



An Exploratory Study of the Attitudes of Middle Managers in the Greater Durban Area:

**A Focus on Cultural Diversity and
Cultural Diversity Management**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Social Science in Industrial Psychology at the University of Natal, Durban. It has not been submitted before any degree for examination in any other University.

Niroshni Moodley

2000

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of middle managers towards cultural diversity and cultural diversity management. A qualitative method of research was chosen to carry out the study. Twenty middle managers from four different companies in the Greater Durban Area were interviewed. One of the main findings of the study was that managers displayed positive attitudes towards cultural diversity and cultural diversity management. However, it was also found that whilst the attitudes displayed towards people of different cultures and races remained positive, little was done in terms of managing the differences that these people brought to the organisation. It was also found that organisations were agreeable to complying with legislative frameworks such as affirmative action and equal employment opportunities to manage diversity. Furthermore, it was established that factors such as understanding, tolerance and acceptance were perceived to be vital "ingredients" to helping diverse people feel accepted and wanted in the company. This was due to their role in increasing productivity levels and decreasing turnover. However, it was uncovered in the literature review, that complying with legislation alone was not enough to manage cultural diversity. If organisations want to unleash the true benefits of diversity management, they will need to recognise people with these differences and simultaneously accept and manage these differences.

INTRODUCTION

The valuing of diversity has not been recognised by organisations in South Africa. The legacy of apartheid which set the different race groups apart has become one of the country's major historical liabilities. According to Mbigi and Westbrook (1998:36) one of the basic myths of apartheid was that the various ethnic groups were so different that they could not work together in a spirit of harmony. The apartheid system was responsible for exaggerating and emphasising differences and used them to distribute wealth, status, privileges and life changes unjustly.

However, students and professional people of colour are today moving in large numbers into areas of academia and business that were previously not available to them. For example, Black pupils are being accepted at what were previously called "White schools" and Black men and women are now being promoted to managerial positions in significant numbers.

These shifts have created the need for educators, managers and other groups in society to reevaluate the effectiveness of a "business as usual approach" to their day to day professional activities (Wheeler and Jennings, 1994:26). According to Wheeler and Jennings (1994:26), achieving cultural diversity and the effective management of a diverse workforce, is one of the most challenging organisational opportunities that managers and educators face today.

The idea of managing diversity is relatively new to human resource professionals. It is so new that people are struggling with the concept, its definition and usefulness. There is a great deal of resistance to valuing the managing of diversity in the workplace, yet strangely enough it has been around for ages. The Bill of Rights in the new Constitution provides that neither the State nor any person may unfairly discriminate against anyone on one or more grounds, including sexual orientation and marital status. Legislation, like the Employment Equity Act is intended to force South African organisations to employ a diversified workforce that reflects the demographics of the country.

However, it should be noted that there is not much that the government can do.

Forcing organisations to employ people from marginalised groups is like putting people on a train that goes round and round in circles without a destination. Part of the reason for this could be that organisations do not see the need of changing the tradition and culture of organisations. The first step towards managing diversity is for organisations to realise the need for and the benefit of undertaking such an exercise.

Thus, it would be very interesting and relevant to understand just how much companies know and are aware of and what their plans are with regards to diversity and cultural diversity management in the workplace. It can be argued that the more knowledge managers have with respect to diversity and diversity management then the better the diversity programmes they will be able to construct in order to harness the various talents and views that diverse people bring to the organisation. On the contrary, if managers display a lack of knowledge and awareness regarding diversity and diversity management, then this can impact negatively on diverse employees.

The central aim of this thesis is to explore the attitudes of middle managers towards cultural diversity and its management. Some of the broad issues to be explored in this dissertation are:-

- What the respondents perceive cultural diversity and cultural diversity management to mean to them.
- What diversity programmes their organisations have implemented, or are currently implementing.
- What do they perceive as being the benefit of cultural diversity management.
- Why do they think there is a need for diversity management in their companies.
- The negative and positive reactions of managers towards the issues of cultural diversity and cultural diversity management.

The structure of this these is as follows:-

Chapter One: Discusses the theoretical orientation and statement of the research problem.

Chapter Two: Discusses the various concepts, definitions and current debates

pertaining to the issue of cultural diversity and cultural diversity management.

Chapter Three: Discusses the research methods used in the study.

Chapter Four: Presents the main findings of the study.

Chapter Five: Presents a discussion on the findings of the study in relation to the literature covered in Chapter two.

Chapter Six: Concludes the study by stating the research limitations and highlighting the main findings of the study.

CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

workforce becoming diverse

The composition of today's workforce, and that of the years to come, is constantly changing. There are more and more women and people of different ancestries entering the working world. These various people, which make up the "melting pot" of not only South Africa but other countries such as the United States, Brazil and Canada, are very much perceived in individualistic terms. However, these individuals come from distinct backgrounds and have various attitudes and work styles. The task for managers and all employees alike, is to learn how to deal with these differences and instill a sense of cultural diversity rather than cultural assimilation in the workplace.

In order to efficiently manage a diverse workforce, the development of skills and abilities and, in some cases, a whole new approach to management is crucial. According to Wheeler and Jennings (1994:21) staff, particularly managers and supervisors need to be provided with the opportunity to investigate the complexities of diversity from a personal and organisational perspective and they need to acquire a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the pivotal nature of their roles. Since the attitudes, actions and philosophies of all members of the organisation influence organisational climate, managers must, therefore, be instrumental in providing opportunities for staff on all levels to explore and respond to diversity and to accept colleagues from diverse backgrounds (Wheeler and Jennings, 1994:22).

As stated earlier, the idea of managing diversity is relatively new to human resource managers and professionals in South Africa and many people are still struggling with its definition and usefulness. However many authors (Thomas, 1996; Wheeler and Jennings, 1994; Thomas and Ely, 1996 and Kemp, 1997) seem to suggest that diverse teams and organisations afford fresh perspectives to market penetration and expand existing and developing markets. A range of skills (from the different cultural and race groups) is being explored and tapped into which the organisation never had before. A

diverse workforce will increase organisational effectiveness by improving profitability, creativity and flexibility and organisational and individual growth. Furthermore, it also increases the ability of a company to adjust rapidly and successfully to market change. In essence it can be said that diversity management will be good for business.

This exploratory study seeks to investigate the attitudes of middle management towards cultural diversity and cultural diversity management. Many organisations feel that managing cultural diversity is about equal opportunities and affirmative action. However, this research argues that managers need to go beyond complying with such legislation if they want to yield the true benefits of diversity management. The negative and positive reactions of managers towards the issues of cultural diversity and cultural diversity management are explored as well as the kinds of diversity programmes implemented by their organisations to retain the talents of diverse employees.

1.2 CONCEPTUALISING CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

The subject of minorities and cultural diversity has only recently been seen as an important theme in South African organisations. However, in North America, political movements since the 1960's, in favour of racial integration led to the promulgation of laws seeking the equality of educational opportunities and employment for all (Fleury, 1998:22). In the USA affirmative action was promulgated at the end of the 1960's as an answer to racial discrimination observed in companies and teaching institutions. In Canada, the Employment Equity Act and Federal Contractors programme, promulgated in 1986 were drafted in similar ways to the American Affirmative Action programme. According to Fleury (1998:22), these acts aimed at achieving a broad scope not only by improving the numerical representation through recruiting, but also by promoting fairer employment systems and trying to influence the discriminatory cultural patterns existing in organisations.

In South Africa, the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act on October 12th 1998

represented a significant step towards transforming the demographic profile of the South African Labour Market. According to Wolmarans (1997:74) "employment equity is aimed at the eradication of any kind, in the hiring, promotion, training, pay benefits and retrenchments". Thus with a more pragmatic approach, management of cultural diversity was an organisation's answer to the growing diversification of the labour force and to the need for competitiveness.

Org. response
to EEA
Dis. Mgmt

1.3 CULTURAL DIVERSITY DEFINED

Being different encompasses far more than race and gender. Before coming to the workplace, people have already established their styles of living, that is their personalities have already been formed. Personality in this case is defined narrowly as the individual's way of interaction to the external environment. As people join the organisation, they already have roles which they have been performing prior to being employees and which they still perform after work.

According to Thomas (1996:91), diversity in its fullest sense involves a broad range of human uniqueness - perception and attitudes, work style, personality, values, lifestyle, sexual orientation, work ethic, age, community style, work view, ethnicity, recreational and personal habits, relation, educational background, work experience, parental status, marital status, functionality, division/department/unit/group, functional level classification, work content, seniority, work location, union affiliation and management status.

Nankervis, Thomas and McCarthy (1996:138), refer to diversity as the variety of race, gender age and cultural differences existing within the workplace.

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30 For Carell et al (1997:48) diversity in the workplace can be generally defined as the recognition of the groups of people who share common traits. These traits - the properties and characteristics that constitute a whole person both unite and divide us.

* They argue that the term diversity has three major working definitions:-

- The politically correct term for equal employment opportunity/affirmative action.

- The recruitment and selection of ethnic groups and women.
- The management of individuals sharing a broad range of common traits.

Carell et al (1997:50) suggests that the first of these definitions represents a very narrow view of diversity and is more likely to be found in organisations which do not have formal diversity policies and programmes. The second definition reflects the reality that many diversity programmes focus on employment regulation concerns. The third definition is the broadest and is likely to be used in organisations with diversity programmes. According to Kossek and Lobel (1996:24), diversity is not only derived from differences in ethnicity and gender but it is also based on differences in function, nationality, language, ability, religion, lifestyle and tenure.

Thus, there are several dimensions when considering what diversity is: gender, age , education, abilities, ethnic groups, religion, origin, breed and language. How then can cultural diversity be conceptualised? For the purposes of this dissertation I define cultural diversity **as a mixture of people with different individual and group identities within the same social system.** These social systems are characterised by majority groups and minority groups. Majority groups are groups whose members historically got advantages in terms of economic resources and power in comparison minority groups.

1.4 CULTURAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT DEFINED

Authors in the area of diversity management have used the terms cultural diversity management and diversity management interchangeably. I have therefore been led to believe that the concepts are the same. However, it is difficult to conceptualise diversity management outside the context of culture. The terms diversity management and cultural diversity management will thus be used interchangeably in this dissertation.

Robbins (1993:663) argues that the 1990's is described as the decade in which organisations have no choice, but to learn to manage diversity. The changing nature

of the workforce necessitates a change in the whole organisational structure so that people can be managed effectively. To date there is little evidence that much has been done to facilitate the change in organisational culture that encourages retention and acknowledges the value of human differences.

Managing diversity is a term that has been battered around at length in the literatures of business and academics. There is much controversy in the use of the term "managing diversity" as some people feel that it can not in actual fact be managed (Wheeler and Jennings, 1994:22). However, I feel that a workforce that is diverse in nature can be managed if staff are properly trained and encouraged to develop the necessary skills.

Nankervis et al (1996:139) state that managing diversity has three components. The first focuses on the quality of the employee's work life needs; the second focuses on valuing differences such as race, culture, gender and age; and the third focuses on equal opportunity relating to issues such as recruitment, selection, training, development and career opportunity decisions based on merit. However, recruiting different people in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, etcetera is of no use if nothing is done to maintain and retain them. People work for different reasons, but there is something common in the reason why people work - that is to satisfy their needs. If their needs, diverse as they are, are not met, they will resign (Wheeler and Jennings 1994:23). Equity of opportunity, influence and utilisation must be an important part of the organisation's aim. Everyone in the organisation, especially managers, need to understand why some employees choose to perform satisfactorily and others unsatisfactorily.

Thomas (1996:10) defines diversity management as ***a planned, systematic and comprehensive managerial process for developing an organisational environment in which all employees, with their similarities and differences, can contribute to the strategic and competitive advantage of the organisation and where no one is excluded on the basis of factors unrelated to productivity.***

The process of managing diversity thus includes:-

- a means of creating an organisational environment which promotes and sustains the ability of well constructed programmes of affirmative action;
- is linked to individual and interpersonal interventions;
- is linked to training and development; and
- is linked to sound business reasons which ensure the achievement of organisational objectives (Thomas, 1996:10).

Thus, the management of cultural diversity implies a holistic focus in order to create an organisational environment that allows all employees to reach their full potential when pursuing a company's goals. The management of cultural diversity is not a package with ready solutions nor a programme to solve the discrimination issue. According to (Fleury, 1998:23), the management of cultural diversity means to plan and implement organisational systems and practices to manage people so that potential advantages of diversity are maximised while its disadvantages are minimised. I believe managing diversity means to add value to the organisation. Among the potential benefits of diversity management, the following need specific mentioning:-

- attracting and retaining the best available human resources (talents) in the context of a labour market,
- enhancing marketing efforts towards diversified market segments,
- promoting creativity and innovation, facilitating problem solving, enhancing organisational flexibility.

The main objective then behind cultural diversity management, is to manage labour relations, employment practices and the structure of the company's work force to attract the best competencies among the so called minority groups. This can be done through recruitment policies that incorporate criteria related to the cultural diversity of the labour market.

3. An organisation must be clear about its reason and motivation for managing diversity. Complying with equal opportunity regulations is not enough. Carell et al (1997:53) argues that organisations must recognise the business necessity of having a diverse workforce and tapping into the potential of that workforce. Usually such motivation is

articulated in an organisation's mission statement or strategic plans.

