

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**The influence of workplace diversity on employee
performance: A case study of the University of KwaZulu-
Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus**

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2020

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Leading institutions view diversity as an all-inclusive strategy to enhance employee performance and improve an institution's reputation. This study allows institutions to see the influence that workplace diversity has on employee performance and therefore enables institutions to improve. This study aimed to show the relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance. The study first examines the role that diversity plays in the workplace. Secondly, it discusses the extent that workplace diversity affects employee performance. Thirdly, it creates an understanding of the effectiveness of diverse people working together. Fourthly, it discovers whether workplace diversity improves or hinders employee performance. The overall purpose of this study was to ascertain whether workplace diversity has a positive or negative influence on employee performance. Qualitative research was used to provide deeper insights. The data for this study was collected at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, amongst three Colleges on the Pietermaritzburg Campus, using personally administered questionnaires. The questionnaire was made up of mostly open-ended questions which made up the qualitative data, and a few closed questions which provided the demographics of the study. A sample size of 54 staff members was used. This sample was an equal selection amongst both academic and support staff members from all three Colleges. There was also an equal distribution of the factors in terms of the internal and external dimensions of the 'Four Layers of Diversity' model. The findings and results of the study are presented in the form of tables, column charts and pie charts. This study used content analysis to analyse the qualitative data that was collected. The themes of the study address the research objectives. The questions that respondents were required to answer in the questionnaire were related to each of the themes. The findings of the study are consistent with the literature. Based on the findings and analysis, it is clear that employees at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus have all had their different experiences with diversity in the workplace. The limitations of the study acknowledge that the researcher is aware of possible areas of weakness of the study and they have been taken into account. Recommendations are made based on the findings and results of the study. Areas for future research are discussed which can be undertaken. The study concludes by summarising the chapters in the study. This study will contribute to existing literature.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Workplace diversity can be defined as the variation of dissimilarities between individuals in a working environment (Dyson, 2017). Diversity includes how individuals perceive themselves, as well as how others identify them. When dealing with a working environment, diversity covers distinct differences between employees. Some characteristics employees can control, for example, religion, while other characteristics employees cannot control, for example, race.

The vision of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) is “to be the Premier University of African Scholarship” (UKZN, 2019, p. 1). Their mission is to be a “South African University of Choice” that has academic excellence and research innovation, is entrepreneurial, and is analytically involved with society and demographic representatives (UKZN, 2019, p. 1).

UKZN aims to create an organisational culture that is value-orientated and encourages everyone at UKZN to accomplish their institutional goals (UKZN, 2019). The values at UKZN are signified as R.E.A.C.H.T; these values guide the actions and performance of all UKZN students, staff and visitors (UKZN, 2019). R.E.A.C.H.T stands for “Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Client Orientation, Honesty, and Trust” (UKZN, 2019, p. 1).

UKZN has a very diverse working environment which aims at redressing past disadvantages, inequalities and differences (UKZN, 2019). A diverse working environment affects employee performance in an organisation. Therefore this study aimed to show the relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance. UKZN’s Pietermaritzburg Campus was used as a case study. This study aimed to determine whether workplace diversity has a positive or negative influence on employee performance.

This chapter gives an overview of the study. It provides the background of the study and research problem, as well as the research questions and research objectives. This chapter also discusses the justification, contribution, and limitations of the study. Lastly, the outline of the study is provided by introducing each chapter.

1.2. Background of the study

On the 1st of January 2004, a merger occurred which resulted in the formation of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The merger combined the rich histories of both the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal (UKZN, 2017).

In the 1960s, the University of Durban-Westville (UDW) was founded for the Indian population on Salisbury Island in Durban Bay. However, the number of students were still very low due to the Congress Alliances' policy of the former apartheid structures, which excluded many. In the 1980s, the policy collapsed due to an approach of "education under protest" (UKZN, 2017, p. 1), "which sought to transform apartheid institutions into sites of struggle" (UKZN, 2017, p. 1). The number of students increased and thereafter the College was granted University prestige in 1971. In 1972, the University of Durban-Westville was granted its new name and relocated into its contemporary campus in Westville; it became a major institution in the struggle against apartheid (UKZN, 2017). In 1984, the University of Durban-Westville became an independent institute, allowing student admission to all races.

The Natal University College (NUC) in Pietermaritzburg was formed in 1910. In 1949, the University of Natal was granted autonomous University ranking. This was as a result of its prompt rapid increase in the number of students, its accomplishments in and prospects for research, and its extensive variety of programmes (UKZN, 2017). By then, the Natal University College "was already a multi-campus institution, having been extended to Durban after World War I" (UKZN, 2017, p. 1).

These two universities were among the first KwaZulu-Natal institutions in South Africa to merge. The merger was the culmination of a wide-ranging consultative process, started in 1990, within the Higher Education Sector (UKZN, 2017).

1.3. Problem statement

The issue of diversity has become common all around the world. In today's digital world, institutions thrive on systems that involve teams, discussions and free speech, and working styles that are inclusive (Bourke, et al., 2017). Leading institutions view diversity as an all-inclusive strategy to enhance employee performance and improve an institution's reputation. South Africa has come a long way in terms of creating diverse workforces. However, creating an inclusive work environment can either have a positive or negative influence on employee performance. Therefore, this study examined how workplace diversity influences employee performance.

1.4. Main research question

The main research question for this study was:

- 1.4.1. Does workplace diversity have a positive or negative influence on employee performance?

1.5. Research questions

The research questions for this study were:

- 1.5.1. What role does diversity play in the workplace?
- 1.5.2. To what extent does workplace diversity affect employee performance?
- 1.5.3. How effective is the practice of diverse employees working together?
- 1.5.4. Does workplace diversity improve or hinder employee performance?

1.6. Research objectives

The research objectives of this study were:

- 1.6.1. To examine the role that diversity plays in the workplace.
- 1.6.2. To investigate to what extent workplace diversity affects employee performance.
- 1.6.3. To understand the effectiveness of diverse employees' performance when working together.
- 1.6.4. To determine if workplace diversity improves or hinders employee performance.

1.7. Justification of the study

Workplace diversity has been well researched, however, it has not been specified what influence workplace diversity has on employee performance in institutions. This study focused on the relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance. This study is important as it examined whether or not everyone is treated fairly, as well as problems that arose; in this way they could be corrected and a better working and learning environment sought. Therefore, this study allows institutions to see the influence that workplace diversity has on employee performance and therefore enables institutions to improve.

1.8. Contribution of the study

The contribution of the study is fourfold: Firstly, it examines the role that diversity plays in the workplace. Secondly, it discusses the extent to which workplace diversity affects employee

performance. Thirdly, it creates an understanding of the effectiveness of diverse people working together. Fourthly, it discovers whether workplace diversity improves or hinders employee performance. This study enables UKZN to take into account the findings of the study and use it in the future when dealing with workplace diversity as it provides first-hand information from employees.

1.9. Outline of the study

The structure of the chapters of the study are as follows:

1.9.1. Chapter one: Introduction

Chapter one provides an overview of the study. It discusses the background of the study, problem statement, research questions and research objectives. This chapter also discusses the justification and contribution of the study.

1.9.2. Chapter two: Literature review

Chapter two discusses the relevant literature linking the relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance. It provides definitions and discusses key terms that are related to this study.

1.9.3. Chapter three: Theoretical framework

Chapter three discusses the theoretical framework for the study when dealing with workplace diversity. The theoretical framework that has been adapted by the researcher for the study is the Four Layers of Diversity model by Gardenswartz and Rowe.

1.9.4. Chapter four: Research methodology

Chapter four presents the research methodology that was used in the study. It provides the problem statement, main research question, research questions and research objectives. This chapter also defines and explains key terms in relation to the study, such as research design, study site, target population, sampling, data collection, reliability and validity, as well as data analysis. Lastly, it discusses the ethical considerations for the study.

1.9.5. Chapter five: Findings and results

Chapter five provides the findings and results of the study. The data that was collected is presented in the form of tables, column charts and pie charts. This chapter introduces the findings and results, displays the respondents' demographics, and lastly provides the results in line with the research objectives of the study.

1.9.6. Chapter six: Discussion of the results

Chapter six provides the discussion of the results of the study. The data that was collected was analysed, answering each of the research questions and presenting relationships and patterns. This chapter introduces the discussion of the results, defines content analysis, and provides the themes of the study.

1.9.7. Chapter seven: Limitations, recommendations and conclusion

Chapter seven concludes the study. It provides a summary of the key findings and discusses the limitations of the study and any restrictions that may have been faced by the researcher. This chapter provides recommendations for employees and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, based on the findings and results of the study, and discusses areas for future research.

