerned. Other variables were, nevertheless, sufficient to arrive at a meaningful conclusion.

**Relationship between dimensions**

Factor analysis helped identify four dimensions which constituted the dimensions underlying attitudes towards affirmative action (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001; Krings, et al. 2007). The research by Esterhuizen (2008) found different dimensions from those in this study but Konrad and Hartmann (2001) according to Krings, et al. (2007) used an instrument similar to this one in that the first dimension they identified was participants’ knowledge of affirmative action. Similarly to Krings, et al. (2007), the first dimension was awareness of affirmative action practices in the organisation. This dimension was necessary since it could not merely have been assumed that participants possess a ready knowledge of affirmative action.

The other dimension was egalitarianism which denotes a positive attitude towards affirmative action. This dimension relates to the standpoints people assume with respect to the latter.
Egalitarians believe that society is unequal and needs some intervention to bring about equality (Konrad & Hartmann, 2001).

Self-interest, the third dimension, was inversely correlated with egalitarianism in this study. This implied that people who scored negatively on self-interest scored positively on egalitarianism: the belief that social inequality is unacceptable (Feldman, 1988). Women were found in previous studies to have been more egalitarian than men. Once more this, according to Bobo (1998) and Konrad and Hartman (2001), could be ascribed to their experiences in a male dominated social system. In the present study, no significant differences were identified in the egalitarianism evidenced by men and women.

The other dimension was prejudice. This dimension was also used in the Konrad and Hartmann (2001) and Krings, et al. (2007) studies. It pertains to stereotypes about different gender and race groups (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Prejudiced individuals and groups view others as displaying inherent incapacities ascribed to their association with the disaffirmed groups (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Such stereotypes reflect negative attitudes towards attempts to redress these tendencies and will view affirmative action negatively since it seeks to affirm people despised by those holding to stereotypes (Murrell, Dietz-Uhler, Dovidio, Gaertner & Drout, 1994). In this study, prejudice was found to be positively correlated to egalitarianism and awareness of organisational affirmative action practices. It was nevertheless, inversely related to self-interest.

**Main Findings**

The first dimension examined by this study was participants’ level of awareness of different organisational affirmative action practices. This was deemed necessary because it would not have been worth it to assess people on aspects of which they are not aware. Awareness is normally created through training, advocacy as well as information dissemination. The study found that there was a significant difference in awareness of organisational affirmative action practices between men and women on this dimension (F=4.677; p=.032). This was also the case with the different job levels in the organisation studied (F=1.341; p=.265). The study established that there were no significant differences between the means of different job level groups as regards awareness of organisational affirmative action practices. For the different age groups
there was a statistically significant difference between the means of different age groups (F= .343; p=.711. In other words, entry level employees display lower awareness levels concerning affirmative action practices as compared to those at management level while employees in the age group 46-65 years also exhibit lower awareness levels in this respect. These findings contrast with those of Krings, et al. (2007). They found that neither women nor supervisors differed from men and non-supervisors in knowledge of affirmative programmes. This may be ascribed to the invariable exposure all these groups were subjected to since affirmative action is an organisational phenomenon and not an intrapersonal one (Krings, et al., 2007).

The second dimension was egalitarianism. Konrad and Hartmann (2001) noted that people who score high on egalitarianism generally hold positive attitudes towards affirmative action. This study found that there were no significant differences between the mean scores of men and women on this dimension (F= .016; p= .898). For the different job levels, there were no statistically significant differences between the scores of employees on different job levels (F= 2.301; p= .081). The hypothesised outcome on race was that there were no significant differences between Blacks and Whites on egalitarianism. This study could not arrive at a conclusive finding due to the small number of White respondents but there are findings from previous research by Bobo (1998) and Konrad and Hartmann (2001). These two studies apportioned White people’s attitudes to the types of affirmative action programme that are being studied. They reported that White people are more positive towards affirmative action programmes that improve Black people’s human capital than towards those that seek to redistribute resources to them. Age group was not found to mediate the inclination to support egalitarianism. There were no significant differences between the means of different age groups on this dimension (p=.678). This finding contradicts that of Kravitz, et al. (2000), who found that older respondents anticipated more negative outcomes for organisations that implement affirmative action (r= -.24; p< .05).