Unlike affirmative action, managing diversity is not a short term strategy that is used to correct imbalances in the workplace. Rather, it is a long term process which demands top management to identify and commit to strategies to access the potential of all employees. It can therefore be argued that in order for diversity management to be effective, commitment from the whole organisation is required.

I believe that one of the biggest obstacles in dealing with such a diverse workforce is breaking through people's pre-conceived attitudes about those who are different from themselves. No matter how much a person may believe that s/he is open minded, there is some degree of prejudice in us all. These prejudices come from stereotypes that people believe are true, or some that they have at least heard. Because of these stereotypes people's attitudes are reflected in their actions towards others. One of the reasons people and companies try to avoid the issue of cultural diversity, I believe, is due to these pre-conceived stereotypes and a lack of knowledge and understanding of other cultures. Following, is a discussion on the nature of attitudes, the measuring of attitudes, attitude formation and attitude change, perceptions and stereotypes.

• **Nature of attitudes**

Vecchio (1998:106) defines an attitude as "an idea charged with emotion that predisposes a set of actions to a particular group of stimuli". According to Vecchio (1988:106) this definition covers three essential components of an attitude: the cognitive, the affective and the behavioural. The cognitive component of an attitude is represented in our definition by the word "idea". By idea we mean that some category we use in our thinking is an essential feature of an attitude. According to Moorhead and Griffin (1995:65), it is the knowledge a person presumes to have about something. The affective component of behaviour refers to the individual's feelings towards something. It is similar to emotion in many ways in that it is something which we all have control over. The behavioural component of an attitude refers to a predisposition to act in a particular way (Vecchio, 1998:107). The behavioural component of an

attitude is demonstrated by such actions as seeking or avoiding certain people and situations or purchasing a particular product.

According to Moorhead and Griffin (1995:64) attitudes can be formed and changed very quickly. Moorhead and Griffin (1996:65) define attitudes as “complexes or beliefs and feelings that people have about specific ideas, situations and other people”. Attitudes are important because they are a mechanism through which people express their feelings.

Measuring attitudes

Because attitudes are not directly observable, their existence and nature must therefore be inferred. Thus, people who study attitudes such as psychologists cannot examine attitudes directly, but they must instead consider three aspects of attitudes. Attempts to study attitudes focus most frequently on the affective component.

Measures of the affective component can usually be physiological (that is heart rate, blood pressure and pupil dilation). The cognitive component can be measured through verbal statements of belief (such as personal estimates that an outcome will follow an event). The behavioural component can be measured by studying actual behaviour (whether employees request job transfers, or how they vote in an election) or by studying statements of intention to act in a particular way (Vecchio, 1988:108).

The most commonly used device for studying attitudes is the graphic scale. A graphic or likert scale asks a person to indicate his or her degree of agreement with a statement by checking one of five possible positions: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree or strongly disagree. It is not absolutely necessary to have five possible positions for responding, as the simplest response format can consist of only two options such as agree and disagree. But research indicates that the reliability of rating scales increases with the number of steps in the scale (Vecchio, 1988). Part of this dissertation required the use of the graphic scale to study the attitudes of the respondents. Some of the suggested interview questions required answers that could measure the respondents answers on either a graphic or likert scale. Semantic differential scales are another useful way to measure attitudes. These scales ask for ratings based on one pair of adjectives that are opposite in meaning. For example an

employee might be asked to rate his supervisor's teachings as "good or bad" on a scale of 1 to 7.

Attitude Formation

Vecchio (1988:108) states that attitudes are formed through learning and their sources can be divided into three categories: direct experience, social communication and emotional conditioning.

Direct Experience: Our direct involvement with the objects in our environment creates our attitudes, both positive and negative. It is difficult to like someone who ignores you or is overbearing and it is difficult not to like someone who is warm and responsive to you and who pays you compliments. However, on the other hand, lack of contact can facilitate the development of negative attitudes (Vecchio, 1988:108). Simple exposure to an object can lead to positive evaluations. Repeated exposure to an object without having any prior attachment, is sufficient enough to enhance one's attitude towards the subject.

Social Communication: We also develop attitudes from communicating with people socially. While most of us may not have met the President of South Africa, we are likely to have attitudes towards such an individual based on messages transmitted to us by others. For example, co-workers can also greatly influence an employee's attitude towards a job. This process occurs when employees attempt to influence a coworker to share their view (either positive or negative) of the features of their organisational environment.

Emotional Conditioning: Attitudes can also be formed through emotional conditioning. Emotional conditioning suggests that attitudes are formed for reasons that are not always based on rational arguments. For example, we may believe a person's point of view regarding a certain issue because that particular individual may be extremely attractive and entertaining. Because we encounter objects and persons in contexts that have their own rewarding and punishing features, our attitudes towards them are susceptible to a wide variety of contaminating influences (Vecchio, 1988:109).

Attitude Change

According to Vecchio (1988:109) there are four factors involved in attitude change: the source, the message, the medium and the audience. The process of attitude change follows five steps: attention, comprehension, yielding, retention and action.

Source factors refers to the person or object that causes the attitude change.

Message factors are the specific structure and content of what is being presented to cause the attitude change.

Medium factors involves the medium through which the message is being transmitted (for example, newspapers or face-to-face contact).

Audience factors deal with the influence of individual characteristics (that is aspects of personality of the target person).

The five steps in the process of attitude change focus on the target person's attention (whether the person is attentive to and receiving the persuasive appeal), comprehension (whether the appeal is understood as it was intended to be), yielding (whether the individual truly surrenders to the persuasion), retention (whether the individual's attitude change is more than a transition), and action (whether the attitude change attempt alters subsequent behaviour) (Vecchio, 1988:110). Most researchers believe that an individual must go through all five stages in the process of attitude change.

Source Factors: The source of attitude change can have a significant influence on the magnitude and direction of the change. Vecchio (1988:110) suggests that people are more likely to be influenced by sources that seem more expert and attractive. People also respond better to sources who are similar to themselves. This may be the reason why politicians often try to emphasise the traits and experiences that they have in common with their audience. The initial degree of liking that an audience feels for the source is also important. Usually, the more the person likes the source of a persuasive appeal, the greater the likelihood of attitude change in the hoped for direction (Vecchio, 1988:110).

Medium Factors: During the 1960's and early 1970's, attitude researchers were greatly interested in the way that the media affected people's attitudes. More recently, however, researchers have become sceptical about the once popular notion that the media have a greater impact on the audience than the message itself (Vecchio, 1988:110).

According to Vecchio (1998:110), research suggests that people find spoken appeals more influential than written appeals, even though they comprehend written appeals better, they are more likely to be persuaded by fact-to-face appeals. The reason why face-to face appeals may be more effective could be due to the fact that the listener feels social pressure and tries not to be rude and therefore complies with the speaker's implicit request.

In comparison to other channels of communication, the mass media appear to be relatively ineffective in significantly altering attitudes. The mass media can however, instruct and inform the public about the existence and availability of objects and issues.

Audience Factors: Individual differences have been examined in connection with the magnitude of attitude change. The more commonly studied audience factors include age (both chronological age and mental age), sex, self esteem and prior beliefs.

It has been documented that there is a fairly consistent relationship between chronological age and persuasibility. However, mental age (that is intelligence) seems to bear a far less consistent relationship with susceptibility to persuasion. It appears that intelligence is also generally related to a greater degree of attention and comprehension, but inversely related to the degree of yielding (Vecchio, 1988:111). Sex and persuasibility have also long been assumed to be related, as females are generally regarded as being more easily influenced by attitude change attempts. This could be due to the fact that females suffer greater cultural pressure to conform and comply to certain standards. However, Vecchio (1988:111) suggests that more recently a review of the sex effect literature has called into question the accuracy of

the simple statement concerning female compliance. Female compliance with attitude change attempts may be diminishing as the societal norm of accepting and encouraging female noncompliance becomes more widely acceptable.

One is also likely to assume that self-esteem would be related to an individual's susceptibility to persuasion, as those individuals who have high levels of self-esteem are more difficult to persuade than those with low levels of self-esteem. However, the relationship of self-esteem and ease of persuasibility may be different for males and for females (Vecchio, 1988:112). Females with low levels of self-esteem appear to be alienated from rejecting attempts to influence their attitudes, while an inverse relationship exists for males (Vecchio, 1988:112).

A person's prior beliefs is also said to play an important role in determining his/her response to an attitude change attempt. Since people desire to have consistency among their beliefs, inconsistency or dissonance can become stressful for them.

Message Factors: The influence of both the content and the structure of messages has been heavily researched. One content factor that has been intensely studied is the power of playing on people's fears. Portraying fearful situations is useful in inducing attitudes change. For example, attempts to sell life insurance via the media typically relies on fear appeals as do attempts to sell such products as radial tyres and motor oil (Vecchio, 1988:112). By increasing the level of threat, one would expect to encourage individuals to surrender to the attitude change. However, one can also imagine appeals to the emotion of fear as having the opposite effect, where people respond by becoming more resistant to the appeal being made.

Another message factor that has received considerable study according to Vecchio (1988:112) is whether conclusions in an appeal are more persuasive when they are explicit (stated for the audience) or implicit (unstated but derivable from the arguments made in the appeal). While an explicit conclusion would aid the audience to better understand, an implicit conclusion would allow people to discover the main point for themselves, with greater acceptance of the conclusion possibly resulting. The results of the research on the topic suggest that the explicit approach is generally more

effective than the implicit approach as it leads to greater audience understanding and comprehension.

Attitude and Actions

Vecchio (1988:113) argues that the link between verbal statements and behaviours is not always simple or always direct. 'Sometimes there may be a great deal of inconsistency between what people say and do.

Mental states and behaviours may be controlled by different mechanisms. Verbal expressions are made in response to very different constraints and pressures as compared to behavioural expressions. Actions are influenced by additional forces such as norms, changes in group affiliation and salience and the opportunity to engage in specific behaviours. According to Vecchio (1988:113) when that strength of a group's norms and the strength of individuals' desire to comply with such influences are taken into account, attitudes can be used to predict actions with surprising accuracy.

Generally, it can be stated that attitudes do affect behaviour. Available evidence suggests that attitudes are very specific in nature and that when they are developed from direct experience from a person or object, they do affect many forms of behaviour (Vecchio, 1988:113).

- ***Perception***

Perception can be defined "as a set of processes by which an individual becomes aware of and interprets information about the environment" (Moorhead and Griffin, 1996:65). Perception plays a key role in determining behaviour in organisations. Organisations send their employees a variety of messages regarding what they are expected to do and not to do. No matter how hard an organisation may try to send clear messages to its members regarding what is expected of them, those messages are still subject to distortion in the process of being perceived by the organisation's members (Arnold and Feldman, 1986:34). Our perceptions of the world serve as the basis of our actions. If our perceptions of what is expected of us are consistent with

the actual expectations of the organisation, then this is likely to result in effective performance. If, on the other hand, our perceptions are distorted then the outcome is likely to result in inappropriate behaviour and ineffective performance (Arnold and Feldman, 1986:34).

As mentioned earlier, linked to attitudes are stereotypes and prejudices that people have about each other. Stereotyping is a common form of perceptual distortion that arises as a result of the similarity of an object to other objects previously perceived by that person (Arnold and Feldman, 1986:35). Stereotypes usually occurs when a person decides (usually unconsciously) that all objects of a certain type share certain characteristics.

A stereotype is defined by Carell et al (1997:51) as a fixed, distorted generalisation about members of a specific group. Stereotypes usually come from an outside source and are not based on individual experiences. According to Carell et al (1997:51) stereotypes negate people's individuality and limits their potential. People often perform according to expectations that are placed on them. Therefore, if the stereotype is that a person is incompetent, then he or she likely to perform in that manner (incompetently). Stereotyping is dangerous because it results in perceptions being influenced not by the actual characteristics of a particular object, but rather by the apparent similarity of that object to some previously perceived object or group or group of objects (Arnold and Feldman, 1986:36).

attitudes
↓
Stereotypes
↓
Prejudice

When we cling to negative stereotypes about people who are different to ourselves, this results in prejudice (Carell et al, 1997:51). Prejudice consists of processing our stereotypes in such a way as to reinforce one's own sense of superiority to the members of that group (Carell et al, 1997:51). Stereotypes and prejudice against diverse groups have sadly become a stark reality in many South African organisations. Therefore, one of the functions of managers and supervisors in South African organisations will be to eradicate both stereotyping and prejudice.

Managing diversity in organisations requires managers to change their attitudes and mental frames towards people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Whilst many

companies may have sound diversity programmes (that is diversity training programmes, employment equity and affirmative action policies) as part of correcting imbalances created by the apartheid regime, if the attitudes of managers implementing these diversity programmes remain to be negative towards individuals of diverse backgrounds, then these programmes are just used as "window dressing" for organisations.

It can be hypothesised that if negative attitudes are displayed to people of diverse cultures by managers and those employees around them, this could result in low levels of self-esteem for the diverse group which can impact negatively on job performance. (The negative impact that attitudes could have on job performance is outside the scope of this research). On the other hand, if managers have positive attitudes towards people of diverse backgrounds, then this will make diverse employees feel more acceptable and comfortable in the organisation, thereby, increasing the effectiveness of diversity programmes and a diverse workforce as a whole.