1.10. Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the study, including the background of the study. The problem statement was discussed, noting that while workplace diversity has become a popular topic around the world, its influence on employee performance in institutions needs to be examined. The research questions and research objectives were stated. The chapter provided the justification of the study, which is to enable institutions to improve, as well as the fourfold contributions of the study. Lastly, the outline of the study was provided by introducing each chapter. The next chapter provides the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the relevant literature linking the relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance. It first defines workplace diversity and explores the history of workplace diversity in South Africa. Secondly, it discusses the advantages and disadvantages of workplace diversity as well as the different dimensions involved in workplace diversity. Thirdly, it then focuses on the negative and positive influences of workplace diversity. Fourthly, employee performance and the components of employee performance are defined. Fifthly, it identifies the measures of employee performance. Lastly, the chapter discusses the actions that organisations can take in order to successfully manage workplace diversity and employee performance.

2.2. Workplace diversity

When defining the term diversity, it is essential to recognise that diversity amongst employees has a direct effect on a working environment. Natter (2019, p.1) defines diversity as the “understanding and acceptance of the fact that people have individual characteristics, which make them unique from each other, particularly when comparing individuals in a group”. These individual characteristics can be described as “race, ethnicity, gender, religion, political ideologies, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities or socio-economic status” (Natter, 2019, p. 1). An individual’s experiences in life as well as their approaches to solving problems can also be included as individual characteristics.

Another definition is given by Allen, et al. (2007), who stated that diversity can be described as a combination of variations in individuals; some are visible, for example race, and others are less visible, for example, sexual orientation. Diversity is viewed as being inclusive of everyone and treasures the variances that each employee brings along to an organisation (Allen, et al., 2007).

Workplace diversity can be described in many ways; there is no single definition that covers the wide range of aspects. These definitions and explanations of diversity recognise that it is necessary to have a broader overview of diversity than the traditional meaning linked to employment equity and affirmative action which has a focus on the previously disadvantaged groups. In addition, the definition of diversity differs according to one’s perception of diversity (Allen, et al., 2007). The perception of diversity is without a doubt influenced by the groups that one belongs to.

Natter (2019) argues that a working environment is comprised of different employees who each bring their unique qualities to an organisation. This has a direct effect on what occurs in an organisation, as different parts of an organisation are impacted by these diverse employees (Natter, 2019). Members outside the organisation also have a direct effect on how they perceive the organisation; if an organisation is seen to have too many diverse employees that can have an impact on how outside members think (Natter, 2019). Some may become discouraged from interacting with the organisation, while others may jump at the opportunity.

Diversity in the workplace has become a topic that is increasingly discussed, however, there are still varying viewpoints. According to previous research, some organisations may create a diverse labour force because they feel legally obliged to do so, while other organisations may create a diverse labour force because they see the benefits of having a wide range of employees working together (Natter, 2019). It is essential that organisations understand the intricacy of workplace diversity when implementing planning decisions.

2.3. History of workplace diversity

When focusing on an organisation, it is important to look at its current situation, as well as its past. This will affirm whether or not workplace diversity in that organisation is on the right track in its efforts to get rid of working environments or practices where employees are not treated fairly, especially those from previously disadvantaged groups (Natter, 2019).

2.3.1. Affirmative Action in South Africa

In South Africa, the Employment Equity Act, no. 55 of 1998, was put in place to ensure that all South Africans are treated fairly and receive equal employment opportunities. Affirmative action is defined in the Employment Equity Act section 15(1), as “measures designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce of a designated employer”. This resulted in workplace diversity as employers could no longer discriminate against any employee with regards to their race, beliefs or origin (Natter, 2019).

According to Natter (2019), these legislative rules had two opposing views. Some viewed it as a positive action; they saw this law as an opening for talented employees who may not have had these opportunities in the past (Natter, 2019). Others viewed it as a negative action; they saw it as “reverse discrimination” (Natter, 2019, p. 1). Nevertheless, the emphasis was on previously disadvantaged groups when providing job opportunities. However, rather than “creating a level playing field” (Natter, 2019, p. 1), this diversity law put minority members at an advantage over others when providing jobs.

Natter (2019) further explored the backlash that is associated with affirmative action as it is a major concern when dealing with workplace diversity especially in larger organisations. It has also become a concern that when creating an organisation that is diverse, it is a possibility that qualified individuals may be overlooked and in this way talented individuals will suffer (Natter, 2019). For example, an organisation may tend to focus more on hiring an individual that fits into a specific category that is needed to create a diverse workforce, rather than focusing on the most qualified individual for the job (Natter, 2019).

2.4. The effects of workplace diversity

As a result of the history of South Africa and the effects of affirmative action, there are many advantages and disadvantages when dealing with workplace diversity. Although countless organisations have welcomed the idea of workplace diversity, other organisations still view workplace diversity as simply a legal obstacle that needs to be complied with (Allen, et al., 2007). However, Allen, et al. (2007) stated that in more recent times, workplace diversity has been viewed as a concept that is more strategic as it is believed to have performance benefits. Workplace diversity allows organisations to attentively recognise and serve the needs of minority consumers who are growing rapidly in numbers (Allen, et al., 2007).

2.4.1. Advantages of workplace diversity

Workplace diversity benefits organisations in many ways, such as retaining talent, lower turnover, generating creative ideas, improved problem solving and decision making, and increased performance levels (Allen, et al., 2007). Workplace diversity serves as a competitive advantage which overall results in improved organisational performance (Allen, et al., 2007). Ayres (2019) gives an account of the advantages of workplace diversity:

2.4.1.1. Increases predictability when working in teams

When working with teams that are diverse, organisations have the chance to allocate tasks in relation to each employee's strengths (Ayres, 2019). There is no need to assume who is best suited to complete a task. Organisations are able to build diverse teams that fit well together and work cohesively. Each employee will have the suitable qualification and experience that is needed in order to contribute to the team effectively, and this will allow for increased productivity and innovation on a daily basis (Ayres, 2019). This results in an increased job satisfaction level and a decreased turnover rate.

2.4.1.2. Creates a stronger economy

Workplace diversity develops a working arrangement whereby everyone is able to join the labour force. It can be seen as an invitation that welcomes everyone to become active; different individuals bring their unique education and past experiences which are treated with great value

(Ayres, 2019). On an organisational level, there will be a larger pool of applicants to choose from when filling positions (Ayres, 2019). From a societal standpoint, a stronger economy will be developed with regards to both local and international communities (Ayres, 2019).

2.4.1.3. Organisations are able to access required talent

Workplace diversity results in less restrictions when hiring employees. Organisations are able to pay attention to a candidate's past experiences and education and assess who has the best skills and abilities to perform the tasks, rather than focusing on a demographic profile that will fit in with other employees (Ayres, 2019). By using an individual's skills and abilities as the primary tool when hiring, everyone will have a chance at success.

2.4.1.4. Increases creativity and productivity

When employees have comparable backgrounds or have similar past experiences, their views will often be grouped into the same category (Ayres, 2019). If employees have similar viewpoints, this can become very problematic when an organisation needs to develop new, creative ideas. Workplace diversity is a very powerful tool that enables an organisation to solve complex problems due to the wide range of fresh ideas and creative solutions that were not previously accessible (Ayres, 2019). At each level, diverse teams that leave room to improve create stronger bonds and have increased productivity levels. Ayres (2019) reports that productivity in a team increases by 35% when employees are racially diverse, and by 45% when employees are bilingual. Therefore, workplace diversity has become a key factor for many organisations today (Ayres, 2019).

2.4.2. Disadvantages of workplace diversity

An opposing view of workplace diversity claims that it is undesirably linked to employee performance due to decreased levels in employee satisfaction, and increased turnover, decreased cohesiveness, communication difficulties, and increased conflict (Allen, et al., 2007). These effects could in turn result in damaging consequences in an organisation. Ayres (2019) gives an account of the disadvantages of workplace diversity:

2.4.2.1. Some cultures are not heard

When working in teams, workplace diversity definitely helps to improve intellect and understanding in an organisation. However, it does not create a working environment where every employee feels comfortable or safe to share their ideas (Ayres, 2019). This matter is customary in cultures which emphasise being respectful or polite. For example, employees may not feel free to voice their opinions or ideas even if they are asked to. This may be due to the influence of culture on keeping to their roles and what their job position requires of them (Ayres, 2019).

2.4.2.2. Communication issues

When working with diverse employees, quality translation is the most effective way to ensure good communication. It can also be seen as an effective way to communicate without losing important information in the process (Ayres, 2019). It is important to recognise that diverse employees have different backgrounds, so although everyone may, for example, speak English, they will have different accents and slang that can cause miscommunication. The same applies to different cultures. If employees do not understand each other, they may offend someone without knowing it; for example, a handshake may be a kind gesture for some, while having cultural implications for others (Ayres, 2019).

2.4.2.3. Varying understandings of etiquette

Employees from different backgrounds will have varying attitudes in the workplace. They will have their own set of standards, as well as behaviours and etiquette they believe in (Ayres, 2019). These differences can either improve the working environment, or cause misunderstandings and create ill feelings and bitterness among employees. For example, some employees may feel the need to ensure that all their work is complete at the end of their shift even if it means staying on, while others expect to work only for the eight hours they get paid for (Ayres, 2019).