Self-interest is the third dimension investigated. It relates to materials which individuals or groups stand to forego or gain from implementing affirmative action (Tougas, et al. 1995). Previous studies found that people with high scores on self-interest hold negative attitudes towards affirmative action (Tougas, et al., 1995). The present study established no significant differences between the mean scores of men and women on this dimension (F= .016; p= .898).
Gender was, as a result, not a determining factor in this instance. Tougas, et al. (1995) confirm the findings of this study. They reported that men display favourable attitudes towards affirmative programmes designed to help women and regard such programmes as fair (Tougas, et al., 1995).

Again this study found that there were no significant differences between people on different job levels as regards the dimension of self-interest (F= 2.301; p= .081). This implies that job level plays no role in attitudes towards affirmative action resulting from the need for preservation of self-interest. This finding is consistent with those in other studies. Tougas, et al. (1995, p.65) noted that their study “gave no support for the contention that in general, people’s attitudes towards affirmative action is a matter of self-interest”.

Regarding age groups and self-interest, the study identified no statistically significant difference between the means of different age groups (F= 2.608; p= .078). Younger employees display different attitudes towards affirmative action emanating from the need for self-preservation as compared to older employees.

The last dimension was prejudice. A chi-square test was run on the relationship between prejudice and job level, which found that there were no statistically significant differences between these two variables (p=.927). This means that managers and non managers experience no prejudice among themselves as well as between themselves. This is unlikely to create an “us and them” feeling and is a good source of cohesion in the organisation. In addition, another important finding for the organisation is that there were no significant differences between men and women on this dimension. This is another positive discovery since there were no differences between men and women regarding gender based prejudice.

In conclusion, the findings bode well for the organisation since the level of awareness amongst employees with respect to different affirmative action programmes means that this awareness can be exploited further to aid the appreciation of the intentions of the legislature in promulgating the Employment Equity Act (EEA, 1998). In general, there seem to be more similarities than differences between different subgroups with regard to their attitudes to affirmative action.
It was noted that this research evidenced its own limitations. In particular, the number of White officers employed at different facilities in this district made it difficult to obtain the required number of this category of employees to participate in this study. It is recommended that vigorous recruitment processes consider this category of employees in order to enhance representativity.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter, conclusions stemming from this study are presented based on the specific objectives of the literature review as well as the empirical outcomes. Limitations encountered in the study are likewise based on these two sources. Recommendations are made, also based on the integration of the results of both the literature review and the empirical study. Personal experiences of the researcher are also expressed and are integrated into the conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

4.2 CONCLUSION: LITERATURE REVIEW

4.2.1 Specific aims achieved
In Chapter 2 the constructs, attitude and affirmative action were conceptualised. Attitude formation theories as well as the structure of attitudes were described. The rationale for this action and its ultimate aim, employment equity, were explained. It was also required that the study explain the determinants of attitudes towards such action, which was likewise carried out. The influence of attitudes towards affirmative action, on individual, group and organisational functioning, was explained in detail. Attitudes were seen to facilitate particular functions of human behaviour. This conception was explained by elucidating the functions of attitudes towards action of this kind. A framework of the model for managing attitudes towards affirmative action was suggested.

Given the theoretical aims of the study in terms of the literature review, all specific aims of the study were achieved.

4.2.2 Overall conclusions
Affirmative action as a concept elicits different perceptions and reactions among different people and groups (Kravitz, 2008). These are manifestations of attitudes which people hold towards this concept (Vermeulen & Coetzee, 2006). Perceptions and reactions may point to positive or
negative regard for this concept. Those to whom affirmative action represents unfair conduct tend to emphasise quotas rather than true representativity.

A common mistake made by people is confusing diversity with affirmative action. Diversity is the goal of affirmative action, while affirmative action is the vehicle to drive diversity goals. It was never the intention of the legislature to unfairly discriminate against members of non-designated groups and scale down their numbers in organisations, but current employment equity practices prove otherwise. This is evidenced in the small number of White who participated in this study. My personal observation is that there were virtually no White officers in the district I studied.

4.3 CONCLUSION: EMPIRICAL STUDY

4.3.1 Conclusion on specific aims

The results of the study were presented in Chapter 3. To achieve the empirical objectives of the study, the following results were obtained:

- The profile of respondents and their responses to affirmative action practices in the organisation.
- Differences in responses to the different dimensions between groups according to age group, gender and job level.
- An indication of specific groups and procedures that need improvement.

The following conclusions were arrived at, according to the profile of the organisation’s affirmative action practices.