Furthermore, the attitude of willingness to fully engage in diversity programmes and issues of cultural diversity can be said to improve employer/employee relations. If managers show a lack of awareness in managing cultural diversity and their attitudes towards cultural diversity reflect low levels of enthusiasm, I believe this can hinder the effectiveness of a diverse workforce in terms of achieving team and organisational goals.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the literature documented on cultural diversity and cultural diversity management.

2.2 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AND MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Programmes such as affirmative action and employment equity, are programmes that many companies currently engage in as part of complying with legislation. However, many of these companies believe that complying with legislation such as the above is in fact diversity management. It must be borne in mind that embarking on such programmes is what drives many South African companies towards a more integrated and diverse workforce and does not involve managing diversity. Following is a discussion on the differentiation and clarification of the terms affirmative action and employment equity as summarised by (Martins 2000:29).

- **Affirmative Action**

A temporary intervention to achieve equal opportunities and to eliminate disparities between diverse employees. Preferential treatment is utilised to equal the playing field. The focus is on previously disadvantaged groups.

- **Employment Equity**

Granting equal access into a company, merit is a criteria when appointing or promoting. Providing equal access for all people to participate on the basis of merit, ability and potential.

- **Diversity Management**

A diverse workforce is founded on the premise that harnessing of differences may create a productive environment in which everybody is valued, talents are

utilised and organisational goals are met. Martins (2000:32), states that diversity is not about reducing standards, and it is not about removing our own prejudices. Rather, it is about recognising that our prejudices exist and then questioning them before we act. Martins (2000:32) continues by saying that diversity is not a distraction from more important business issues. Rather, it is a standard against which our business performance is measured. Diversity is about positive action and it is not about language and political correctness.

2.3 NEED FOR AND BENEFIT OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

According to Thomas (1996:11), some of the reasons organisations embark on managing diversity include:-

- tapping into a range of skills which the organisation never had before;
- attracting and retaining the best talent, promoting greater productivity as a result of employee and job satisfaction;
- developing enhanced creativity and problem solving and the timeous responses to diverse customers and markets. Diverse teams and hence organisations afford fresh perspectives to market penetration and expand existing markets. With diverse consumer markets, customers want to know that the organisation provides products and services to them and is not alienated from them but rather represents them in the makeup of the employee base;
- and utilising all people to the maximum and creating improved relations and communications between organised labour and management.

Furthermore, Nankervis et al (1996:142) argue that the trends taking place in the twentieth century necessitate that if organisations really want to stay in the market they must change the old way of doing things - a change in organisational culture and climate is required to manage a diverse workforce. The implications of these trends are important to managers particularly in the management of diverse people. Following is the discussion of some of these trends summarised by Nankervis et al (1996:142).

- *Quality Imperative*

South African organisations have been protected by sanctions for a long time. Removal thereof has exposed them to international competition. Organisations have to make quality a top priority if they want to succeed since the quality of goods and services has become a criterion for competitive advantage. It has been argued that for many years, South Africa has been endowed with a high population growth and can therefore benefit by capitalising on human resources at its disposal in the struggle of surviving in the market. They have to use every human potential available to their level best, especially if the very same people are the consumers. If these consumers are not satisfied with local products then they will buy imported products, thus taking local companies out of business.

- *Information Technology Imperative*

This particularly refers to the impact of information technology in the area of providing informational support for decision making. Growth of on line data accessible to everyone is increasing the quality and speed of decision making at all levels. This has an impact on traditional staffing levels. Everyone with such information at his/her disposal will have to make use of it accordingly without having to wait for his or her superior to give direction. There is a need for self empowered individuals, who are equipped with decision making powers as opposed to the traditional power based bureaucratic organisations. As everyone has access to essential information, people in organisations gain more power and take on greater responsibility.

- *The Communication Imperative*

The knowledge of the organisation's external environment is much more accessible than ever before. For example, there is access to world money markets through on-line data. Information is fast and efficient by electronic means. Worldwide media coverage provide us with knowledge of events as they take place. This enables organisations and people to be more responsive to changes in national and international contexts.

- *The Imperative for Change*

The external environment is constantly changing. However, bureaucratic organisations are not able to respond quick enough. In order to survive and succeed, organisations need to move away from a highly structured span of control to more responsive structures which may involve redundancies - which is the main reason why people resist change.

- *The Learning Organisation*

A learning organisation, defined by Robbins (1997:535), is an organisation that has developed the continuous capacity to adapt to change. It is successful in acquiring, cultivating and applying knowledge that can help it to adapt to change. In the learning organisation, change is seen as an ongoing process and not as an event.

- *Customer Satisfaction*

Globalization has brought diverse customers from all over the world. South African organisations are faced with a challenge of not only satisfying these customers in the short term but they also have to develop a long term relationship with them. They have to come up with strategies to retain customers.

2.4 DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AS PART OF A CHANGE PROCESS

Managing diversity created by affirmative action, by whatever means will be one of the biggest challenges facing organisations in the future according to Norris (1996:36).

He states that accepting the challenge of diversity implies, among other things:-

- changing organisational culture;
- re-conceptualising appropriate leadership skills;
- developing management and staff to work and advance in organisations that are very different from what they used to be.

However, not much has been done in the area of managing diversity except, providing access for employees with disabilities, and the recruitment and selection of disadvantaged groups. Carell et al (1997:53) suggest the following reasons why South

African companies do not succeed in managing diversity:-

- no follow up activities after initial training;
- few or no incentives for managers to increase the diversity of their workgroup;
- top management view diversity management as a Human Resources issue and not as a key to the organisation's long term success.

Gerber, et al (1998:47) argue that the first step in any plan to manage diversity is to **survey the workforce** directly or via their representatives. This is also emphasised by Misselhorn (1997:151) when he says that one of the most common approaches to change is to identify the issues affecting the individual, group or organisation and to convert these issues into positive goals or objectives. Workplace forums can be surveyed to pinpoint the needs of diverse employees that need to be accommodated. Other committees can also be used like health and safety committees, team leaders and any interested parties. Efforts towards diversity management should not be an industrial relation issue, but be part of the strategic planning process.

Those organisations that invite change and successfully manage diversity are more likely to detect and solve complex business problems that do not fit into the orthodox business models of yesterday (Norris, 1996:37).

Norris (1996:37) describes three developmental stages that an organisation experiences as it moves from a monocultural to a diverse or multicultural one. These stages are:-

- **Monocultural** which is characterised by implicit or explicit exclusion of racial minorities and women.
- **Nondiscriminatory** which is characterised by a sincere desire to eliminate the majority's unfair advantage. This, however, is done without the organisation significantly changing the dominant culture, but by ensuring that the climate of the organisation is not a hostile place for the new members of the workforce.
- **Multicultural** which describes the organisation that is in the process of becoming or has become diverse in the most visionary sense. This means that organisations reflect the contributions and interests of the diverse and cultural

and social groups in the organisation's mission, operations and services. This organisation also aims to eradicate all forms of social discrimination and shares power and influences so that no group is at a disadvantage.

Norris (1996:36) further explains that these three stages can be related to the transformation process that South Africa is now facing and through which it still has to experience. The monocultural stage can be compared to the apartheid ethos, when the dominant culture was "White Eurocentric" and open discrimination was practised. This stage has now been left behind, with the dismantling of the apartheid system and the election of a democratic government.

South Africa has entered into the non-discriminatory stage, which can be linked to the implementation of affirmative action interventions that have been put into place in order to redress the imbalances of the past. However, it seems that a White Eurocentric culture still tends to dominate in many organisations (Norris, 1996:36).

Finally, the country will enter into the last stage, that of multiculturalism, which can only be brought about by the acceptance of a diverse nation and the eradication of all forms of discrimination. It is when this stage is reached that a new culture, built on the country's diversity may emerge.

The challenge of future organisational change that many organisations will be forced to experience is also stressed by Norris (1996:24) who believes that many White managers still fear affirmative action and also actively oppose it. According to Norris (1996:26) most South African organisations are still dominated by a Eurocentric male ethos and this kind of atmosphere can be intimidating and even hostile to those who are not White males. He further believes that for affirmative action to be successful, an organisation's climate must transform into one that values diversity and more importantly where managers and supervisors have the necessary skills to manage that diversity. Norris (1996:39) maintains that the management of diversity can only be properly executed if it forms part of the organisation's strategic management process.

He discusses six important factors that should form part of the strategic management process in organisations:-

- *Organisational Culture*

The historically White/Eurocentric, male dominated culture exists in many organisations. This organisational culture will have to change and reflect the values and belief system of a diverse culture.

- *Organisational/Environmental Change*

These factors need to be addressed at the same time as bringing about changes in one may effect changes in the other.

- *Total Quality Management*

This must become part of the strategic management process within organisations in South Africa in order to address certain fears that increasing diversity might lead to the lowering of standards.

- *Participative Management Decision Making*

Leadership in organisations will have to adopt a participative management style that involves all cultural groups in the organisation's decision making process.

- *Resource Development*

This is regarded as the key element in providing a well educated and trained workforce and has been emphasised in construction and development initiatives.

- *Strategic Planning*

This is the factor that provides direction for the organisation and is future orientated, but at the same time it should never be regarded as more important than the other factors in the strategic planning process.

The positive outcomes of organisational change can only be successful through the proper management of diversity if it forms an integral part of an organisation's strategic management process. Similarly, Martins (2000:32) concurs with Norris by seeing

diversity management as part of a change process. Martins (2000:32) offers the following steps for companies to manage diversity effectively:-

Strategically:

- manage the Employment Equity process as a total change process;
- adjust human resources and personnel policies and programmes in order to meet the diverse population's needs and to be perceived as being fair to all;
- train managers to facilitate the Employment Equity process to manage change and act as mentors (managers involvement and commitment);
- develop shared visions and values which reflect the values of all the cultural groups in an organisation; and
- investigate all services (internally and externally) for any forms of discrimination and link diversity with business priorities.

Operational:

- involve employees in the planning and implementation of Employment Equity and in the decision-making processes that affects them directly;
- communicate the roles, functions, aims and implications of Employment Equity to all employees and educate them accordingly;
- address the trust gap between management and employees;
- implement a training needs and competency analysis, develop training programmes and train employees accordingly, especially the disadvantaged groups;
- develop creative incentive programmes to retain skilled black workers;
- support white males during the change process;
- train and educate employees in intercultural understanding; and
- continuously measure employee's perceptions towards the implementation of Employment Equity.

2.5 APPROACHES TO MANAGING DIVERSITY

It has been aptly documented by Norris (1996:36) and Martins (2000:32) that diversity

management needs to be seen as part and parcel of the organisational transformation and change management process. Organisational change can be defined as a response to change, a complex educational strategy intended to change beliefs, attitudes, values and structure of organisations so they can better adapt to new technologies, markets and challenges.

Thomas (1996:92) states that the majority of organisations have chosen to respond to diversity in the following ways:-

- **Exclusion** - by keeping diverse people out of the organisation or excluding them once they have been included.
- **Denial** - ignoring the unique types of diversity which employees bring to the organisation.
- **Suppression** - encouraging individuals who are "different" in the organisation to suppress that difference and adopt the accepted styles, ways of thinking and behaving and other aspects of conformity in order to survive or progress within the organisation.
- **Assimilation** - attempting to transform those who are different into clones of the dominant group.
- **Tolerance** - acknowledging the rights of others to exist or be included, while taking steps to minimise interaction.

I believe that one of the fundamental reasons why organisations have chosen to respond to diversity in the above ways could be that they fear change.

Accommodating diverse people requires change at all levels of the organisation, one of the main areas being training. Investing in training requires large amounts of money which companies can not afford. However, on the contrary, companies may just not see the benefits of a diverse workforce. A more detail discussion on change features in the latter part of the chapter.

Thomas (1996:93) argues that very few South African organisations have arrived at a point of fostering mutual adaptation, or attempting to understand "different or non-mainstream" people in their own terms.

Robbins (1997:523 - 526) proposes five levels on which change can take place in the organisation: Structural, cultural, technological, people and the physical setting. Following is the discussion of people and the cultural change starting with the Human Resource Development Approach, followed by the Organisational Culture Approach.

2.5.1 Human Resource Development Approach

Carell et al (1997) states that the basic problem in South African organisations hindering either organisational or human resources development is that of **stereotypes** and **prejudice**. The most common stereotypes and forms of prejudice have to do with ethnic and racial categorisation. As a result White males do not believe in Black leadership. How then can we expect a human resource programme like mentoring to succeed if mentors do not believe that the mentees have the potential to learn and develop ? Feldman (1996: 646 - 647) presents strategies that have proven effective towards ending prejudice and discrimination:

- *Increasing Contact Between the Target of Stereotyping and the Holder of the Stereotype*

Research has shown that increasing the amount of interaction between people can reduce negative stereotyping. Situations where there is relatively intimate contact, where the individuals are of equal status, or where participants must co-operate with one another or are dependent on one another are most likely to bring about a reduction of stereotyping. This can be in the form of organised outings or camping where people will have to treat one another equally and not as superiors or subordinates.