2.4.2.4. Slow down work processes

Although a diverse workforce will generate more ideas when solving problems, this can also be seen as a disadvantage. Teams may move at a slower rate due to debating ideas that are proposed. When employees propose ideas that have the potential to be successful, it is only fair that the value of the idea should be debated (Ayres, 2019). Many teams find it difficult to stay on track and meet their deadlines due to this issue, therefore, it is helpful to have a management figure to direct the debates.

2.5. Dimensions of workplace diversity

According to Natter (2019, p.1), the term workplace diversity “hints at the multi-faceted aspects of how differences among employees can play out in the workplace”. While having a wide range of employees that are unique and different can benefit an organisation in many ways, this can also hinder an organisation’s performance due to diversity issues that may develop. Natter (2019) explores the dimensions of diversity:

2.5.1. Diverse perspectives

A great positive of workplace diversity is the wide variety of viewpoints that occur in an organisation when there are different employees working together. Employees who are from different backgrounds will have different cultures and experiences, and therefore view issues differently, as well as think of different solutions (Natter, 2019). These varying viewpoints help

in two ways. Firstly, the solutions to problems will always be unique and creative. And secondly, there will always be a variety to experiment with.

These unique ideas may result in ground-breaking notions that provide original ideas for an organisation's growth (Natter, 2019). However, many organisations will encounter employees that do not accept the ideas of others and find it difficult to adapt to another employee's viewpoint.

2.5.2. Diverse thought processes

Diverse employees will vary in most circumstances in the way that they think, identify problems, and find potential solutions (Natter, 2019). For example, males and females have different ways of thinking when they have an issue at hand because of the effects it will have on each individual. In the same way, one employee may not see that there is a problem area, while another employee may clearly identify the problem area straight away (Natter, 2019). Thus, although diversity among employees helps to identify issues in the workplace, finding solutions from varying perspectives may be difficult (Natter, 2019).

The same applies when dealing with different cultures in an organisation. In various cultures, males and females have different roles. Therefore, in the workplace, one employee's behavioural expectations may clash with another employee's due to cultural norms (Natter, 2019). In various cultures, females are required to have a submissive role, as opposed to western cultures where females are encouraged to be independent (Natter, 2019). Therefore, a mix of both gender and culture in an organisation may result in misinterpretations or strain on employees.

2.5.3. Diverse lifestyles

In the 21st century, employees cannot be stereotyped and categorised into the same group. Employees are no longer able to work constantly for eight hours, with only a tea or lunch break (Natter, 2019). Employees have families that are structured differently; there are no longer set roles for parents as in the past. Both parents share the responsibilities with regards to home, children, and so on. Nowadays, employees' work-home balance may be intertwined.

Employees are now faced with a range of needs that can affect their work routine in an organisation. For example, a sick child may lead to an employee leaving work early or not coming in at all, and this may affect their work routine as he or she will have to work from home (Natter, 2019). The same applies to employees from different religions; employees may need time off work to celebrate their religious holidays. Therefore, an organisation needs to be flexible in order to accommodate the needs of employees and retain their talent (Natter, 2019).

2.5.4. Diverse brand and reputation

One of the biggest benefits of workplace diversity is that organisations with a diverse workforce are viewed as being noble members of a community by consumers and potential employees

(Natter, 2019). An organisation that has a workforce that is diverse strengthens its brand and reputation by being socially inclusive and all-encompassing; this creates opportunities with a more diverse consumer base (Natter, 2019). For example, a diverse workforce will attract a diverse range of consumers because they will feel welcome and comfortable. However, a workforce that is not inclusive of everyone will only cater to some consumers and exclude others (Natter, 2019).

2.5.5. Bring growth

In the same way, an organisation that is diverse will attract a consumer base that is larger, as the product or services that the organisation provides will be more culturally appealing due to the creative thought that went into them (Natter, 2019). This is a result of employees having a positive impact on an organisation. Employees are able to communicate about their new ideas and expand an organisation's market, resulting in corporate growth (Natter, 2019). If all the employees in an organisation were similar, they would have similar viewpoints, resulting in less products or services emerging (Natter, 2019).

2.6. The influence of workplace diversity

Organisations have recognised the need to have a diverse workforce that truly reflects society, therefore organisations need to attract and retain talented employees in line with the relevant demographic developments (Prieto, et al., 2009). Organisations often question the relationship between workplace diversity and organisational performance and how it affects the bottom-line, as well as the evidence surrounding the issue (Prieto, et al., 2009). Over the past few years researchers have found it difficult to gain a better understanding on how workplace diversity influences organisations, as well as both teams and individuals (Prieto, et al., 2009). There are different views on workplace diversity. Prieto, et al. (2009) discuss the positive and negative influences of workplace diversity:

2.6.1. Negative influence of workplace diversity

Diversity can have a negative influence on both individuals and groups in an organisation. For example, employees who differ from the majority in an organisation usually have decreased levels of psychological commitment, increased turnover levels, and higher absenteeism rates than other employees (Prieto, et al., 2009). Nevertheless, there is proof that this negative influence weakens over a period of time.

Proponents in favour of the "similarity-attraction paradigm of team composition" (Prieto, et al., 2009, p. 15), claim that an employee's opinion of another employee is commonly influenced positively by the more similarities one has with another with regards to their demographic characteristics (Prieto, et al., 2009). For example, "bio-demographic attributes such as age,

gender, and race/ethnicity are immediately observed and categorized by individual members, and these differences tend to be negatively associated with team performance and social integration” (Prieto, et al., 2009, p. 15). This paradigm therefore states that “homogenous teams are likely to be more productive than heterogeneous teams because of mutual attraction of team members with similar characteristics. Heterogeneous groups, in contrast, are hypothesized to be less productive and have lower team cohesion because of inherent tensions and relational conflicts arising from member differences” (Prieto, et al., 2009, p. 15).

While various perspectives in a group can result in heightened group functioning as a result of more information, diversity may however reverse or reduce this effect due to varying factors amongst group members, such as differences in personalities, values and beliefs, or gender (Prieto, et al., 2009). It has been debated that such “subgroup categorizations can disrupt group processes by rendering group members less trusting of and motivated to cooperate with other group members and less committed to the group, increasing interpersonal tensions and conflict, and lowering communication” (Prieto, et al., 2009, p. 15). Even though diversity may inspire increased performance levels in teams due to more information, it also challenges team performance.

2.6.2. Positive influence of workplace diversity

Varying individuals have different ways of viewing the world. Therefore, having different viewpoints is an advantage when teams are trying to be creative and come up with innovative ideas or unravel multifaceted problems (Prieto, et al., 2009). In addition, gender diversity may improve performance levels while the lack of gender diversity may hinder performance levels. It can be expected that gender diversity would have a positive influence on an organisation’s performance. It was proposed that performance in an organisation would increase when females represented equal numbers in the workforce (Prieto, et al., 2009).

Organisations increasingly depend on diverse teams in the workplace. These teams are put together with the intention of encouraging inspiration when making decisions and solving problems. Frequently, informational diversity in these groups encourages employees to work together with their differences, including their different opinions and values as well as demographic attributes (Prieto, et al., 2009).

Informational diversity can be described as “differences in knowledge bases and perspectives that members bring to the group” (Prieto, et al., 2009, p. 16). Information that is diverse in teams can possibly increase performance levels; however teams that are diverse are more likely to not be able to benefit. It can be suggested that “groups are more likely to effectively use their informational resources when group members believe in the value of diversity; in support of their proposition, diversity beliefs moderated the relationship between informational diversity and

performance, such that informationally diverse groups performed better when they held pro-diversity beliefs rather than pro-similarity beliefs” (Prieto, et al., 2009, p. 16).

2.7. Employee performance

Employee performance can be defined as how employees behave in an organisation, as well as how they efficiently they perform their duties and complete work that has been delegated to them (Donohoe, 2019). In most organisations, employees are expected to reach performance targets that have been set. Additionally, targets are also set for the organisation as a whole in order to offer goods and services that are efficient and timely (Donohoe, 2019).

According to Donohoe (2019, p.1), when dealing with a single employee, performance refers to “work effectiveness, quality and efficiency at the task level”. For example, a salesperson may be required to make a certain number of calls to potential customers in an hour, while a production worker may be required to produce a certain number of products in an hour (Donohoe, 2019).

An employee’s performance will have an impact on their colleagues as well as an organisation’s performance outcome. If an employee is not able to keep up with what it is required of them (Donohoe, 2019), this will impact their colleagues who will have to help or in some cases redo the work. Donohoe (2019) maintains that if employee performance is low, consumers will be unsatisfied, which will have an impact on an organisation’s profits and reputation.