4.3.2 Conclusions based on the overall employment equity profile of the organisation

- In general, employees seemed to be aware of different affirmative action practices in the organisation, given their mean scores.
- It was not possible to draw a fair conclusion using the results based on different race groups in the study due to the low number of White participants. The number of White
participants was disproportionate to the number of Black participants and as such would have biased the study.

- Sufficient numbers were however, obtained with other variables that made up the study and a conclusion can be arrived at.

4.3.3 Conclusions based on differences between groups

4.3.3.1 Gender
Women were more aware of organisational affirmative action practices. Both men and women were equally egalitarian, which bodes well for their overall outlook on the importance of affirmative action as the tool to mediate imbalances in employment practices. There was a low overall mean score on self-interest for both men and women who participated in the study. A low score in this regard demonstrates altruism and as such is good for the organisation because self-serving biases can only be detrimental to organisational functioning.

4.3.3.2 Age
Overall there were no differences between different age groups as regards attitudes towards affirmative action. Age groups therefore cannot be said to play a role in such attitudes. Another positive finding which emerges is that all age groups have been shown to be altruistic. As stated in the above explanation, low scores on self-interest indicate that people are not channelled by narrow self-serving biases but, rather, the broader good of the community.

4.3.3.3 Job level
In general there were also no differences in outlook towards affirmative action between various job levels in the organisation. Employees at different job levels have been shown to be more egalitarian and focus less on self-interest, thus indicating the level of intergroup trust on aspects affecting affirmative action.

4.4 LIMITATIONS

The following limitations affected the ability of the study to fully achieve its objectives.
4.4.1 Limitations: literature review

More recent literature could possibly have been included but due to its dearth, there was at times an inclination to use old sources. There were few available literature resources to back up what had been earlier studied with respect to attitudes. This forced me to rely on classic articles and books to theorise attitudes towards affirmative action. As I indicated in my introductory chapter, there is plenty of research on affirmative action and attitudes, studied separately, but little about attitudes towards affirmative action, to the extent that the two have to be conceptualised separately and then intertwined to deduce a particular meaning for the concept.

There is also a scarcity of research in this field in the South African context. Much of the literature that is available is from other countries. This made it difficult to refer to specific South African contexts and samples of other legislation; furthermore, the reference to minorities in those countries’ contexts meant the opposite of what South Africans refer to as minorities. There was little information about attitudes as such; but some on perceptions about affirmative action. This created a theoretical problem since what I discovered from international studies is dissimilar to the references in South African literature. For instance the conceptualisation of dimensions of attitudes towards affirmative action is not standard in all research. International literature has a specific one while the South African literature has its own.

4.4.2 Limitations: empirical study

This study was conducted in an organisation which is highly regulated. This was apparent from the amount of gate keeping that one was obliged to negotiate in order to access the data. First one is required to obtain permission from a national office through the provincial office, which took time and delayed the timeframes of the study. Such permission, even if obtained from a national office, is not enough to guarantee entry into individual facilities. Issues of the command structure were invariably an obstacle to accessing the individual facilities since some are managed by higher ranking officials than those from the provincial office, who were reluctant to take instruction from their junior counterparts at the latter.

There was little cooperation from some facility managers. This is of great concern since these facilities are public institutions and should welcome a research effort of this kind due to its self-
reflective value. In those facilities that did not cooperate, fewer questionnaires were returned than from those in which facility managers did cooperate.

The number of White individuals who participated limited the results of the study. There were significantly so few Whites in many of the sampled facilities that even a convenience sampling procedure was not enough to yield an acceptable number of White participants. This may also be ascribed to a poor response rate in some facilities which employed a sizable population of White officers. There were lower response rates in urban facilities than in rural ones.

The results of the study cannot be generalised to the whole organisation in the country because of the non-representative sample and its small size. Only ten facilities belonged to this district and are not necessarily representative of the full spectrum of facilities in the whole country.

4.4.3 Suggestions for future research

• There is a need for future South African research into the specific items that make up the different dimensions of the attitudes towards affirmative action due to the unavailability of local sources on these dimensions.

• Implementation of affirmative action is not time bound but rather an ongoing process which will require that prevailing attitudes at that time be assessed in order that they be properly managed. This is necessitated by the emotions aroused by talk of affirmative action and related social implications emanating from perceptions of exclusion and entitlement.