- *Making Positive Values More Conspicuous*

Feldman (1996:161) states that another approach towards changing stereotypes and prejudice is the one commonly discussed under the topic of changing attitudes - that of the Cognitive Dissonance theory. Research has shown that people who are made to see that the values they hold regarding others are inconsistent with their negative perceptions of them are more likely to work actively against prejudice in the future.

- *Providing Information About the Object of Stereotyping*

The most direct means of changing the way people perceive one another is through education which will teach them to be aware of the positive characteristics of targets and stereotypes.

Feldman (1996:162) states that another concern often overlooked is the **physical workplace**. Many manufacturing enterprises operate plants that were designed for a workforce of muscular young males. Women find themselves trying to run lathes that require intense physical force and others have to stretch to reach machine controls. Feldman (1996:162) argues that the workplace should be adapted to the labour force because ignoring it could be sacrificing quality and productivity.

Randall (1998) does not believe that focussing on difference is as important as focussing on similarities. Randall maintains that it is important to help companies move forward and begin to work from a commonality of purpose and unity of focus. One way to help make this happen is through what Senge calls **shared vision**. This is a vision that takes root and spreads because there is a reinforcing process of increasing clarity, enthusiasm, communication and commitment. Randall argues that the following will happen when diversity becomes a shared vision by every employee in the company:-

- Top Management will be committed and, therefore, support any diversity initiative;
- learning techniques will be designed to help participants expand their capacity for honest and open communication; and
- the working environment will be a learning environment.

2.5.2 Organisational Culture Approach

Carell et al (1997:52) state that in the past South African organisations responded to the influx of different people through the process of **assimilation**.

This process assumed that the dominant group's style and preferences were superior to those persons who were not in the dominant group. This assumption devalued diversity in organisations and reinforced the value of homogeneity. The disadvantage of assimilation is that pressuring diverse employees to conform diminishes them as individuals. Another disadvantage is that the energy effort used by diverse employees to assimilate, drains them of enthusiasm for reaching the goals of the organisation. Anthony et al (1996:145) argue that the concept of treating everyone as though they were the same (assimilation) is now being replaced by emphasising individualism. The corporate culture of companies will have to consider the ethnic, culture, personality styles (gays and lesbians), educational and gender differences that represents today's workforce.

Carell et al (1997) argue that organisations must recognise the business necessity of having a diverse workforce and tapping into the potential of that workforce. They further state that this kind of information is articulated in an organisation's mission statement or strategic plans. An understanding of the role of culture is becoming more and more essential as the nature of the labour force changes. An awareness of cultural differences can also serve to lessen prejudice and discrimination (Feldman, 1996:649).

Swanepoel (1998:740) states that changing culture is more difficult than changing behaviour and usually takes longer. Kotter in Swanepoel (1998: 740) identifies eight errors common to organisational change and their consequences:-

- underestimating the importance of having a shared vision;
- failing to communicate a vision;
- allowing obstacles to block a new vision;
- failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition;
- allowing too much complacency;
- not anchoring changes in the corporate culture;
- not creating enough short term gains; and
- declaring victory too soon.

Following is a discussion of Kotter's (1995/1996:741) multi-stage process for designing

change strategies.

Kotter's (1996) Model of Designing Change Strategies

Step One: Establish a sense of urgency

The energy resulting from this sense of urgency is necessary to shake up the status quo so that change can be initiated and executed. This can be done via the department managers, by submitting their proposed plan of action to their supervisors stating deadlines as to when certain things will be done.

Step Two: Formation of a Powerful Guiding Coalition

This involves the development of a group with enough power, including but not limited to trade union leadership which will lead the change effort.

Step Three: Creating a Shared Vision

The change agent must craft a vision, formulate corporate strategies and transpose these into human resource strategies.

Step Four: Communicating the Vision, Strategy and Core Values to the Employees on a Continuous Basis

This must be communicated down to everyone in the organisation, using every possible communication vehicle.

Step Five: Empowering Broad Based Action

This involves the process of getting rid of obstacles, encouraging a culture of risk taking and creativity and changing structures or systems that undermine the change.

Step Six and Seven: The Generation of Short Term Wins

This involves the creation of performance opportunities and rewards and the consolidation of gains.

Step Eight: Anchoring the New Approaches in the Culture of the Organisation

This involves continuously articulating the connection between new behaviours and organisational success.

Since diversity management entails far more than recruiting people of different race and gender and that companies have to view diversity management as part of a change process, diversity training will form an important aspect as part of the change process. Diversity training can help to identify skills, value and utilise these differences and similarities in order to improve the way people work together. Thus the ultimate goal is to improve organisational effectiveness.

However, the key to change will be adjusting or changing people's attitudes. The key barrier seems to be that many people in organisations are resistant to change. Some ways to change are: lectures being well organised and delivered, having an effective discussion leader, discussion groups and classroom demonstrations with group work (<http://krypton.mnsu.edu>). In addition to this many companies also experience barriers to communication such as language differences, non verbal communication, cultural stereotypes and most people tend to evaluate what others say or do, that is whether it is good or bad and there is also a high level of anxiety which causes a distortion of meanings (<http://krypton.mnsu.edu>). The following discussion on diversity training offers insight on how to deal with these problems.

2.6 DIVERSITY TRAINING

Diversity training can be defined as training with the goal of raising personal awareness about individual and group differences and similarities in the workplace (Meyer, 1999:22). Meyer (1999:22) states that certain aspects should be taken into account when implementing a diversity training initiative, which could have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the training. She discusses the following pitfalls organisations encounter when embarking on diversity training programmes.

- *Lack of Management Commitment*

Although management provides the financial resources for diversity training, they do not often participate in the training sessions themselves. Employees and supervisors will question their commitment and regard their intentions as "lip service" if real participation and action are not visible.

- *Improper Needs Identification*

The manager or consultant often makes unilateral decisions about the content of the diversity training programme. Usually these programmes entail a very general approach and are not tailor made for the particular company, industry or region. For example a diversity training programme designed for a company in the Northern Cape may require a different approach in terms of contents than a programme for a company in Kwa-Zulu Natal because of various factors such as language, racial, cultural and religious differences. If the employees' needs and differences are not identified prior to training sessions, then this is likely to impact negatively on training effectiveness.

- *Political Orientation*

Diversity training fails when presented from a political point of view. In certain training groups there are most likely to be people from different political groups and if certain political philosophy is portrayed as the right way, members who differ from this view react negatively towards diversity training and this in turn defeats the purpose of diversity training.

- *Reactive Approach*

Diversity training lacks legitimacy when it is introduced by management as a reaction to racial incidents, labour unrest or industrial action in the company. This creates an impression to the employees that diversity training is presented as a remedy to problems. Thus, the staff will feel that they are regarded as incompetent to handle diversity and employees will see diversity as a problem and not a strength.

- *Facilitator's Profile*

Diversity training will become less effective when the diversity profile of the facilitators does not mirror the principle of representivity. Due to the fact that racial segregation

and informal separation have embodied much of the characteristics of South African organisations, an all White or all Black facilitator team will be placed in an awkward position of not being able to relate and provide comfort to group members who are different to them.

- *Unbalanced Content*

Another problem is that training can often be either too superficial or too comprehensive. In the former instance, diversity is presented from a very simplistic perspective, for example an oversimplification of various world views of the different cultures. This approach tends to override other important diversity variables such as subcultures, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion and individual differences. On the other hand, diversity training can also end up being too comprehensive when cultural and other differences are presented in so much detail that they contribute to further stereotyping and generalisations based on differences. Whilst cultural differences are a reality, each individual is different irrespective of culture - he or she is a unique product of many possible variables and influences.

- *Participant Profile*

A diversity training initiative will lack legitimacy if the vast majority of the group members are from one particular race group. If the majority of the participants are White, they are likely to feel that they are seen as the problem and their level of resistance will therefore be greater. Black employees will also question the legitimacy of such training. Conversely, if the majority of the participants are Black, the participants will in all likelihood see diversity as a Black issue which can also result in resistance to diversity training. In addition, if the group consists of employees from different departments, these group members can become isolated when they return to the workplace and may find it difficult to gain support for skills transfer and implementation.

- *Project Approach*

Some organisations run diversity workshops which are not integrated into the strategic plan of the organisation. Thus, there is no clear indication on how diversity training relates to the strategic plans of the organisations, such as increasing market share and

globalization. This creates the impression that diversity training is a “soft” programme which does not contribute to the bottom line of business. Furthermore, the interrelationship between affirmative action, employment equity and diversity is not clear, which creates further confusion and unnecessary duplication of programmes and activities. As a result, diversity training intervention is seen as a short term project.

- *Inadequate Transfer of Training*

If well developed action plans and follow up activities do not complement the training, then skills transfer will not become reality. The impact of training will therefore remain very limited. A lack of support systems, such as counselling opportunities, exacerbates the problem.

- *Superficial Evaluation*

Most diversity programmes end with a reaction evaluation by the participants of their perceptions of the programme. This form of evaluation merely focuses on trainee perceptions and does not indicate whether learning and behaviour changes have occurred as a result of intervention. Moreover, the most important form of evaluation, namely the impact of the training on the business in terms of return on investment, is sadly neglected.

- *A Preaching Approach*

One of the easiest traps to fall into in diversity training, is preaching. Most trainers who decide to conduct diversity training have strong feelings about equality, fairness, affirmative action, employment equity and human rights. If the trainer always persists on “telling it like it ought to be”, the trainer no longer facilitates but becomes directive and prescriptive in his/her approach. This approach lacks understanding and realisation that overcoming decades of inappropriate racial and sexist conditioning and learning does not happen overnight.

- *Lack of Change Management*

In many organisations a lack of change management regarding diversity manifests itself at two levels: firstly, at the trainer-trainee level. The trainer does not have the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with resistance to change. By actively trying to

avoid, discount, or break resistance down, more harm than good is achieved. In some cases, by using threats and attempts to induce guilt, they may even evoke more and deeper resistance. Secondly, at the organisational level: diversity training is introduced as a "quick fix" approach and without even considering the importance of supporting the management of change from an organisational development perspective. Consequently, diversity does not become part of the culture of the organisation.

- *Consultant Liabilities*

Some diversity consultants lack the professionalism and thoroughness which a particular situation requires. Their understanding of business in general or a company in particular may be deficient in some respects. Therefore, they have difficulty in adapting their views and perspectives to those of the client organisation. In addition, they may lack objectivity, flexibility and balance when they want to introduce and impose a diversity "recipe" in an organisation.

2.6.1 An Awareness Training Programme

Carell et al (1997:54) suggest that the first group to undergo training is that of top management. This should be followed by managerial and employee training. Top management must be made to realise the need and benefit of diversity management. According to Gerber et al (1998:571) managers will not change unless they realise how destructive their behaviour really is.

Carell et al (1997:54) present the following that the awareness training should seek to accomplish:-

- to motivate employees to recognise the worth and dignity of everyone in the workplace and to treat them with respect;
- to diminish the negative impact of individual prejudices by getting each individual to accept responsibility for the problem.

2.6.2 The Training Programme

Diversity training programmes can take many forms. It can take the form mentioned under strategies for managing diversity. The content of the programme can include listening skills. According to Thomson (1993:48) the active listener will help the other person gain a clearer understanding of the situation and to take responsibility for it. Managers can learn to use facts instead of using own beliefs, opinions and assumptions to govern the workplace. Active listening involves understanding the other person's view.

The programmes should also include managing conflict. From time to time interests of individuals and groups within the organisation will diverge from organisational structures and goals. Problems arise when differences in people generate into conflict. Therefore, conflict handling skills are essential in managers especially if they are required to resolve conflict without taking sides.

The programme can also include language sensitivity and guidelines for appropriate language. Price (1997:24) states that the Constitution gives implicit recognition that while the rights of all must be respected, some languages dominate others when being used. If English is to be the lingua franca of business communication in South Africa, the onus rests on businesses to level the linguistic playing fields so that all can participate equally. Carell et al (1997:55) presents the following guidelines when dealing with language sensitivity in the workplace:-

- do not tell jokes directed to a group of people stereotyped because of their primary and secondary characteristics;
- use metaphors and analogies from diverse sources and diverse disciplines, like the arts and sciences as well as sports;
- avoid using terms that devalue people - "cripples"; "boy" or "girl"; or that spotlight people - "Black doctor" or "old supervisor";
- be aware of and sensitive to the preferences of members of diverse groups regarding titles and terminology.

2.6.3 Guidelines for Effective Diversity Training

Although approaches to diversity training may vary from region to region, or even from one company to the next, Meyer (1999:24) states that the following key elements should be incorporated into any diversity training initiative:-

- *Obtain Visible Management Support*

Managers must be trained first in order to show all members of the organisation that they are committed to the process of creating an environment that is conducive to diversity. Managers should also champion the diversity initiative by showing their support visibly in the forms of resource allocation, employment equity plans and participation in the follow up activities.

- *Diversity Needs Identification*

The particular need of the organisation, groups and individuals must be identified in order to tailor diversity training to the specific needs and expectations and interests of the entire organisation. Special interest groups, such as unions, women's forums, disability groups, the Black Management Forum and other groups can be a valuable source in terms of diversity needs identification.