2.8. Components of employee performance

Employee performance indicates an employee’s accomplishments in the workplace after putting in an adequate amount of effort into a job; this is also influenced by a good work ethic, considerate colleagues, and good working conditions (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). Managing employee performance positively in an organisation is vital for daily operations and can be done by utilising human resources effectively to obtain the best results (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). Human resources will enable employee performance to be more tactical by aligning the performance objectives with the organisation’s strategies. Employee performance is comprised of many components, as provided by Pradhan & Jena (2017) below:

2.8.1. Behavioural performance

Behavioural performance is a twofold concept; the process perspective of performance can be determined, which is the behavioural actions that lead to an expected outcome (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). The behavioural actions refer to the way employees act and behave to complete a task, while the expected outcome refers to the consequences of an employee’s behaviour (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). It can be said that in an organisation, the behavioural actions are related to the

expected outcomes. However, the intersection between the two concepts are not yet evident (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). This is because the expected outcome is also influenced by other factors, for example, employee motivation, skills, abilities, and so on (Pradhan & Jena, 2017).

2.8.2. Task performance

Task performance is comprised of clear behaviours that are expected of an employee, such as their responsibilities and the job description they were assigned (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). It requires an employee to use their cognitive ability, related to three elements: Firstly, task knowledge, which is “requisite technical knowledge or principles to ensure job performance and having an ability to handle multiple assignments” (Pradhan & Jena, 2017, p. 3). Secondly, task skill, which is “application of technical knowledge to accomplish task successfully without much supervision” (Pradhan & Jena, 2017, p. 3). And lastly, task habits, which is “an innate ability to respond to assigned jobs that either facilitate or impede the performance” (Pradhan & Jena, 2017, p. 3). Therefore, task performance requires an employee to have previous experience and the capability to do the work. In a working environment, task performance can be seen as a contractual relationship between an employee and management to complete assigned tasks (Pradhan & Jena, 2017).

2.8.3. Adaptive performance

Adaptive performance refers to an employee’s ability to adapt to the necessary working environment and provide the required support to complete the work (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). According to earlier researchers, when employees perform their tasks, they make an effort to adapt their approach and role in the organisation according to the requirements of the job (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). Adaptive performance requires employees to have the ability to professionally deal with working conditions that are not stable. For example, when dealing with new technology in the workplace, employees will need to learn and adapt to changes in how certain tasks will be done technologically. Employees may also be required to adapt their interpersonal behaviours to deal with different colleagues (Pradhan & Jena, 2017).

2.8.4. Contextual performance

Contextual performance can be referred to as employees’ actions that are voluntary which benefit an organisation (Pradhan & Jena, 2017) and create a better working environment. It is a type of prosocial behaviour that is established by employees in a working environment. These prosocial behaviours are unspoken expectations that are not part of an employee’s job description (Pradhan & Jena, 2017); these can also be referred to as extra role behaviours. Contextual performance requires employees to have a voluntary attitude when it comes to “extra work, helping others in solving difficult tasks, upholding enthusiasm at work, cooperating with others at the time of need, sharing critical resources and information for organizational development, abiding by the

prescribed rules and regulations, and supporting organizational decisions for a better change” (Pradhan & Jena, 2017, p. 4). It benefits an organisation by creating a working environment that achieves individual employee productivity and overall effective organisational practices.

2.9. The importance of employee performance

Organisations require employees who are hardworking and able to perform the tasks that they are given, as an employee’s performance contributes to the success of an organisation (Leonard, 2019). It is essential for organisations to recognise performance benefits in order to find a reliable method to evaluate employees (Leonard, 2019). This helps to discover the strengths and weaknesses in an organisation, as well as any gaps that need to be addressed. By evaluating performance in an organisation, different levels of performance can be accounted for (Leonard, 2019). Leonard (2019) presents the importance of employee performance:

2.9.1. Successful employees accomplish their goals

Achieving goals is one of the key factors in employee performance. Employees that are successful are able to perform, meet deadlines and do what is required of them (Leonard, 2019). They do not need second chances; they are able to successfully get the job done on the first try. However, employees who are not able to efficiently perform will face many challenges. They will often seek assistance and make many mistakes. Employee performance is an important factor in many organisations; for example, if employees who work in payroll were always late to capture salaries, an organisation would look unprofessional as staff would always be waiting to get paid and would be filing complaints (Leonard, 2019).

2.9.2. A positive working environment is created

Office morale often increases when employees perform their tasks effectively. It is essential to create an optimistic, active working environment (Leonard, 2019). When employees are not motivated to work, the job takes longer to complete, and furthermore it can have a negative effect on the entire organisation. A positive working environment can be created by giving rewards to employees that are high achievers; this can be done through personal incentives or by group recognition (Leonard, 2019). Organisations with high achievers often recruit and select talented individuals in order to keep the working environment positive and so that everyone can keep working towards their goals (Leonard, 2019).

2.9.3. Employee growth is measured

Evaluating employees regularly allows employees to identify their growth in an organisation. In this way, they are able to feel good about their progress when they improve over time (Leonard, 2019). It also enables them to set new goals and keep a high level of energy in an organisation. By rewarding employees that perform well, they become motivated to exceed their previous

efforts. It is very beneficial to an organisation to have employees that are effective and work well, but it is even more advantageous to nurture employees and promote their growth so that they develop and strengthen the organisation further (Leonard, 2019). Measuring an employee's growth also shows an organisation who has potential to advance into leadership roles.

2.9.4. Team trends are established

If employees do not perform effectively, this affects an organisation's productivity, and eventually the bottom line. Poor performance does not only point out a poor employee. It is important to find trends that are common that exist in groups; by doing this, an organisation will find both the successful employees as well as discover the deficits (Leonard, 2019). Organisations may then assess the deficits to discover whether the issue lies with the employee's talent and abilities or management. Overall, effective employees can be described as productive, which generates a good working environment and an increased level in productivity (Leonard, 2019). Therefore, by assessing the deficits in an organisation, an employer will be able to gain knowledge about where employees or management can be helped in order to improve the organisational success.

2.10. Employee performance measures

There has been ongoing debate for decades about the best way to measure employee performance (Gillikin, 2019). It can be argued that when dealing with performance measurement, it can either be objective or subjective. Currently most organisations lean towards a mix of both objective and subjective measures when dealing with the process of performance measurement (Gillikin, 2019). However, both objective and subjective measures have their own set of benefits and shortcomings:

2.10.1. Objective measures

Objective measures are "more concrete but are often limited in scope to financial data. They often limit the breadth and scope of organizations that can be included in a study since organizations from a single industry are needed for valid comparison purposes with objective measures" (Allen, et al., 2007, p. 23).

An objective measure usually disregards an organisation's ability to interpret a situation. For example, an employee was either ten minutes late or he or she was not; in the same way, a team either met their target or they did not (Gillikin, 2019). As a result, some organisations prefer to use objective measures for employees who have entry level jobs or perform repetitive tasks daily, as performance in this case refers to "a function of doing (or not doing) some specific action" (Gillikin, 2019, p. 1).

Objective measures are best utilised under circumstances where employees can be assessed and compared to the performance of other employees (Gillikin, 2019). For example, it would be incorrect to compare the workload that two employees have completed where one works part time and the other full time. Conversely, objective measures fail when organisations reduce processes that are complex into one score as this will contribute no value (Gillikin, 2019). For example, a law firm cannot be measured on the number of cases they receive each month rather than the outcome of the cases.

2.10.2. Subjective measures

Subjective measures “lack concreteness or reproducibility, but often provide the researcher with a richer description of the effectiveness of an organization with respect to their competitors. Subjective measures allow a broader range of organizations to be compared within a single study” (Allen, et al., 2007, p. 23).

Subjective measures are beneficial to organisations that have jobs that cannot simply be measured. For example, a lawyer has a job that performs many tasks which cannot be reduced into a few distinct metrics (Gillikin, 2019). Thus, organisations will need to define measurement categories, such as client services, or professionalism. Organisations usually “offer a numeric score that represents the employee's perceived performance in that category, but the question of whether a specific rating is "correct" is primarily a matter of interpretation” (Gillikin, 2019, p. 1).

Subjective measures benefit an organisation by enabling management to use their own judgement about an employee's performance in situations that are complicated (Gillikin, 2019). However, this may also have a downside because a bad relationship between an employee and an employer may result in a negative rating which is unfair and biased (Gillikin, 2019).