• Since attitudes predict behaviour, it would be interesting to identify the behaviours that result from positive attitudes or negative attitudes since they have a bearing on social interactions in the organisation as well as overall organisational functioning.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Organisation specific recommendations are made based on the outcomes of the empirical study. General recommendations are also made based on the suggested model for managing attitudes towards affirmative action.
4.5.1 Organisation specific recommendations

The outcomes of the study indicated a generally positive attitude towards affirmative action across the different groups researched. This bodes well for the organisation and the legislative imperative and therefore needs to be maintained. The following specific recommendations are thus made.

- Senior managers must be trained to understand and appreciate the importance of diversity in the workplace.
- Job requirements must constitute the basis for selection and promotion decisions. Affirmative action candidates, therefore, must first satisfy the job requirements before being considered for appointment or promotion.
- Regular climate and attitude surveys should be conducted to diagnose any drift from the current positive ones. This is important to reinforce the existing positive outlook as regards affirmative action.
- The suggested model for managing attitudes towards affirmative action may be implemented to enhance and improve on this outlook among employees.

4.5.2 General recommendation

The following model is generally recommended for managing attitudes towards affirmative action.

4.5.2.1 A model for managing attitudes towards affirmative action

Attitudes are generally malleable (Bell, Harrison & McLaughlin, 2000), which also applies to those towards affirmative action. The malleability of attitudes implies that negative ones can be changed while positive ones can be reinforced to ensure that they are repeated for the benefit of the organisation. Basically, attitudes can be managed for the good of the organisation. To do so, in the case of affirmative action, the drivers for such attitudes as well as leverage points need to be identified. Strategies for their management should also be put in place as well as determining how information in this regard is disseminated without prejudicing the cause. The following model is suggested.
4.5.2.1.1 Affirmative action drivers

Affirmative action programmes are a result of certain drivers in the environment in which the organisation operates (Herholdt & Marx, 1999). These drivers are compelling environmental variables over which organisations exercise little control. Organisations must identify these drivers in organisational review practices for the purpose of intervention. They are the reason for implementing affirmative action programmes. There is an interactive relationship between the drivers and the implementation of the attitude management programme since the implementation
of the programme affects the drivers, while the drivers also inform the implementation of the attitude management programme. For example, the implementation of an attitude management programme may exert some effect on the culture of the organisation while culture is also an input that is considered in the implementation of this process. Herholdt and Marx (1999) identified the following drivers:

- Cultural drivers of democratisation, equity, fairness and non-discrimination
- Educational drivers to enhance an educational backlog and general illiteracy levels among the previously disadvantaged groups.
- Political drivers that seek to democratise the workplace and seek to be inclusive of all participants in the labour market
- Legal drivers that outlaw discrimination in the workplace as well as unfair labour practices and seek to redress past imbalances
- Demographic drivers which depict the composition of the human resources in a society where there is a black majority in workplaces and less consideration for women in influential positions in organisations.
- Psychosocial drivers which recognise that there are diverse groups in society, from which social dynamics result from social interactions.

4.5.2.1.2 Affirmative action leverage points
Leverage points are the opportunities and advantages that are available for organisations to use to implement affirmative action (Herholdt & Marx, 1999). The identification of these points would result in making known the sites at which the organisation can exert influence in human resource decisions. Such points are actually the human resource activities over which the organisation does exercise control. The following are suggested leverage points to implement affirmative action:

- Recruitment and selection
- Promotions, remuneration and transfers
- Training and development.
An organisation may, after an audit of its demographic representation, decide that it will enhance the latter during recruitment and selection; which would mean that outside talent will be sought to enhance equity. It may also decide that to enhance equity, it will be necessary that certain categories of people be promoted or transferred to some of its units. A decision may also be taken that given the present skills base, certain categories of employees be trained and developed for particular positions. This is in line with the legislative prerogative of skills development to empower previously disadvantaged members of society.

The leverage points must be included in the communication of the affirmative action message. They are also interactively linked to the implementation phase. Since they are the sites at which affirmative action programmes will be implemented (i.e. legislation requires that affirmative action be implemented in the organisation’s recruitment, selection, remuneration, promotions and training and development activities), they must form the core of the communication process; it should be stated how this is going to affect both beneficiaries as well as non-beneficiaries.

4.5.2.1.3 Communicating the affirmative action message

Information dissemination is important in swaying attitudes towards an attitude object. Information must be communicated to all the stakeholders that will be affected. The Employment Equity Act of 1998 (EEA, 1998) states that these, in the employment equity context, are the employer, employees, the state and representative employees’ unions. Identification of these stakeholders is important because it helps in also identifying the kind of information to be communicated to each of the stakeholder groups.