- *Integrate in Business Strategy*

Diversity management must be implemented as a positive and proactive business strategy to enhance organisational performance and productivity. Thus, the benefits of diversity management should be communicated clearly to all employees and managers. In addition, the diversity training should form part of the company's employment equity plan in order to create an environment that is conducive to diversity and employment equity implementation.

- *Balanced Objective Approach*

All aspects of diversity should be emphasised that is: race, gender, disability, cultures, sexual orientation, religion, age and individual differences. However, this approach should be used in an objective manner to prevent reinforcement of biases and

stereotyping.

- *Diverse Facilitators*

It is suggested that two or more facilitators be used, provided that they are represented in terms of race and gender. A facilitation team that meets the above requirements will be in a better position to model the contents of a diversity programme and make all groups feel at ease during training sessions.

- *Diverse Participants*

It is strongly recommended that natural workgroups are used where possible, that is members of the same workgroup, so that they have mutual rapport and support when implementing diversity action plans in the workplace. However, participants should be representative in terms of gender, race, disability, age and organisational level.

- *Change Management*

In addition to diversity training, a comprehensive diversity change management strategy must be developed in conjunction with an organisational development practitioner. The change strategy needs to be well integrated, ensuring that changes occur at personal, interpersonal and organisational levels. This strategy should be inclusive, which requires that all stakeholders be consulted and that the necessary support and information systems be implemented. Furthermore, diversity trainers must be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to identify, acknowledge and constructively deal with all forms of resistance in a positive manner.

- *Consultant Co-ordination*

More time and effort should be put into screening and selecting potential consultants. Recruit and interview a wide selection of candidates. It is also essential to check references of past work, approach, methodology, successes, problems and integrity. The specific responsibilities of both the consultant and the organisation should be clarified. Measures for evaluating success must be outlined. Periodic review meetings should be scheduled to monitor progress, problems and performance.

- *Compile Action Plans*

At the training session, participants should be encouraged to develop action plans in

order to ensure transfer of training to the workplace. These action plans should be very specific in terms of planned activities and how the plans can be maintained, reinforced, monitored and evaluated.

- *Provide Support Structures*

The formation of support structures, such as diversity committees, employees assistance programmes, regular follow-up, networking and activities should be instituted to ensure that diversity filters through the organisation. In addition, if diversity management is incorporated into the performance management system, ongoing support, reinforcement and accountability will ensure that diversity management is entrenched in the organisational culture and overall business strategy of the company.

- *Monitoring and Evaluation*

The diversity training strategy should be monitored on a continuous basis in order to identify successes, shortcomings and areas for improvement and modification. Any changes to the training should be the result of consultation with all stakeholders and should be communicated to all employees. The most important form of evaluation is the quantifiable impact the diversity strategy has on the company in terms of business performance and results.

2.7 CONCLUSION

South African organisations seem to be faced with a huge problem of changing the Eurocentric culture which still seems to have itself strongly rooted in many organisations. Therefore, managers will have to work very hard and adopt the various strategies discussed in this chapter if they want to successfully manage a diverse workforce.

The aim of this chapter was to gain more theoretical insight into the concept cultural diversity and cultural diversity management. Goals of diversity management, benefits of diversity management, training in diversity management were also discussed.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter discussion will centre around research design issues such as population and sample, data collection techniques, data analysis used in the study and the methodological problems encountered by the researcher.

3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

The aim of this research was to gain understanding and insight into the attitudes of middle managers regarding cultural diversity and cultural diversity management. A qualitative research method was chosen. A thorough understanding of the respondents' attitudes to diversity and its management is therefore required. In order to gain insight into the attitudes of middle managers we need to see the world through their eyes. It is hoped that the data collected will provide a detailed look at the attitudes of middle management regarding diversity management.

Qualitative research can take many forms and has many definitions. One form consists of open ended questions embedded in a structured interview or questionnaire, while other forms may be through fieldwork and participant observation. For Van Maanen, et al (1982:32), qualitative research refers to the meaning, the definition or analogy or model or metaphor characterising something. It, therefore, deals with the meaning of things and explains why something happens.

It seems that qualitative data are attractive for many reasons. Qualitative data can be described as being rich, full and holistic and they preserve the chronological flow of data where it is required. Furthermore, qualitative data offers a far more precise way to determine the cause and effect relationships regarding organisational issues. Qualitative data reduces a researcher's trained incapacity, bias, narrowness and arrogance (Van Maanen, 1979:117). Finally, according to Van Maanen (1979:118), there are many reasons to believe that qualitative data can be more useful than

quantitative information from the same organisational setting, in order to produce a more powerful analysis.

However, qualitative data does have its weaknesses and problems as well. Collecting and analysing qualitative data is a very labour intensive operation that can cause much stress. Qualitative data can also become overwhelming for the researcher, as the sheer range of phenomena to be observed, the recorded volume of notes, the time required for writing up, coding and analysis can become very time consuming. But the most serious difficulty experienced by qualitative researchers is that methods of analysis are not well formulated. For quantitative data there are very clear conventions that the researcher can use. However, the researcher faced with qualitative data has very few guidelines and is often faced with the uncertainties as to whether the conclusions presented are unreliable or invalid.

3.2.1 Population

The population consists of 63 middle managers from four companies in the greater Durban area.

3.2.2 Sample

A sample is a subset of a population (Sekaran, 1992:225). A sample size of 20 middle managers was chosen and a convenience sample of 4 companies was taken. The reason for convenience sampling 4 companies, is because these companies were willing to provide the information I required. A listing of all the middle managers were obtained from the 4 companies resulting in a total of 63 middle managers. From this listing, a sample of 20 respondents were chosen using the simple random sampling method. The reason for choosing middle managers is because, while policies regarding diversity and diversity management are usually formulated by the Human Resource Managers, they are in actual fact implemented by the middle managers.

It is my opinion that a sample size of 20 managers seemed adequate because the

study is largely qualitative in nature. Middle managers were interviewed individually and their responses quoted verbatim by the author.

3.2.2.1 Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling as the name implies involves collecting information from members of the population who are conveniently able to provide this information (Sekaren, 1992:235). The reason for choosing convenience sampling as a method of obtaining a sample, is due to the fact that it is a quick, convenient and less expensive method of sampling. However convenience sampling does have disadvantages. One of the main disadvantages being generalizability. Using this method of sampling, the researcher can not generalize his/her findings to the rest of the population.

3.2.2.2 Characteristics of the Sample

The respondents range between the ages of 29 and 55 years of age. All of the respondents were males. Respondents belonged to three race groups namely Black, White and Indian. The respondents were employed in the companies for approximately seven years.

3.3.3 Data Gathering Technique

Structured interviews were conducted with each respondent. The reason for the choice of interviews as a data gathering technique was because the respondent's attitudes were explored. Therefore, the best possible way to do this was through face-to-face interviews, where the respondent's answers were quoted verbatim.

The format of the questions were primarily open ended as the author was interested in gaining insight into the feelings and attitudes of the respondents. Open-ended questions do not restrict the respondents to specific "Yes" or "No" answers as they are encouraged to explain "Why" and "How". However, while most the questions were indeed open ended, four of the eight questions required "Yes/No" answers. These

questions were scaled on a key that comprised of "Yes" (Y), "No" (N), "Unsure" (U), "Very Comfortable" (VC), "Comfortable" (C) and "Very Uncomfortable" (VC).

The reason for choosing face-to-face interviews is because of its many advantages. One being that the researcher can adapt the questions, clarify doubts and ensure that the responses are properly understood by either repeating or rephrasing the questions. Furthermore, the researcher is also able to pick up non verbal cues from the respondents. Any discomfort, stress or problems that the respondent experiences can be detected through frowns, nervous tapping and other body language.

One of the main disadvantages of the face-to-face interview is that respondents might feel uneasy about the anonymity of their responses when talking to the interviewer. However, one way of curbing this problem is to first speak to the respondents and ensure them that their names will be kept confidential and there will be no way of knowing which person gave which response (Sekaran, 1992:197)

3.3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

Since the study was largely qualitative in nature, the respondent's responses were transcribed onto computer. Thereafter, in order to make sense of the large volume of data gathered, common themes and trends were generated from their the candidate's answers. This is called a method of coding.

3.4 METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Shortcomings and methodological problems are bound to be experienced by researchers especially when the researcher is a student embarking on research for the very first time. Following is a discussion on some of the methodological problems experienced by the researcher.

3.4.1 Sample Size

A sample size of 20 respondents may seem relatively small when compared to large

sample sizes used in quantitative research. However, due to time constraints (the dissertation had to be completed within a period of 6 months) experienced by the researcher, a sample of 20 respondents was chosen. Due to the fact that a qualitative research approach was chosen encompassing long and tedious methods of coding and making sense of the data, the small sample size seemed quite attractive at the time.

Respondents were interviewed, thus, revealing to the researcher their feelings, attitudes and emotions. Therefore, while a small sample size was opted for, the information extracted from the respondents carried more quality rather than quantity. Results are therefore, still valid and reliable.

3.4.2 Generalizability of Findings

Gaining access into various companies in Durban proved to be a very difficult and frustrating experience. Many Human Resource Managers were sceptical about the aim of the study, especially when it became known that the interview was the source of gathering the data, and thus access to interview respondents was denied. Other companies were in the midst of organisational restructuring, resulting in large numbers of workers being demoted and left without jobs. Thus, the "atmosphere" and "mood" of the organisation was not right to carry out a research project which demanded respondent's attitudes and feelings. Therefore, the four companies that were willing to accommodate the fieldwork were sampled and respondents chosen from these companies. Due to the fact that only four companies were sampled, while the internal validity may be high, external validity may be low which makes generalizability of the findings to other companies in the Greater Durban Area difficult. Generalizability claims of the findings should therefore be made with caution.

3.4.3 Data Processing and Analysis

As mentioned earlier, the respondents' answers to the questions were categorised into themes in order to make sense of the large volume of data. While some of the themes were present in the respondents' answers, others were directly inferred from their

answers. Therefore, due to the fact that some of the themes may have been inferred, there is a likelihood of the results being affected. However, to guard against this problem, the respondents were asked for clarification of their answers at the end of each question. Results are therefore, still valid and reliable.

3.4.4 Convenience Sampling

As mentioned earlier, a convenience sampling method was used to choose the companies to carry out the research, the main reason being that these companies were willing to accommodate me. However, while convenience sampling may be a quick and efficient method of sampling, one is not easily able to generalise the findings to the rest of the population. Thus, the findings of the research may have to be treated with caution.

TABLE 1: RESPONDENTS (MIDDLE MANAGERS)
BY COMPANY AND GROUP

COMPANY	INDIAN	BLACK	WHITE
A	✓ ✓ ✓	✓	✓
B	✓ ✓ ✓	✓	✓
C	✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
D	✓ ✓	✓	✓ ✓

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter discussion was centred around the research design issues such as population and sample, data collection techniques, methods used to analyse the data and the methodological problems experienced by the researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present the main findings of the study. The respondents' answers were divided into a total of sixteen themes (some of which were inferred from the respondent's answers and other themes directly stated by the respondents themselves). Under some of the themes, the respondent's attitudes and perceptions of the themes are presented. The broad themes represent how the respondents gave meaning to cultural diversity and cultural diversity management (see Appendix 2 and 3). The findings of each theme or category will now be discussed. An analysis of the respondents' attitudes will also be discussed.

4.2 THEME ANALYSIS: GENERAL FINDINGS

Following is a discussion of the themes based on what the respondents interpreted them to mean.

4.2.1 Different Beliefs and Ideologies

All of the respondents (N = 20) felt that cultural diversity, related to the different beliefs and ideologies that people from different cultures have. People of different cultures follow different traditions, have different beliefs, different ways of life and different ways of thinking and reacting to different situations, thus making them culturally different.

It would seem from the responses of the respondents that most of them associated different beliefs and ideologies as to how they gave meaning to cultural diversity. Some of the responses were as follows :

“ Cultural diversity basically means, the presence of different cultures within an environment. In South Africa, with its vast majority of ethnic groups, it is evident that every one of these groups have their own culture, that is way of life “.

"Cultural diversity could be described as people of different race groups working together for a common purpose. These different race groups could also be from different religious backgrounds".

"Cultural diversity entails differences in people's behaviour due to religious, racial, political and social affiliations of groups of people".

The above definitions as stated by the respondents seem to be similar with Thomas' (1996:91) definition who defines diversity as involving a broad range of human uniqueness such as perception and attitudes, values, lifestyles work ethics, personal habits, etc.

4.2.2 Difference in Race, Gender and Age

A significant majority (N = 16) of the respondents felt that cultural diversity defined, related to the differences in race, gender and age. People of different race groups, different ages, different genders respond differently to the world around them, thereby making them culturally diverse. The remaining number (N = 4) did not associate race, gender, age to their definition of cultural diversity.

It would seem from the responses of the respondents that most of them associated difference in race, gender and sex to their definition of cultural diversity. Some of the respondents' responses were as follows:

" Cultural diversity is the differences between race groups, gender and religion. People who come from different race groups, gender and religion also have different beliefs and ideologies".

"Cultural diversity entails people of different cultures and race groups, either Whites, Indians, Blacks or Coloureds".

"The differences in the cultures of the people that you work with. Difference in race

and language groups”.