2.11. Managing workplace diversity and employee performance

Regardless of the mixed results of the influence of workplace diversity on employee performance in organisations, research indicates that the outcome of any organisation depends on how workplace diversity strategies are managed (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Jayne & Dipboye (2004) discuss the actions that organisations can take in order to successfully manage workplace diversity and employee performance:

2.11.1. Enforce the commitment and accountability of management

When dealing with diversity in the workplace, employees need to know that management is committed when implementing any new strategy (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Organisations usually have many diversity barriers that are very general and indirect, therefore when dealing with workplace diversity for the improvement of an organisation, it is important to have reliable

leadership. Organisational success requires management to take charge of diversity strategies and stand accountable for any issues that may arise; they should ensure that these issues are reported, discussed, and the appropriate action should be taken (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). This will ensure that diversity barriers are addressed and a workforce will be built that truly reflects the demographics of the accessible labour market, as well as build employee commitment (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Therefore, enforcing the commitment and accountability of management is critical; these diversity strategies will mean transforming an organisation for the better (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

2.11.2. Conduct a detailed needs assessment

Organisations need to conduct a detailed needs assessment. In order to be successful, workplace diversity needs to be personalised to a specific organisation as well as the unique employees who face challenges (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). A needs assessment focuses on the employees, the jobs, and the organisation; this makes sure that diversity issues are outlined correctly and the appropriate actions are taken. Therefore, the needs assessment benefits an organisation by discovering the broad variety of options and choosing the best strategies to address the diversity issues in an organisation (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

At an employee level, an effective needs assessment involves comprehending the organisation's challenges, evaluating the demographics of an organisation, as well as being aware of the attitudes of employees (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). An organisation can do some research by using focus groups, surveys, or interviews to discover the issues that employees face in an organisation (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). The research that an organisation does can explore the attitudes of employees, as well as detect issues in an organisation that management may overlook. For example, an organisation can analyse complaints that have been made by employees, or evaluate any activity that has taken place with regards to legal policies and practices. A detailed needs assessment benefits an organisation by identifying areas that need attention (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

At an organisational level, the culture of an organisation is important when developing new diversity strategies. An organisation's culture needs to be taken into consideration because a strategy that may be implemented successfully in one organisation may not be successful in another (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Therefore, management needs to focus on the organisation and pay attention to the needs and support what is needed for a specific organisation. If an organisation does not consider their culture, the result will more than likely be that new diversity strategies will be underutilised due to employees' non-participation (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

2.11.3. Develop a strategy that links diversity and results

Organisations need to link diversity strategies with the results they want to achieve in order to be successful. The diversity strategy that is developed will guide decision making in an organisation,

as well as organisational processes (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). In order for an organisation to be transformed, organisations first need to recognise the competitive advantages of workplace diversity, such as recruiting the best talent, appreciating a diverse customer base, improved teamwork results, and increased productivity (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Thus, organisations need to develop diversity strategies that link to the outcomes that an organisation wants to achieve, and in this way challenges will be addressed successfully (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

Organisations can also provide a communication plan to inform employees about an organisation's steps in diversity strategies (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). By organisations discussing the diversity strategies, employees will be up-to-date and aware of what is going on; for example, ongoing review meetings, efforts to implement diversity strategies, and so on. In this way, the commitment of management will be demonstrated and an organisational culture will be developed that entirely embraces diversity (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

2.11.4. Encourage team building and group training

Organisations with a diverse workforce need to acknowledge that employees have a wide array of knowledge and skills, therefore, management needs to encourage team building and group training. This will make sure that the knowledge and skills of employees will be used to improve their performance (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004), as well as make the most of the individual strengths that each employee contributes when working in a team or group. After some time, it is believed that team performance improves due to employees developing a deeper, interpersonal understanding of each other, not just at a demographic level (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). This is a result of team building as employees are encouraged to share details about their past experiences and backgrounds, which in turn helps employees understand each other better as well as what each employee brings to the team (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

Working in diverse teams has an impact on employee performance as well as the productivity levels in an organisation, therefore management needs to ensure that teams have the necessary skills to deal with conflict and communicate effectively (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). This can be done through a few steps. Firstly, an organisation needs to recognise and prepare for potential issues that may arise in diverse teams, for example, very little social contact or communication problems (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Secondly, it is important for an organisation to recognise that these issues can be resolved with effective management leading a team. Effective management is made up of the necessary abilities and skills to assist diverse teams in resolving these issues (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). And lastly, an organisation needs to understand that it takes time for a diverse team to make the most of their differences, and this should also be considered when evaluating a diverse team's performance (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). However, team building and group training should speed up the process of a diverse team having an advantage.

2.11.5. Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of diversity strategies

In order to successfully manage diversity, it is essential to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of diversity strategies. There are many reasons why organisations do not evaluate the diversity strategies. Firstly, organisations may have difficulty finding worthwhile metrics and they worry about the return on investment when it comes to diversity strategies (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Secondly, often organisations do not gather the correct data to be evaluated; this results in resources being wasted (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004) and may be due to organisations fearing that data collected may be biased or discriminate against employees. And lastly, organisations that already have effective diversity plans in place do not feel the need to have conclusive evidence (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

However, regardless of these reasons, there are many persuasive reasons why organisations should capitalise on diversity metrics. Firstly, metrics enable organisations to keep track of the progress that is being made as well as address any emerging challenges (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Secondly, metrics indicate an organisation's level of commitment to diversity strategies that are being implemented. And lastly, metrics make sure that resources are allocated according to regions that are most beneficial, and in this way costs can be reduced (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004).

Therefore, by measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of diversity strategies, organisations will be able to make informed decisions with a good data-filled background (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Introducing metrics that are significant and implementing an evaluation process that is effective and all-inclusive involves detailed planning and adequate resources (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004). Measurement involves monitoring changes that occur, so organisations need to be aware that change takes time. Thus, when evaluating diversity strategies, a long-range perspective is needed.

2.12. Summary

This chapter has discussed the relevant literature linking the relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance. It first defined workplace diversity and explored the history of workplace diversity in South Africa. Diversity has a direct effect on an organisation's working environment, and was described as a combination of variations in individuals. Diversity has a long history in South Africa, therefore it is important to take both the current situation and past into consideration when dealing with issues. Secondly, the advantages and disadvantages of workplace diversity were discussed, as well as the different dimensions involved in workplace diversity. The advantages of workplace diversity are that it increases predictability when working in teams, it creates a stronger economy, organisations are able to access required talent, and it increases creativity and productivity. The disadvantages of workplace diversity are that some

cultures are not heard, there are communication issues, varying understandings of etiquette, and it slows down work processes. The dimensions of workplace diversity are that it provides diverse perspectives, diverse thought processes, diverse lifestyles, diverse brand and reputation, and brings growth. Thirdly, this chapter focused on the negative and positive influence of workplace diversity. There were different views on workplace diversity in the way that it affects an organisations performance and the bottom-line. Fourthly, this chapter defined employee performance and the components of employee performance. Employee performance was defined as how employees behave in an organisation, as well as how they efficiently they perform their duties and complete work that has been delegated to them (Donohoe, 2019). The components of employee performance were behavioural performance, task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual performance. Fifthly, the measures of employee performance were identified. Objective and subjective measures had their distinct benefits and shortcomings. Lastly, the actions that organisations can take in order to successfully manage workplace diversity and employee performance were discussed. These actions were to enforce the commitment and accountability of management, conduct a detailed needs assessment, develop a strategy that links diversity and results, encourage team building and group training, and measure and evaluate the effectiveness of diversity strategies. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framework for the study, related to workplace diversity. The theoretical framework adapted by the researcher is the Four Layers of Diversity model by Gardenswartz and Rowe. They believe that diversity in the workplace can be categorised into four layers (Lew, 2011). This chapter, firstly, defines and explains a theoretical framework. Secondly, it discusses the importance of managing workplace diversity. Thirdly, the chapter explains workplace diversity and covers the four layers of Gardenswartz and Rowe's model which are: 1) personality; 2) internal dimensions; 3) external dimensions; and 4) organisational dimensions (Lew, 2011). Lastly, the application of the theoretical framework for the study is discussed.

3.2. Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework can be defined as “a collection of interrelated concepts, like a theory but not necessarily so well worked-out” (Borgatti, 1999, p. 1). It controls the direction of the research by helping the researcher decide which elements should be measured, as well as which relationships to focus on (Borgatti, 1999). A theoretical framework is deductive in nature; it is specific, logical, and well thought out.

Borgatti (1999) states that a theoretical framework is important for two main reasons. Firstly, it prevents bias. A researcher may have preconceived ideas about the research topic that may influence the research (Borgatti, 1999). The theoretical framework will keep the researcher's judgement clear. And secondly, it will guide the researcher's focus points. The research problem can be reduced in order to focus only on what is important and relates to the theoretical framework.

The term workplace diversity can be interpreted in many different ways. The definition differs amongst individuals, organisations, and even researchers (Washington, 2008). For example, some organisations recognise diversity as “strictly focused upon race, gender, religion, and disability status” (Washington, 2008, p. 3), while in other organisations, diversity can be “extended to sexual orientation, body image, and socioeconomic status” (Washington, 2008, p. 3). In this study, diversity is explained using Lee Gardenswartz and Anita Rowe's Four Layers of Diversity model that was created in 1994 (Washington, 2008).

3.3. Managing workplace diversity

The rise in employees that are diverse in the workplace should result in both internal and external members of an organisation being more comfortable, as employees and clients will be surrounded by others with different backgrounds (Lew, 2011). However, this feeling of being comfortable is only possible through an organisation effectively managing diversity issues. Therefore, an organisation needs to consider various factors when striving towards a diverse workplace that is effective (Lew, 2011).