Bell, et al. (2000) found in their research that affirmative action attitudes and evaluations regarding the attributes of the affirmative action programme are positively linked to the kind of information communicated to the stakeholders. Fear inducing communication was found to increase the immobility of recipients and must be avoided (Arnold, et al., 2005) while moderate fear inducing messages were reported to increase the effectiveness of information processing (Jepson & Chaiken, 1990).
Another aspect that must be considered in communicating affirmative action information is the source of that communication. Decisions need to be taken on which sources of information are going to be used to communicate this message. A golden rule would be that the source must be able to reach the intended target audience (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The credibility of the source is also a matter to consider in relaying such information. Eagly, et al. (1978) stated that the trustworthiness of the communicator is a function of their honesty and should not be seen to be biased towards their causes and personal interests.

Social psychologists such as Tannenbaum (1956) established that the amount of attitude change is directly related to the degree of the attractiveness of the change agent to the recipients of the change message. Communicator attractiveness was also found to be more important if the message is likely to be unpopular (Eagly & Chaiken, 1975).

All things considered, the following can be included in the communication strategy:

- The reasons for affirmative action must be communicated to all the people it is going to affect
- The strategic importance of diversity and affirmative action to the organisation must be emphasised
- Communication must be based on outcomes of culture, demographic and skills audits which are substance based
- The message must address fears and anxieties of both non-beneficiaries and beneficiaries
- The most senior personnel must be involved right through the communication process.

4.5.2.1.4 Implementing the attitude change management strategy

The aim of the attitude management strategy is to enhance self-support for the beneficiaries that will be responsible for minimising a helpless-like dependency and to decrease the negative consequences of despondency in nonbeneficiaries. Turner and Pratkanis (1994) recommend the following steps:
• Establish the unambiguous, explicit and focused qualifications criteria to be used in the selection process.
• Clearly communicate the necessary criteria
• Be certain that selection procedures are perceived as fair by the targeted applicants and future co-workers
• Provide specific information testifying to the competencies of the candidate
• Emphasize the recipients’ contributions to the organisation
• Develop socialisation strategies that deter attributions fostering helpless-like behaviour
• Be aware that affirmative action programmes do not operate in isolation. Develop other interventions like mentoring and coaching as part of succession planning
• Reinforce the notion that affirmative action is not just preferential selection
• Recognise that affirmative action is not a panacea. Foster programmes that emphasise the attraction, retention and career development of non-beneficiaries through meaningful horizontal mobility while vertical mobility may be an option for beneficiaries.

These measures are not exhaustive. Organisations are at liberty to decide on their own as long as they contribute positively to the realisation of the essential management of attitudes.

4.5.2.1.5 The role of feedback in managing attitude change.

Feedback is a means through which the different activities in the model are relayed. Through feedback it is possible to assess the impact of the change actions on the goals that have been set (Werner, Bagrain, Cunningham & Viedge, 2010). Once feedback is available, it becomes easier to see leakages and deviations so that corrections can be made.

In this model, feedback from communication is relayed back to drivers and leverage points. It is anticipated that in a two way communication set-up the organisation should be able to get back information regarding those drivers and leverage points which can be returned into the planning of the whole attitude management model. The feedback loops that connect communication and drivers and leverage points indicate a reciprocal flow of information where the drivers and
leverage points inform communication content and the latter is compared with drivers and leverage points to determine whether any changes to them should be made.

The same can be said about the flow of information between communication and implementation. In the implementation phase, information that has been less well communicated will be detected. This will be the same even with information that has been distorted. Hence, communicated information becomes an input for implementation while implementation helps in unearthing new information and perfecting wrongly relayed information.

In the last information loop, there is a connection between implementation and the drivers and leverage points. It is the last two that tell us where changes are required. It must be remembered that they are inputs in the whole process which are obtained from diagnosing and auditing the organisation and its environment. Grey areas which still need to be improved are brought to the fore and are used as learning points to inform future planning and, at times, add to the drivers or leverage points.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the main conclusions stemming from the literature review as well as the empirical research were discussed. Conclusions were reached with respect to the overall organisational profile with respect to affirmative action as well as the different demographic groups in the organisation.

A model for managing attitudes towards affirmative action was suggested, based on the result of the study as well as inputs from the literature study. Organisation specific recommendations as well as areas that still need to be researched were identified.
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