Nankervis, et al (1996:138), concur by defining diversity to mean the variety of race, gender, age and cultural differences existing amongst employees in the workplace.

4.2.3 Tolerance and Acceptance

More than half (N = 12) of the respondents felt that one of the main reasons why there was a need to know about diversity management in the workplace was so that they could learn to tolerate and accept each other despite the fact that different people come from different race groups, different genders and cultures. Many respondents also felt that “tolerance” and “acceptance” were reasons why their organisations would benefit from diversity management. The remaining number of respondents (N = 8) did not feel that the factors “tolerance” and “acceptance” were reasons why their organisations would benefit from diversity management.

However, most of the respondents linked the themes “tolerance” and “acceptance” as to why they felt there was a need to know about cultural diversity in the workplace. Some of the responses were as follows:

“People from different race groups should understand the cultural differences between each other. Tolerance, acceptance and honesty will prevail in the long term”.

“Times have changed and management acknowledges and accepts these changes, but the rest of the staff should learn to accept this and feel comfortable. However some of the staff refuse to accept changes”.

“Only by understanding that people of different race groups will have different cultures and different lifestyles, will we be able to converse with and understand these employees. This will generate tolerance and acceptance on both sides”.

4.2.4 Respect and Coexistence

More than half (N = 12) of the respondents felt that their organisation would benefit from diversity management because they will be better able to respect and learn to work with people from diverse backgrounds whether it involves different race, gender or culture. The remaining number of respondents (N = 8) did not feel that the factors “respect” and “coexistence” were benefits of diversity management.

However, most of the respondents linked the themes “respect” and “coexistence” to the benefits of diversity management. One response was as follows:

“There would be a better understanding between people of different cultures. A better understanding of the different lifestyles and what they believe in. Communication will improve and people will get along much better”.

4.2.5 Understanding

The theme “understanding” was expressed strongly by the respondents, needing to know about diversity and why their organisations will benefit from diversity management. A significant majority of the respondents (N = 14) felt that understanding played an important role in reducing the resolution of conflict among people of different race groups and gender. The respondents felt that one of the reasons why there was a need to know about diversity in the workplace was so that they could better understand each other, understand how diverse people think and act and, thereby, reduce conflict that usually arises out of a lack of understanding of people of diverse groups and cultures.

The remaining number of respondents (N = 6) did not feel that the factor “understanding” was one of the benefits of diversity management. However, most of the respondents linked the theme understanding to the benefits of diversity management and why they felt there was a need to know about cultural diversity and cultural diversity management. Some of the responses were as follows:

"Good teamwork is dependent upon members within the team accepting that cultures and affiliations are different. The workplace must recognise that people's behavioural patterns are a function of people's backgrounds, that is race, religion, ethnic identity. Furthermore, understanding cultural diversity helps in speedy conflict resolution".

"Management of the company will better understand the staff dynamics, mainly in areas where cultural and religious beliefs play a role in people's motivation".

"I think that understanding people who are different from us in terms of race and gender forms a very important aspect of cultural diversity. However I think that we are still very way off in terms of understanding people who are different to us".

While there is no documented literature to argue that factors such as tolerance and acceptance, respect and coexistence and understanding are positively related to diversity management, I believe that these factors are likely to improve in companies that have embarked on diversity management programmes.

4.2.6 Increase in Productivity and Quality of Life

A significant majority of the respondents (N = 17) felt that one of the benefits of diversity management was an increase in productivity. They also indicated that staff would be happier and more productive in a workplace that was sensitive to their cultural backgrounds. This in turn would lead to an increase in the quality of working life experienced by people from diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, through the proper management of cultural diversity, there would be better alignment of staff to company goals. If staff understand the goals of the company, then this leads to an increase in productivity.

The remaining number of respondents (N = 3) did not feel that productivity levels and quality of work life of employees increase as a result of diversity management.

However, most of the respondents linked increases in productivity and quality of

working life to the benefits of diversity management. Some of the responses were as follows:

"There will be better alignment of staff to company goals. People will be happier and more productive in the workplace when they detect that the company is sensitised to their cultural backgrounds".

"Almost every organisation strives towards the best in production. I feel that diversity management positively influences production. This is an excellent intrinsic motivator towards better production".

Similarly, Thomas (1996:11) states that one of the reasons organisations should embark on diversity management is to promote greater productivity and this is directly related to employee satisfaction.

4.2.7 Communication

More than half of the respondents (N = 12) did not feel that communication levels increased as a result of diversity management.

However, the remaining number of respondents (N = 8) felt that one of the benefits of diversity management was that it would lead to better communication between people of different race, gender and religion. According to the respondents if staff and management understood the dynamics behind the thoughts and ways of behaviour of diverse people, then this would lead to increased communication between diverse people. In addition, the respondents also indicated that there was a fundamental need to know about diversity in the workplace, because diverse people have different behavioural patterns and these behavioural patterns were a function of their different race, religion, sex and ethnic identity.

Thus, whilst most of respondents did not feel that communication levels increased as a result of diversity management, a significant number of respondents linked the theme

communication as being one of the benefits of diversity management. Some of the responses were as follows:

"Certainly, one of the benefits of diversity management would be better communication between people of different race and cultural groups. If staff and management can understand the dynamics behind the thoughts and ways of behaviour of diverse people, then this will increase communication between diverse people".

"I think that through understanding that different people have different perspectives at looking at things, one would be able to understand each other's hopes, fears, objectives, strengths and weaknesses. This will therefore lead to increase in communication between people of different race groups".

4.2.8 Language Barriers

More than half of the respondents (N = 13) did not feel that language barriers were a frustrating experience associated with diversity management. These respondents did not want to share their frustrating experiences with the interviewer. However, a small number of respondents (N = 7) said that language barriers was one of the most frustrating experiences associated with diversity management. Some respondents indicated that understanding the Zulu language proved to be very difficult.

Furthermore, the Black employees who were not very fluent in the English language, also showed difficulty in understanding this medium of language, when instructed by their supervisors. Respondents indicated feelings of frustration, helplessness and anger in trying to deal with the language problem and many of them felt that this impacted on productivity in a negative way.

Thus, whilst most of the respondents did not associate language barriers as a frustrating experience of diversity management, a significant number of respondents linked the theme language barriers with the frustrating experiences associated with diversity management. Some of the responses were as follows:

"I think understanding the language of Black people is often very difficult. I do not want to know what they are talking about. But sometimes, they will often speak in Zulu whilst in my presence, and I wouldn't know whether they are speaking about me or not. I find this disturbing, and this makes me dislike them".

"I do not think that we should expect black people who most frequently speak in their mother tongue, to speak fluent English. Surely, if us English speaking people were asked to speak Zulu, we will not speak the language very fluently either. We need time to understand, to learn and to accept the change. This will not happen overnight. However, I believe that through diversity management, we will be able to accept these differences".

While a small number of small respondents indicated that language barriers were a frustrating experience associated with diversity, it is more than likely to be a contributing factor to conflict in companies. This is substantiated by Thomas (1993:48) who states that problems are likely to arise when differences in people generate into conflict, in this case language being the difference. Managers should be careful when dealing with issues such as language as it is a sensitive issue. I am inclined to agree with Price (1997:24) who argues that while the constitution recognises the importance of all languages, some languages tend to dominate, especially when English is used as the main medium of communication. When companies start to experience the above language problems, as indicated by some respondents, I believe that it could be a training need that is lacking which management would have to incorporate into their diversity management programme. Price (1993:48) suggests that the programme should include language sensitivity and guidelines for appropriate language.

4.2.9 New Talents and Ideas

A significant majority of the respondents (N = 15) felt that diverse people brought new talents and ideas into the organisation. These employees were also likely to develop new ways of solving certain company issues. Therefore, according to the respondents, an organisation that is diverse would inevitably increase the

effectiveness of the way the organisation is run. Diverse employees are able to afford fresh perspectives on organisational issues and this can, in turn, increase the productivity of the company. Thus, whilst most of respondents linked the theme new talents and ideas as being one of the ways their organisation would benefit from diversity management, a small number of respondents did not feel that diverse people bring new talents and ideas into the organisation. Some of the responses were as follows:

"People of different race groups bring in different ideas and ways of thinking. They offer new blood to the organisation. This could in turn improve organisational effectiveness and productivity".

"People of colour offer new insight in terms of problem solving, therefore this will increase organisational effectiveness".

"Our customer base is made up of people of all race groups and cultures. It seems then, only logical to have employees of different race groups to liaise with these customers. Employees and customers of similar colour often communicate better with each other".

Thomas (1996:11) agrees by stating one of the reasons organisations should embark on diversity management include tapping into a range of skills that the organisation never had before. Furthermore, diverse teams are likely to afford fresh and new perspectives when dealing with existing markets.

4.2.10 Affirmative Action

More than half of the respondents (N = 11) indicated that affirmative action was one of the programmes that their organisation had introduced to help those who had been previously disadvantaged. However, there was a mixture of responses as to whether the respondents viewed affirmative action as being positive or negative. A few respondents (N = 4) indicated that affirmative action was just used by the organisation

as “window dressing”. In other words, it is only done to comply with legislation and it does not always result in finding the right person for the job.

A small number of respondents (N = 4) felt that while affirmative action was indeed used by the company to help those who had been previously disadvantaged, there was still a very small number of Blacks in management and supervisory positions. The remainder of the respondents (N = 3) were uncertain about the true intentions behind affirmative action, because they felt that affirmative action had not yet filtered through the entire organisation and that there were still very few Blacks in management positions. They argued that there were changes taking place, but at a very slow pace.

Deducing from the respondent’s answers, it would seem that affirmative action is one of many plans to redress the imbalances of the past and to accommodate those disadvantaged employees.

4.2.11 Identification of Needs and Wants

A significant majority of the respondents (N = 15) felt that identifying with “needs and wants” of diverse people was part of what diversity management entailed. Diverse people have different ages, different cultures, different religions and they belong to different race groups. Therefore, they are likely to have different needs and wants in the workplace. Therefore part of the cultural diversity management would be to identify with these different “needs and wants” of diverse people.

The remaining number of respondents (N = 5) did not feel that identifying with “needs and wants” of diverse people is part of what diversity management entails.

Therefore, whilst most of the respondents linked the theme identification of “needs” and “wants” with what they understood cultural diversity management to mean, a small number of respondents did not feel that diversity management entailed identifying with the needs and wants of diverse people. Some of the respondent’s answers were as follows:

"It seems to me that part of what diversity management entails is identifying the needs and wants of a diverse workforce. These needs and wants could entail issues such as understanding that people of colour have not been afforded equal opportunities in the workplace. Hopefully, through the process of diversity management issues such as these can be addressed".

"Indians, Blacks and Coloureds have not been afforded equal and fair opportunities in the workplace. Programmes through diversity management need to be structured in such a way that issues like these are taken into consideration. It is hoped that diversity management will involve such programmes".

I felt that most of the respondents were vague and unclear about the kinds of needs and wants they wanted the company to identify. Even after much probing, issues such as understanding and recognising that Black people had been previously disadvantaged, was what they associated the identification of needs and wants with. However, whilst the respondents were unclear about the kinds of needs and wants that needed to be addressed, Meyer (1999:24), states that identifying the needs and wants of diverse people especially during the training phase is crucial as needs need to be identified, so that a proper diversity programme can be structured to meet the needs of the employees and the organisation. She further argues that interest groups such as unions and women forums can provide valuable information with regards to identifying diversity needs.

4.2.12 Team Building

A significant majority of the respondents (N = 16) did not state that team building was one of the ways their organisations would benefit from diversity management. However, a small number of respondents (N = 4) felt that good teamwork was dependent upon members within the team accepting that different people have different cultures and affiliations. These respondents felt that it was essential and beneficial that teams comprised of different race groups, age group, sex and cultural groups, as this brought in new ideas and talents and new ways of thinking. Thus, by

having mixed teams, these employees would learn to tolerate and understand each other's differences in order for teamwork to be successful.

Furthermore, the respondents indicated that their company often sent teams away on trips to the Drakensberg (which was called the Fiasto Team Building Course). Away on these trips, employees would get to know more about each other and learn to interact socially with each other despite differences in skin colour, age and cultural background. These respondents indicated that this was a wonderful way of managing cultural diversity, as their acceptance and understanding of the different cultures and race groups had improved tremendously.

Thus, whilst most of the respondents did not feel that team building was one of the ways their organisations would benefit from diversity management, a small number of respondents linked the theme team building as one of the benefits of diversity management. It was hoped that a larger number of respondents would have associated team building with diversity management, as I feel that team building forms an important aspect of diversity management. This is supported by Feldman (1996:64) who argues that increasing contact between people who are "different" is likely to bring about a reduction in stereotyping. Team building is usually done in the form of organising outings and camping where people have to treat each other equally and not as supervisors and subordinates.

Individuals vs Collectivism

4.2.13 Education and Training

More than half of the respondents (N = 11) indicated that affirmative action was one of the programmes used to help those who had been previously disadvantaged. The remaining number of respondents (N = 9) named and discussed other programmes that were introduced in their organisation to help educate and train those employees who had been previously disadvantaged.

Respondents (N = 9) said that Adult Based Education was one of the programmes introduced by their organisation to help those who had been previously disadvantaged.