Workplace diversity needs to be successfully managed in order for an organisation to be more productive. For example, duties may seem more effortless and are performed with ease amongst employees that have a similar way of working together, who will generally be more productive (Lew, 2011). On the other hand, employees that are different may be less productive, as individuals may be taken advantage of from members of the dominant group, due to factors such as age or gender (Lew, 2011). This may have an impact on an employee's efficiency and confidence and in turn affect their overall performance.

It is important for organisations to be diverse in order to attract and retain clients that are diverse (Lew, 2011). A diverse organisation also enhances and improves problem solving and decision making. Thus, the importance of a diverse workforce should not be overlooked. An organisation needs to first understand the skills that are necessary for managing diversity before addressing any issues (Lew, 2011).

3.4. The 'Four Layers of Diversity' Model

According to Washington (2008, p. 3), diversity can be seen as "representing a multitude of individual differences and similarities that exist among people". Diversity includes a wide range of human characteristics, for example, from one's personality to sexual orientation to educational background to work location. These diversity characteristics are illustrated in the Four Layers of Diversity Model by Gardenswartz and Rowe (Washington, 2008).

This model had an impact which influenced and encouraged people to talk about diversity. It lays the foundation for inclusion by examining each individual's existence in an organisation (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2016). This model is illustrated in figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1: The Four Layers of Diversity Model, Gardenswartz and Rowe (1994)



Adapted from: (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2016)

According to Gardenswartz & Rowe (1994), diversity can be described as an onion, “possessing layers that once peeled away reveals the core” (Washington, 2008, p. 3). Gardenswartz and Rowe classified the four layers as: 1) organisational dimensions; 2) external dimensions; 3) internal dimensions; and 4) personality.

The Four Layers of Diversity in the Gardenswartz and Rowe model are:

3.4.1. Organisational dimensions

The first layer refers to organisational dimensions; it is concerned with the cultural aspects that exist in a work environment (Loden & Rosener, 1991). Organisational dimensions form the outermost layer, containing diversity factors such as “management status, union affiliation, work location, seniority, divisional department, work content/field, and functional level classification” (Washington, 2008, p. 3). An employee has very little control with regards to their influence over these factors. The authority and control is left in the hands of the organisation in which one works (Washington, 2008).

Organisational dimensions influence employee performance due to the categorisation amongst employees' organisational statuses (Lew, 2011). These factors influencing diversity are usually unchanging, however, depending on the organisation, there may be potential to evolve. While some employees may be categorised as part of management or non-management, others may be categorised in terms of "hierarchical status, work substance, organisational sector, and precedence on the basis of experience" (Lew, 2011, p. 1).

3.4.2. External dimensions

The second layer refers to external dimensions which consists of "aspects of our lives which we have some control over, which might change over time, and which usually form the basis for decisions on careers and work styles" (Loden & Rosener, 1991, p. 1). External dimensions consist of diversity factors such as "personal habits, recreational habits, religion, educational background, work experience, appearance, status, marital status, geographic location, and income" (Washington, 2008, p. 3). These are partly responsible for an individual's choices in life, such as determining the relationships and bonds that we form, as well as the type of work we do (Loden & Rosener, 1991). Therefore, when compared to the organisational dimensions, the individual has more control over these diversity factors.

External dimensions influence employee performance as a result of categorisation of diversity factors that evolve, as well as those that do not change. Diversity factors that change are, for example, "age, height, weight, religion, education, physical ability, marital status, income level, and geographic location" (Lew, 2011, p. 1). These factors may result in employees being categorised differently. These factors may evolve over time and result in an employee's "time, tallness, heaviness, creed, schooling, physical ability, marriage, earnings level, and geographic location" (Lew, 2011, p. 1). These factors influence an employee's performance, as an employee who is a parent or married, for example, may be treated differently with regards to overtime or their workload compared to an employee who is single and has less responsibilities outside of work.

3.4.3. Internal dimensions

The third layer refers to internal dimensions; it consists of diversity aspects that we cannot control. Internal dimensions form the layer which gives rise to many of the divisions that exist between and among people (Loden & Rosener, 1991). For example, it includes the first thing we see in a person, such as age or race, which will form the basis of our assumptions and basic judgements. Internal dimensions contain diversity factors that are given to an individual at birth, such as "age, race, ethnicity, gender, and physical ability" (Washington, 2008, p. 3). Therefore, this can be seen as the layer in which the individual has the least control due to an individual being born this way.

Internal dimensions influence employee performance as this layer is usually the source of discrimination and prejudice (Washington, 2008). Employees may be judged based on their appearance before one has a conversation with them. For example, employees are treated differently based on their age. An older employee is assumed to be more wise and experienced, and is generally more respected in the work environment. On the other hand, a younger employee who has just graduated will lack the support of colleagues, and will have less confidence when doing their work.

3.4.4. *Personality*

The fourth layer refers to an individual's personality which is inherent in nature. Personality can be defined as "traits and stable characteristics of an individual that are viewed as determining particular consistencies in the manner in which that person behaves in any given situation and over time" (Washington, 2008, p. 3). It is at the core and is comprised of an employee's likes and dislikes, as well as their opinions and values. An individual's personality is "shaped early in life and is both influenced by, and influences, the other three layers throughout one's lifetime and career choices" (Loden & Rosener, 1991, p. 1).

Personality influences employee performance, as the other three layers "help shape the individual's perception, disposition, and actions, as the individual interacts with the world around them" (Washington, 2008, p. 3). Diverse employees may have different attitudes about their work; for example, if employees are given a task that is not part of their daily duties, some may view it as a learning opportunity and go the extra mile, while others may perform poorly as they do not feel that it is necessary.

3.5. Application of the theoretical framework

The researcher used this model as a theoretical framework to explore workplace diversity. The main focus is on the internal and external dimensions as they are interrelated with the study. Internal dimensions refer to sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, physical ability, gender, and race. External dimensions refer to personal habits, religion, geographic location, income, recreational habits, work experience, parental status, appearance, marital status, and educational background.

This model is very beneficial as each of the four layers contains dimensions that contribute to the growth of both the individual and the organisation (Loden & Rosener, 1991). When dealing with diversity, the internal dimensions are often the most popular and receive the most attention especially when promoting initiatives. However, it is the external dimensions and organisational dimensions that often control the way that individuals are treated, with regards to who belongs in an organisation or who is next for a promotion (Loden & Rosener, 1991). Therefore, by referring

to these dimensions and encompassing these factors throughout the study, the research questions will be answered.

3.6. Summary

This chapter has provided the theoretical framework adapted for the study, the Four Layers of Diversity model by Gardenswartz and Rowe (1994). It first defined and explained a theoretical framework. A theoretical framework controls the direction of the research by helping the researcher decide which elements should be measured, as well as which relationships to focus on (Borgatti, 1999). Secondly, the importance of managing workplace diversity was discussed. Workplace diversity needs to be successfully managed in order for an organisation to be more productive. Thirdly, this chapter explained workplace diversity and covered the four layers of Gardenswartz and Rowe model. Diversity includes a wide range of human characteristics which are illustrated by the model (Gardenswartz and Rowe, 1994). The four layers discussed are: 1) personality; 2) internal dimensions; 3) external dimensions; and 4) organisational dimensions (Lew, 2011). An explanation was provided for each layer as well as the link between workplace diversity and employee performance. Lastly, the application of the theoretical framework for the study was covered. There will only be a focus on the internal and external dimensions as they are interrelated with the study. The next chapter provides the research methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the research methodology used for the study and discusses how the research was conducted. It first presents the problem statement, main research question, research questions and research objectives. Secondly, it discusses the research design, nature of the study and research approaches. Thirdly, the chapter explores the study site, target population and sampling used for the study. Fourthly, it discusses the data collection method used, including the research instrument and its structure. Fifthly, reliability and validity are defined, and the pilot test that was undertaken to ensure the study's reliability and validity is discussed. Sixthly, the chapter discusses how the data was analysed, specifically using content analysis. Lastly, it provides the ethical considerations for the study.

4.2. Problem statement

Although workplace diversity can be viewed as promoting respect and acceptance of others, it can also be viewed as the cause of more issues arising in the workplace. At present, institutions thrive on systems that involve teams, discussions and free speech, and working styles that are inclusive (Bourke, et al., 2017). Leading institutions view diversity as an all-inclusive strategy to enhance employee performance and improve an institution's reputation. South Africa has come a long way in terms of creating diverse workforces. However, creating an inclusive work environment can either have a positive or negative influence on employee performance. Therefore, this study examined how workplace diversity influences employee performance.

4.3. Main research question

The main research question for this study was:

- 4.3.1. Does workplace diversity have a positive or negative influence on employee performance?