These included literacy programmes especially for the Black and Indian women. Some of these respondents (N = 3) also indicated that their organisation established a training school called "Mini-Tech", which was a technical training school (where employees would learn more about a specific trade, for example, mechanics and electricity, to help train those people who were underprivileged and disadvantaged).

Other respondents (N = 3) indicated their organisation offered scholarship programmes for students both at school and at university. This scholarship programme was mainly based on affirmative action, as it was designed to cater for those students who were underprivileged and disadvantaged in the past. Thus, whilst affirmative action was one of the most popular programmes used to help those who have been previously disadvantaged, other programmes such as Adult Based Education, establishment of training schools and scholarships were also used by organisations.

4.2.14 Harmonious Relations

More than half of the respondents (N = 12) did not feel that harmonious relations occurred between employees as a result of diversity management. However, a small number of respondents (N = 8) felt that one of the ways their organisation would benefit from diversity management was by creating harmonious relations between employees. Due to the fact that most organisations, today, and in the future, are made up of significantly large numbers of diverse people in both race and gender, proper diversity management is sure to lead to diverse employees comfortably relating to one another. The respondents considered harmonious relations between employee and employer to be very important as it was one of the prime factors leading to increases in productivity.

Thus, whilst most of the respondents did not feel that harmonious relations occur in the workplace as a result of diversity management, a significant number of respondents perceived harmonious relations as one of the ways their organisations would benefit from diversity management. Some of the responses were as follows:

"Diversity management is sure to increase harmonious relations in the workplace. Through the process of diversity management issues such as understanding, acceptance and tolerance will be addressed and this will therefore lead to working relationships between people of colour in the workplace".

"I feel that diversity management and harmonious relations go hand in hand. Through the process of diversity management, relationships between employees of different race groups will improve. Presently there is some tension that exists between employees of different race groups. Through diversity management, it is hoped that issues such as acceptance, tolerance and understanding of people different to ourselves in terms of race and culture can be addressed".

4.2.15 Fairness and Equality

A significant majority of the respondents (N = 15) felt that cultural diversity management was the ways in which management balanced the treatment of employees so that they could be free and productive and liable for promotions despite their different race groups, ethnic groups and gender. The respondents felt that diversity management entailed managers and supervisors creating a working environment that was equal and fair to all employees despite their physical differences. The remaining number of respondents (N = 5) did not feel that cultural diversity management was about fairness and equality. Thus, most of the respondents linked the theme fairness and equality with what they understood the term cultural diversity management to mean. Some of the responses were as follows:

"Certainly, one aspect of diversity management should be about fairness and equality. Every employee in the company, regardless of race, gender and culture should be given free and equal access to all opportunities in the workplace. These could include anything from, promotions to filling vacant posts to relocation".

"Diversity management should entail giving all employees the opportunity to promotions, education and training regardless of their race or cultural group".

"Part of diversity management should be about fairness and equality. By this I mean all employees being treated fairly and being allowed equal opportunities in the workplace".

It is evident from the high majority of respondents linking fairness and equality with diversity management, that they perceive fairness and equality to mean affirmative action and equal employment opportunities. It is as a result of these programmes that employees will be treated fairly and equally.

4.2.16 Change and Resistance to Change

A significant majority of the respondents (N = 16) did not feel that "change and resistance to change" were reasons resulting in why management should be familiar with diversity and diversity management. However, a small number of respondents (N = 4) felt that "change" formed an important element as to why management and employees should be familiar with diversity and diversity management. Since management positions are still occupied by many White employees, they needed to accept that change is about to happen (that is management positions are now being occupied by Blacks) and this needs to be urgently addressed, in order for harmonious relations to exist in the workplace.

Thus, whilst most of the respondents did not feel that "change and resistance to change" were important elements of diversity and diversity management, a small number of respondents linked the theme "change" and "resistance to change" as to why they felt there was a need to know about diversity in the workplace.

It was interesting to see that only a small number of respondents linked diversity management to change and resistance to change, when Norris (1996:36) states that embarking on a diversity initiative will not only require a change in attitudes and feelings, but more importantly a change at all levels of the organisation.

4.3 RESULTS - RESPONSES TO SCALED QUESTIONS (SEE APPENDIX 4)

Many of the interview questions required "yes" and "no" answers. Respondents could also have been unsure of the answers. Therefore, questions that required "yes" and "no" answers were tabulated according to a key.

All of the respondents (N = 20) felt that there is a need to know about diversity in the workplace and that their organisation will benefit from diversity management. All of the respondents (N=20) indicated that their organisation had introduced programmes to help those who had been previously disadvantaged. The programmes ranged from Affirmative Action to Adult Based Education Programmes and Scholarship Programmes. Most of the respondents (N = 17) indicated that they were comfortable working with people from cultural backgrounds other than their own.

Five of the respondents indicated they were **very comfortable** working with people from cultural backgrounds other than their own, while twelve of the respondents indicated that they were **comfortable** working with people from different cultural backgrounds than their own. Only one of the respondent indicated that he was **uncomfortable** working with people from different cultural backgrounds other than his own. Two of the respondents indicated that they were **unsure** about how they felt working with people from cultural backgrounds other than their own. Five of the respondents indicated that they had exciting experiences associated with diversity management in their organisation, while the other fifteen respondents indicated that they did not have exciting experiences associated with diversity management. Fifteen respondents indicated that they had frustrating experiences associated with diversity management, while the other five respondents indicated that they did not have frustrating experiences associated with diversity management.

From the above results we can therefore deduce that most of the respondents have displayed positive attitudes towards people of diverse backgrounds. This in turn could make diverse employees feel more acceptable and comfortable in the company, thereby increasing the effectiveness of diversity programmes and a diverse workforce

as a whole.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the main findings of the study. The researcher analysed the data using the methods of content analysis and divided the data (respondents' answers into themes). The findings are summarised as follows:-

- Many of the respondents displayed understanding and knowledge about the meaning of the terms "cultural diversity and cultural diversity management".
- Many of the respondents indicated that their organisations would benefit from diversity management as levels of tolerance and acceptance increase and they begin to understand and respect people from diverse cultures. Consequently, there are increases in productivity levels and quality of working life of many diverse employees.
- Most of the respondents displayed positive attitudes and felt comfortable working with people from different cultural backgrounds other than their own.
- Many of the companies managed cultural diversity through programmes of affirmative action, equal employment opportunities and Adult Based Education Programmes. In the next chapter (chapter five), a discussion of the results will be presented.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the chapter is to discuss the findings as presented in Chapter Four.

The salient findings will be discussed under the following headings:-

- Meaning of cultural diversity (as interpreted by the respondents).
- Meaning of cultural diversity management (as interpreted by the respondents).
- Benefits of cultural diversity management.
- Cultural diversity programmes currently being embarked on in organisations.
- Experiences associated with cultural diversity management in organisations.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.2.1 Meaning of Cultural Diversity (as Perceived by the Respondents)

The various definitions documented by most of the authors (Thomas, 1996; Nankervis et al 1996; Carell et al, 1997 and Kossek and Lobel, 1996) on cultural diversity encompass cultural diversity to mean: "the differences in race, gender, age, cultural background, attitude and marital status".

Most of the respondents defined cultural diversity to be the different beliefs and ideologies that different people brought with them into the organisation. Respondents also indicated that cultural diversity meant the differences in race, gender, age and culture. People who belong to different race, gender, age and cultural groups will have different beliefs and ideologies. Therefore different beliefs and ideologies can be associated with the meaning of cultural diversity. Respondents did indicate some level of understanding to the term cultural diversity.

5.2.2 Meaning of Cultural Diversity Management (as Perceived by the Respondents)

The definition of cultural diversity management documented by authors Nankervis et al (1996) and Thomas, (1996) encompassed issues such as focussing on the needs of the employee's work life, valuing differences that diverse employees bring with them to the organisation, issues related to recruitment, that was affirmative action and equal employment opportunities. Furthermore, the process of managing cultural diversity also included individual and interpersonal interventions and was also linked to training and development. An environment needs to be created that enables all employees to reach their full potential while simultaneously pursuing the company's goals.

Thus, managing diversity should encompass the process of management being more tolerant and more understanding of people of different cultures and helping diverse employees in organisations to respect each other to coexist in harmony. Another important factor that related to diversity management was management being able to identify with diverse employee's needs and wants, so that people were given opportunities to advance in the organisation irrespective of their cultural background, race or gender.

Respondents defined cultural diversity management differently. Some respondents defined cultural diversity management as "understanding and identifying with the needs and wants of cultural diverse people". Other respondents understood cultural diversity management to mean tolerating and accepting the various race and gender differences that people brought with them to the organisation. In addition, some respondents indicated that it was about complying with legislation such as affirmative action and equal employment opportunities and in so doing this would create fairness and equality in the workplace and employees would be free and productive despite their differing race, gender and cultural backgrounds.

5.2.3 Benefits of Cultural Diversity Management

Respondents argued that organisations embark on diversity management for various reasons. Some of these reasons included tapping into a range of skills and talents which was previously absent in the organisation; by having employees who possess unique skills and talents, this is sure to lead to enhanced creativity and problem solving. Other benefits of diversity management as summarised by Nankervis et al (1996:142) include factors such as quality imperative, imperative for change, information technology imperative, communication imperative, the learning organisation and customer satisfaction. Other benefits, according to the respondents, include attracting and retaining the best talent, tapping into a range of skills which the organisation never had before, promoting greater productivity as a result of employee satisfaction, developing problem solving skills to adapt to diverse customers and markets and creating improved relations and communication between labour and management. These responses are discussed in detail below:

- *Increase in Productivity and Quality of Work Life*

Respondents indicated that if management were more sensitive to employee's cultural backgrounds and differences and if management was able to identify and understand that people from different cultures and race groups, required different needs, especially at the workplace this could lead to an increase in productivity and the quality of employee's work lives. According to the respondents if employees' needs are understood, it leads to job satisfaction. If employees were satisfied with their jobs and working conditions, then productivity levels would increase. One respondent indicated that "differences of diverse people needed to be understood and appreciated for them to perform at their optimum levels."

- *Increase in Communication*

Respondents stated that through diversity management, came a "definite increase in communication between diverse employees and management". By simply understanding that different cultures had differing needs and wants, ways of behaviour and thinking patterns, communication between different cultures, different race groups

and gender groups would increase. According to the respondents, through the understanding and acceptance of each other's differences, better communication would arise amongst employees.

- *The Retention of New Talents and Ideas*

Respondents stated that by having people of different race groups, gender, cultures, marital status and religion influenced different ways of thinking and responding to situations. These individuals brought with them new talents and ideas which could be beneficial to the organisation. Employees with new talents and ideas have different ways of thinking and ideas of solving organisational problems. These employees could be highly skilled in certain fields of the organisation and thus they could become valuable assets to the organisation by increasing productivity. One respondent indicated that by "having employees with new and differing talents, they are able to afford fresh perspectives to certain organisational issues and execute new plans and ideas". This according to the respondent "can make South African companies more "globally competitive".

- *Harmonious Relations in the Workplace*

Respondents felt that harmonious relations in the workplace was the "ultimate benefit" of diversity management. Through understanding employee differences in terms of cultural background, race and gender, factors such as "tolerance and acceptance" is likely to manifest for these different employees. Once employees were able to tolerate and accept each other, employees were able to respect each other and coexist with each other in harmony in the workplace. Thus, according to one respondent "harmonious relations in the workplace is crucial for job satisfaction and therefore, results in an increase in productivity."

It is along similar lines that authors (Thomas, 1996; Wheeler and Jennings, 1994; Thomas and Ely, 1996 and Kemp, 1997) argue that organisations that are made up of diverse teams are able to afford fresh perspectives to existing markets. They are also able to identify with the market at a greater level due to the fact that markets are made up of diverse customers. Diverse teams would also be able to identify with differing customer needs. Furthermore, diverse people are said to bring "new blood" into the

organisation and this not only increases organisational effectiveness by improving the profitability of the organisation but also improves creativity and individual growth of employees which in turn creates improved relations and communication between management and labour (Thomas, 1996:12).

5.2.4 Organisations Attempts at Managing Cultural Diversity

Organisations were reported to have responded to diversity and diversity management in different ways. Some of these ways included affirmative action, assimilation, equal employment opportunities and Adult Based Education. However, according to Carell et al (1997:55), complying with equal employment opportunity regulations and affirmative action is not enough, as the organisation must be able to realise the benefits of having a diverse workforce and tapping into the potential of that diverse workforce.

Affirmative action can be described as a short term strategy that is used to correct the imbalances in the workplace. Managing diversity, on the other hand, is a long term process which demands top management's identification and commitment and to set in motion mechanisms that will be able to access the potential of all diverse employees (Carell et al, 1997:53). Thomas (1996:10) argues that if affirmative action is introduced in isolation from organisational environments, where management believe that a few Black or female faces will make the organisation look politically correct, then this is most likely to backfire resulting in high levels of turnover and decreases in productivity. Following is a discussion on how the companies sampled chose to manage cultural diversity.

- *Affirmative Action*

Many respondents stated that affirmative action was one of the main approaches, their company had chosen to manage cultural diversity.

The attitudes displayed by some of the respondents towards affirmative action was negative. Respondents felt that affirmative action was introduced merely as "window dressing" and only done to comply with legislation. One respondent commented by

saying that once he was recruited into the organisation, he felt alienated from his co-workers and did not feel like he was part of the organisation.

Other respondents felt that affirmative action was slow in being implemented in their organisations and that employees in their organisations especially at management levels did not reflect the demographics of the country. Respondents indicated that: "far too many males still occupied management positions and that Blacks were still confined to the bottom of the hierarchy doing blue collar work." Respondents stated that: "affirmative action did not infiltrate all levels and departments in their organisation." Respondents stated that: "affirmative action is being confined to only management levels."

One respondent mentioned that while affirmative action and equal employment opportunities have their advantages due to the fact that only recently, women were introduced into the production in their organisations, nothing was being done to make women feel more comfortable and acceptable in the production environment which is dominated by males. According to one respondent: one woman who entered the production environment closely under his supervision and was subjected to certain forms of sexual harassment." The respondents indicated that while organisations do have policies against sexually harassing women in the workplace, top management still remains "blasé" about these issues. This, according to the respondent, results in poor performance by certain employees and high levels of absenteeism.

There could be many reasons why these respondents view affirmative action in a negative light. Since affirmative action and employment equity are described not only by Norris (1996) but also by Martins (2000) as part of a change process, employees need to be aware of this change. Part of the change process requires the company to address the implicit trust gap between management and employees. The existing employees in the company need to be reassured that their positions in the company will not necessarily be threatened as a result of affirmative action and employment equity. Employees need to be trained and educated in intercultural understanding (Martins, 2000:33). I feel that if employees are trained and aware of the change, they are more likely to be accepting of the change process and view it in a positive light.

- *Adult Based Education Programmes*

Some of the respondents stated that their companies introduced Adult Based Education Programmes to help further the education of those employees who were previously disadvantaged. These programmes are designed especially for Black and Indian women most of whom had not completed their schooling careers. According to the respondents these programmes “are necessary as many of these women are illiterate and have difficulty in speaking and writing English”. Other respondents stated that Adult Based Education Programmes are necessary and a vital part of an organisation’s aim to help those who have been previously disadvantaged. It also forms part of a diversity management programme as it helps to further the education levels of these employees and helps reduce the salary and education gap between those employees who are educated and uneducated.

- *Field Trips Away from the Working Environment*

Respondents from one company stated that part of their company’s programme of dealing with diversity and diversity management was organising trips away (for example to the Drakensberg) for certain team members of groups of employees. According to the respondents, the aim behind these trips was to help people of different races and cultures to interact with each other on a social level. After the trip each member was compelled to give written feedback about the trip and what he or she had learnt from it.

Those respondents who had been on the field trips stated that it was an excellent way of breaking the ice between new and especially diverse employees. They claimed that the levels of understanding of each other had increased as they began to learn how others viewed the world and the things around them. The respondents stated that they were able to identify with cultures that were different to their own and their levels of tolerance and acceptance had greatly increased. The respondents stated that these trips away were a stepping stone to understanding and accepting employee’s differences.

I am inclined to agree with the respondents as I also feel that field trips away from the working environment is a very good way of getting diverse employees to interact with

each other. When people are different from each other because of their race, gender or culture, there are likely to be stereotypes and prejudices, some negative and positive. If employees are given the opportunity to interact with each other on a social level, they are more likely to be accepting and understanding of each other's differences as they learn more about each other. This could result in a positive attitude change between people who are different from each other. However, there could be many reasons why other companies do not embark on field trips. One reason could be that it involves large amounts of money which many companies do not have. Furthermore, these companies do not really see the benefits of undertaking such an exercise and therefore they choose not to invest time and money in it.

From the sample of middle managers interviewed, it seems that some companies in the Greater Durban Area still view cultural diversity management to be affirmative action and equal employment opportunities. As documented by many authors, Carell et al (1997) and Thomas (1996), diversity management entails far more than just complying with legislation. Recruiting people of colour into the company only because it is the "politically correct" thing to do is not what diversity management is about.

Rather it should be seen as part of a change process as Norris (1996), Kotter (1995, 1996) and Martins (2000) have so implicitly stressed. Change is required at all levels of the company, the way the company recruits employees, the training of the managers to manage such change and adapting to working with a multicultural workforce.

5.2.5 Experiences Associated with Diversity Management

This theme was categorised into two factors, frustrating experiences associated with diversity management and exciting experiences associated with diversity management.

A small number of respondents (N = 7) stated that one of the most frustrating experiences associated with diversity management was the language barrier. Respondents reported feelings of "frustration", "anger" and "helplessness". Furthermore, the respondents stated that the inability of Black employees to

understand the English language and the inability of White and Indian employees to understand the Zulu language made communication of vital issues such as company goals difficult to communicate and understand, thus lending itself to decreases in productivity. The inability to understand employees through language also resulted in conflict arising between certain race groups during work time, thus hampering with work schedules, according to some respondents. According to Price (1997:21) both the public and the private sector must bear in mind that the new constitutional labour standards place heavy obligations on employers to begin cultivating a reasonable level of English skill in the work environment, so that conflict and understanding are kept at a minimum, through clear communication.

For example, workplace meetings, where crucial employment policy decisions are made, will function more effectively if all employees and employers are able to communicate effectively through similar levels of language ability.

Furthermore, according to Price (1997:22), a reasonable level of language proficiency will be required for all employees to understand employment policies such as terms and conditions of employment which are all likely to be written in English.

Thus, there are many benefits for organisations to make sure that all employees are well versed in the English language. According to respondents in the Manufacturing sector, their companies need to start implementing proper language development programmes, as language barriers are "infiltrating" all aspects of the job.

While there were frustrating experiences associated with diversity management expressed by majority of the respondents, a small number of respondents from one company mentioned exciting experiences associated with diversity management. These respondents made mention of how "interesting" it was to learn about the ways and cultures of other employees. Furthermore, the "new ideas and ways of thinking" expressed by diverse employees proved to be very rewarding experiences especially where team work was involved. In addition respondents also stated that by accepting other cultures and understanding their perceptions and experiences helped in "speedy conflict resolution".

5.3 CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that all middle managers possess some knowledge in terms of understanding the concepts "cultural diversity and cultural diversity management". All of the respondents indicated that there was a fundamental need to know more about cultural diversity in the workplace and once again all of the respondents indicated that their organisation would definitely benefit from diversity management.

Furthermore, majority of the respondents indicated that they were comfortable working with employees that were different in terms of race and cultural backgrounds. In addition, almost all employees seemed to be aware of the programmes their organisations had introduced to help those who were previously disadvantaged, and how they thought their organisation was managing cultural diversity.

Therefore, it can be deduced from the above findings that the respondents were comfortable interacting with people from diverse groups and they displayed understanding of cultural diversity and cultural diversity management. They also displayed positive attitudes towards creating and implementing ways on how to manage a diverse workforce. Thus, this could impact positively on employer, employee relations and help to create feelings of mutual acceptance between employer and employee.

It was also found that factors such as understanding, acceptance and tolerance were perceived to be vital ingredients for creating harmonious relations amongst diverse people in the workplace. These factors were also essential, according to the respondents, in helping people of different race, gender and cultures feel accepted and part of the organisation as a whole.

Whilst many of the respondents displayed knowledge regarding the concepts cultural diversity and cultural diversity management, the programmes implemented by their organisations to manage cultural diversity merely "touch the surface" of what the process of diversity management really entails.

It can be inferred from the remarks made by the respondents that their organisations have introduced affirmative action and equal employment opportunities to comply with legislation and they have not really constructed any diversity programmes that will retain the talents and diverse employees within the company. Authors Carell et al (1997), Thomas (1996) and Smith and Braxton (1993) have remarked that if affirmative action and equal employment opportunities are introduced in isolation to organisational environments, then the long term benefits of diversity management are not likely to be seen.

The managing of a diverse workforce entails two independent principles, valuing differences between people and managing people in such a way that their differences are taken into account. A process of change is required at all levels of the organisation, that is the cultural, structural, technological, people and physical setting levels. Therefore, managers would have to work very hard and adopt the various strategies discussed (in the literature review) in order to effectively manage a diverse workforce and yield its benefits.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore the attitudes of middle managers towards cultural diversity and cultural diversity management in the greater Durban area. In this, the concluding chapter, the limitations of the research are discussed and recommendations made for future research. A summary of the main findings of the study are also highlighted.

6.2 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The limitations of this study encompass both the skills of the researcher as well as the chosen method or research that is qualitative methodology. Due to the fact that the researcher is an inexperienced student, long and tedious procedures were used and sometimes they could have been distorted using more shorter methods. Similarly, while the researcher had not perfected the art of interviewing, the techniques used during the interview process may not have been professional resulting in researcher effects, inaccurate noting of responses and coding errors.

6.2.1 Qualitative Methodology

As stated previously in Chapter Four, qualitative research can be very useful and attractive for many reasons. However, qualitative research is not without its limitations and problems. One of the most serious difficulties that qualitative researchers experience is that the methods of analysis are not well formulated. Thus, the researcher is often faced with many uncertainties as there are very few guidelines as compared to quantitative research. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from qualitative research are often unreliable or invalid.

6.2.2 Sampling

This proved to one of the greatest limitations of the study. The selection of companies chosen to research was carried through a convenience sampling technique.

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique and thus does not yield a high degree of generalizability. However, whilst external validity of the findings may have been low, the internal validity in the sampled companies remains high. Similarly the "randomness" of the sample (the respondents themselves) was arrived at through the listing of all middle managers from the company. Thus, no particular random selection techniques were used and this resulting once again in a non-probability sampling technique.

6.3 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

It was found that while managers displayed knowledge about the issues and concepts surrounding cultural diversity and cultural diversity management, many of the companies manage diversity by complying with legislation such as equal opportunities and affirmative action.

It has been clearly documented by many authors (Thomas, 1996 Carell et al, 1997 and Smith and Braxton, 1993) that if South African organisations want to succeed, they must recognise the emergence of a diversified workforce, by not just complying with legislation, but by creating ways in which to harness the various ideas, talents and views of a diversified workforce.

The findings of the study also indicate that factors such as acceptance, tolerance and understanding of different race, gender and cultural groups impact positively on the working lives of diverse employees. It has been established that these factors contribute to increase in productivity and decreases in turnover and absenteeism. These factors are also crucial in aiding diverse employees feel more accepted and wanted in the workplace.

6.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

In order for South African organisations to meet the challenges of the 21st century, they need to make use of the skills and talents of their brightest employees. Furthermore, if organisations want to remain globally competitive, the workforce must be willing and able to provide the skills necessary to meet these challenges. The workforce also needs to be skilfully trained to keep abreast with the changes in technology.

Therefore, the role of manager and supervisors becomes crucial at this point, as they need to direct and motivate the workplace and at the same time, they need to understand both the employee's and the organisation's needs and see that both are met.

If organisations fail to realise that the management of diversity entails the need to value the differences between people and that these differences need to be taken into account when managing diversity, then any diversity initiative taken by organisations will fall short of fulfilling its rich promise.

6.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study aimed at exploring the attitudes of middle managers towards diversity management in the workplace. Due to the fact that the sample size was small, the research could be limited to a certain extent, in that it did not incorporate a wider sample of diverse employees such as women and more Black employees. Thus, a bigger sample size containing a more diverse sample will prove to be more meaningful. In addition, a qualitative approach combined with a quantitative approach could also add more meaning to the study.

Lastly, the research was confined to only three sectors of the market namely: Fuel, Manufacturing and Food. Future research should focus itself to a larger range of settings so that findings could be generalised to a greater extent.

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APPENDIX 1

SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What do you understand by the term cultural diversity?
- What do you understand by the term cultural diversity management ?
- Do you feel there is a need to know about cultural diversity in the workplace ?
- Do you feel that your organisation will benefit from cultural diversity management?
- Are there any programmes that your organisation has introduced to help those who have been previously disadvantaged?
- How do you feel about working with people from different cultural backgrounds other than your own?
- Do you have any exciting experiences associated with diversity management in your organisation?
- Do you have any frustrating experiences associated with diversity management in your organisation ?

APPENDIX 2

THEMES ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

(N = 20)

THEMES		TOTAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	Different Beliefs and Ideologies	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Differences in Race, Gender, Culture	16	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3	Tolerance and Acceptance	12	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓				✓			✓	✓
4	Respect and Coexistence	12	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓		✓		✓
5	Understanding	14	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6	Increase in Productivity and Quality of Life	17	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
7	Communication	8	✓		✓				✓		✓	✓		✓			✓					✓
8	Language Barriers	7	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓						✓				✓	✓
9	New Talents and Ideas	15	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Affirmative Action	11	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		

APPENDIX 2 (Cont...)

THEMES ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

(N = 20)

[illegible]

APPENDIX 3

THEORIES/BELIEFS ABOUT THE THEMES

(N = 20)

[illegible]

APPENDIX 4

RESPONSES TO SCALED QUESTIONS

(N = 20)

KEY

Y	Yes
N	No
U	Unsure
VC	Very Comfortable
C	Comfortable
VU	Very Uncomfortable

[illegible]

[illegible]