4.4. Research questions

The research questions for this study were:

- 4.4.1. What role does diversity play in the workplace?
- 4.4.2. To what extent does workplace diversity affect employee performance?
- 4.4.3. How effective is the practice of diverse employees working together?
- 4.4.4. Does workplace diversity improve or hinder employee performance?

4.5. Research objectives

The research objectives of this study were:

- 4.5.1. To examine the role that diversity plays in the workplace.
- 4.5.2. To investigate to what extent workplace diversity affects employee performance.
- 4.5.3. To understand the effectiveness of diverse employees' performance when working together.
- 4.5.4. To determine if workplace diversity improves or hinders employee performance.

4.6. Research design

A research design can be defined as a blueprint which assists the researcher when collecting, measuring, and analysing data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 95). It assists the researcher in solving the problem statement, by achieving the research objectives and answering the research questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 96).

A case study was used in this study. The aim of a case study is to focus on a particular subject when collecting data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 98), for example, an organisation or a specific department. The underlying purpose of a case study is to ensure that one gets a clear picture of a real-life scenario. In this study, the case study was the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. The researcher chose a case study design as it emphasises the contextual analysis of diversity in the workplace and its influence on employee performance.

4.6.1. Nature of the study

This is a descriptive study. The purpose of a descriptive study is “to obtain data that describes the topic of interest” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 43). Descriptive studies are intended to describe a particular object. In this study, the researcher was interested in finding out the relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance.

4.6.2. Research approaches

There are two research approaches when conducting research; these are quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research refers to numerical data and statistics. It is used when

a researcher wants to quantify ideas and get an idea of how much or how many and conclude with exact numbers. Therefore, the results can be generalized from a larger target population (DeFranzo, 2011). Qualitative research refers to data that is displayed as words, which takes into account the thoughts and opinions of respondents (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 332). It is used when a researcher wants to gain a deeper understanding, for example, underlying reasons, beliefs, and incentives (DeFranzo, 2011).

This study used both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. By using a qualitative research approach, it provided a deeper insight into the problem. It also discovered the thoughts and opinions of employees (DeFranzo, 2011). By using a quantitative approach, the results were reported in percentages. The researcher provided the demographics of the study using percentages, as well the results of the study. This was due to the nature of the research instrument.

4.7. Study site

The study site can be described as the physical place where the data is going to be collected and the study is going to be conducted. UKZN comprises of five campuses, namely: 1) Edgewood Campus; 2) Howard College; 3) Medical School; 4) Pietermaritzburg Campus; and 5) Westville Campus. This study used the Pietermaritzburg Campus as a study site.

The data for this study was collected amongst three Colleges on the Pietermaritzburg Campus. The three Colleges were: 1) College of Humanities; 2) College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science; and 3) College of Law and Management Studies.

4.8. Target population

A population can be defined as “the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 236). In this study, the population was employees at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus.

However, the target population refers to specific characteristics that the researcher is interested in. This study dealt with employees at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, specifically, both academic members of staff and support members of staff.

4.9. Sampling

A sample is “a subset of the population” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 237). In other words, it refers to some, and not all, the members of a population. The sample was academic staff and support staff, selected from three Colleges on the Pietermaritzburg Campus.

4.9.1. Sample size

In this study, a sample size of 54 staff members at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus was used. This sample was an equal selection amongst both academic and support staff members from all three Colleges. There was also an equal distribution of the factors in terms of the internal and external dimensions of the 'Four Layers of Diversity' model.

4.9.2. Sampling technique

There are two key sampling methods; these are probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling occurs when "elements in the population have a known, nonzero chance of being chosen as subjects in the sample" (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 242). In other words, each element has an equal chance of being chosen. For example, "1 in the number of the population" (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 243). Non-probability sampling occurs when "elements in the population do not have any probabilities attached to their being chosen as sample subjects" (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 247). This results in the findings of the study not being completely generalizable.

This study used non-probability sampling. Therefore, the selection of the sample was by choice. Convenience sampling was used. Convenience sampling can be referred to as collecting data from participants who are conveniently able to participate at the time that the research is being conducted (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 247). The researcher went from door to door, to the offices of academic and support staff on the Pietermaritzburg Campus and found employees that were free and available to participate in the study.

4.10. Data collection

Data can be explained as the information that is collected during research. In order to collect data, an instrument needs to be used. This study used personally administered questionnaires. The questionnaire can be referred to in Appendix B.

4.10.1. Research instrument

A questionnaire can be defined as a set of questions that are given to respondents to answer (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 142). These questions are usually well thought out and formulated in advance. There are advantages and disadvantages when dealing with personally administered questionnaires. The advantages of personally administered questionnaires is that the researcher can develop a relationship with the respondent and motivate the respondent to participate in the study; this results in an almost 100% response rate (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 144). Any doubts that the respondent has can be clarified, and the respondents will remain anonymous. However, the disadvantages of personally administered questionnaires are that the explanations that the

researcher gives may introduce a bias. Most importantly, personally administered questionnaires are very time consuming and require a lot of effort (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 144).

4.10.2. Questionnaire structure

The questionnaire was administered in English; instructions were included as well as a consent form for participants to sign. The questionnaire was in line with the research objectives in the study, and there was a section based on demographics. The questionnaire was made up of mostly open-ended questions, which made up the qualitative data, and a few closed questions which provided the demographics of the study. Open-ended questions allow respondents to answer the questions in a way that they choose (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 146). Closed questions request that respondents answer by choosing from a set of choices provided by the researcher (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 146).

4.11. Reliability and validity

Reliability can be described as “a test of how consistently a measuring instrument measures whatever concept it is measuring” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 220). Validity can be described as “a test of how well an instrument that is developed measures the particular concept it is intended to measure” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 220). Thus, in basic terms, reliability deals with the steadiness and consistency of the data and validity deals with whether the correct variables are measured.

4.11.1. Pilot testing

In order to ensure reliability and validity in this study, a pilot test took place. A pilot study can be referred to as a small sub-study which pre-tests the research instrument before it is used on a large scale. The feedback from the pilot test was used to correct any grammatical errors and instruction mistakes, and reduce any risks as there was still time to make changes. A pilot study took place using 10 participants to answer the questionnaires ahead of time. These questionnaires were equally distributed amongst both academic and support staff members from all three Colleges.

4.12. Data analysis

Data analysis ensures that data is sorted and evaluated. It examines raw data with the aim of drawing conclusions in a study. Qualitative data analysis can be defined as a series of processes whereby qualitative data that has been collected transforms into an explanation, understanding or interpretation.

4.12.1. Content analysis

This study used content analysis to analyse the qualitative data that was collected. Content analysis is “an observational research method that is used to systematically evaluate the symbolic contents of all forms of recorded communications” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 350). The researcher was therefore able to analyse large amounts of raw data and thoroughly identify its properties; for example, the presence of certain or repeated words, concepts, or themes (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 350).

The themes of the study addressed the research objectives. The questions that respondents were required to answer in the questionnaire were related to each of the themes.

4.13. Ethical considerations

The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal’s Research Office before starting the data collection process (refer to Appendix D). When collecting data, the respondents were required to sign informed consent forms before participating in the study (refer to Appendix A). The informed consent forms ensure that the respondents are protected. The researcher communicated in a language that was understood by all to avoid ambiguity, i.e. English. The informed consent form and questionnaire were also in English. The researcher explained to the respondents what the study was about, as well as what was expected from them. The respondents were assured that their responses would be treated with privacy and confidentiality and they would remain anonymous at all times. The researcher also informed the respondents that the study was voluntary; they had the right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher only had access to the data that was collected and it would be securely locked away. Furthermore, the data that was collected would only be used for research purposes, it would be stored by the School of Management, UKZN, and thereafter would be destroyed after five years.

4.14. Summary

This chapter has discussed how the research was conducted. It first presented the problem statement, the research questions and the research objectives. Secondly, the research design was discussed. The University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus was used as a case study. A causal study took place to determine a cause-and-effect relationship between the variables. The chosen research approach was qualitative research, in order to provide deeper insights. Thirdly, the study site for the study was the three Colleges on the Pietermaritzburg Campus that consisted of a target population of academic staff and support staff. A sample size of 50 participants was used. Non-probability sampling was used, particularly convenience sampling. Fourthly, the data

collection method was discussed. Personally administered questionnaires were used, which consisted of open-ended and closed questions. Fifthly, reliability and validity were defined, and the pilot test that took place ensured that the study was reliable and valid. Sixthly, the data analysis method was discussed, specifically content analysis. Lastly, the ethical considerations for the study were provided. The next chapter presents the findings and results.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the findings and results of the study. The data collected is presented in the form of tables, column charts and pie charts. This chapter first introduces the findings and results. Secondly, it displays the respondents' demographics. Lastly, it provides the results in line with the research objectives of the study.

5.2. Findings and results

The overall purpose of this study was to ascertain whether workplace diversity has a positive or negative influence on employee performance. This study used qualitative research. The data for this study was collected at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, amongst three Colleges on the Pietermaritzburg Campus. The three Colleges are: 1) College of Humanities; 2) College of Agriculture; Engineering and Science; and 3) College of Law and Management Studies. The population was employees at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus; specifically, a sample size of 54 staff members including both academic and support staff.

This study used personally administered questionnaires. The questionnaire can be referred to in Appendix B. The questionnaire consisted of mostly open-ended questions, which made up the qualitative data, and a few closed questions. NVivo software was used to analyse the data. The research objectives were addressed, as the questionnaire was formulated in order to investigate the research objectives and achieve relevant results.

The research objectives of the study were: Firstly, to examine the role that diversity plays in the workplace; secondly, to investigate to what extent workplace diversity affects employee performance; thirdly, to understand the effectiveness of diverse employees' performance when working together; and fourthly, to determine if workplace diversity improves or hinders employee performance.

5.3. Respondents' demographics

The demographics of this study reflect the internal dimensions of the Gardenswartz and Rowe Four Layers of Diversity Model (1994), specifically age, gender, and race.

The demographics of the respondents were:

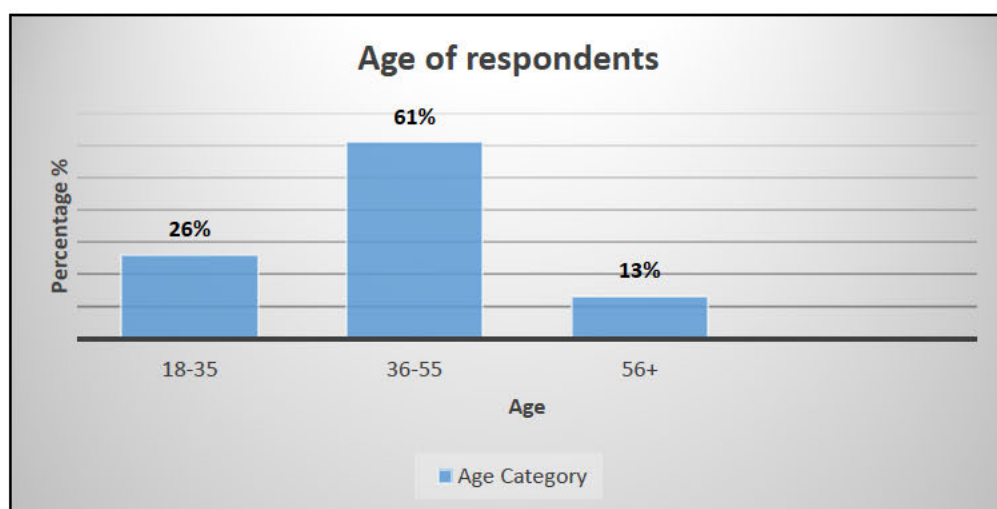
Table 5-1: Respondents' demographics

| Male | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Age | Black | Coloured | Indian | White |
| 18-35 | 4 | | 2 | 1 |
| 36-55 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| 56+ | 2 | | 1 | 1 |
| Female | | | | |
| Age | Black | Coloured | Indian | White |
| 18-35 | 5 | 1 | | 1 |
| 36-55 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 3 |
| 56+ | | | | 3 |

The demographics of the respondents are displayed in more detail using column charts:

5.3.1. Age

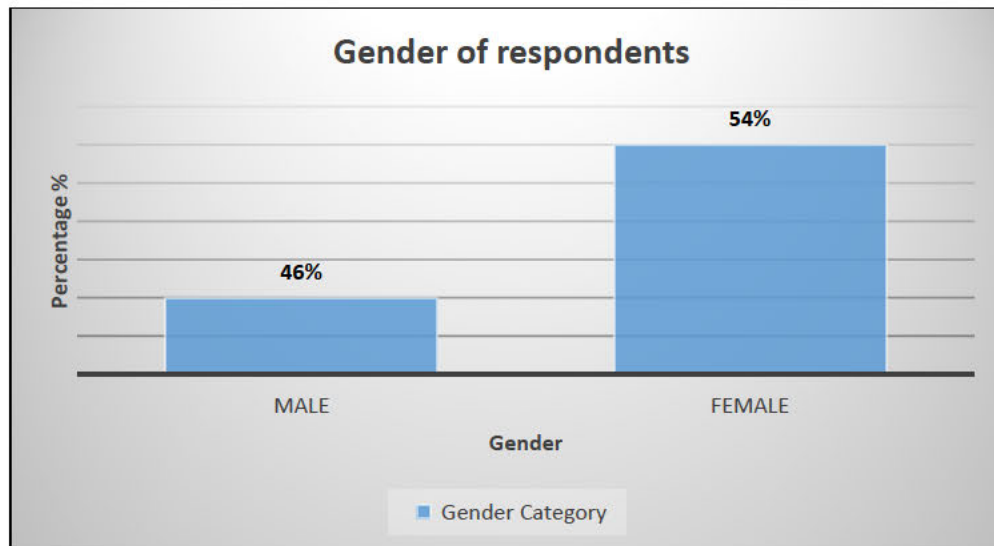
Column chart 5-1: Age of respondents



Respondents were asked their age (refer to question 1 in Appendix B). Out of the 54 respondents, 26% of the respondents were between 18-35 years old, 61% of the respondents were between 36-55 years old, and 13% of the respondents were 56 and older.

5.3.2. Gender

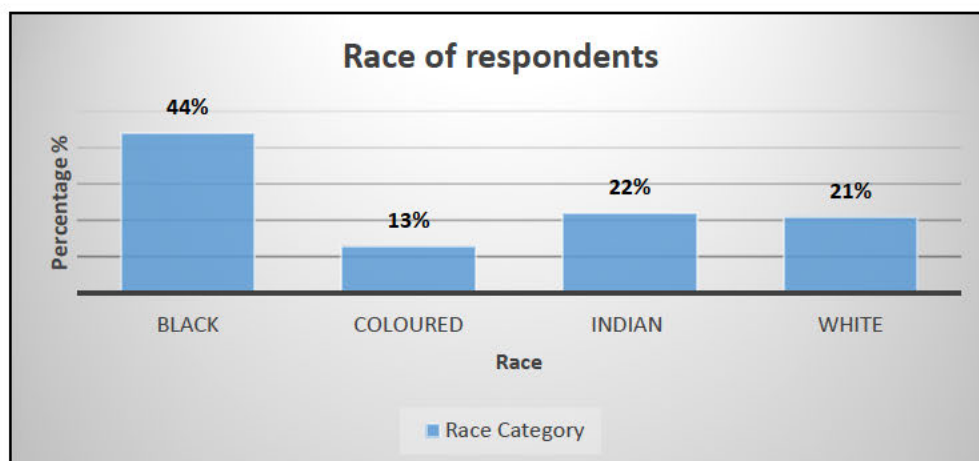
Column chart 5-2: Gender of respondents



Respondents were asked their gender (refer to question 2 in Appendix B). Out of the 54 respondents, 46% of the respondents were male and 54% of the respondents were female.

5.3.3. Race

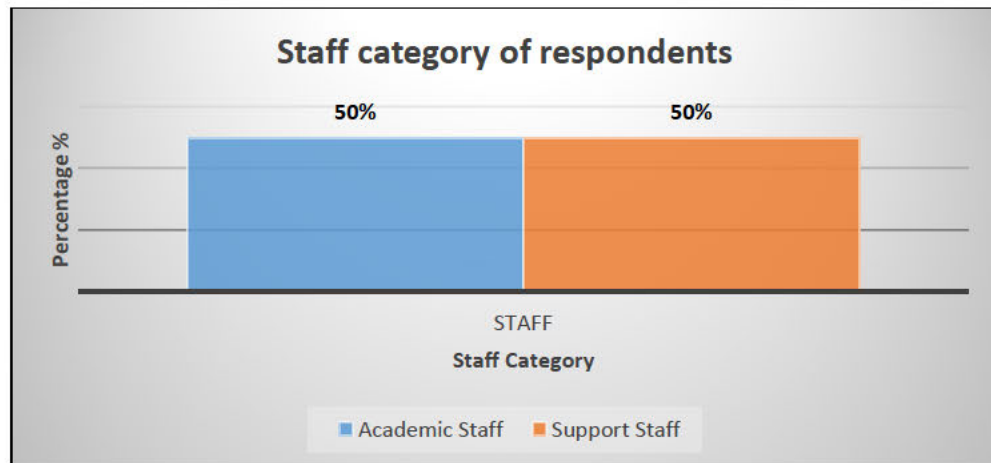
Column chart 5-3: Race of respondents



Respondents were asked their race (refer to question 3 in Appendix B). Out of the 54 respondents, 44% of the respondents were Black, 13% of the respondents were Coloured, 22% of the respondents were Indian, and 21% of the respondents were White.

5.3.4. Staff

Column chart 5-4: Staff category of respondents

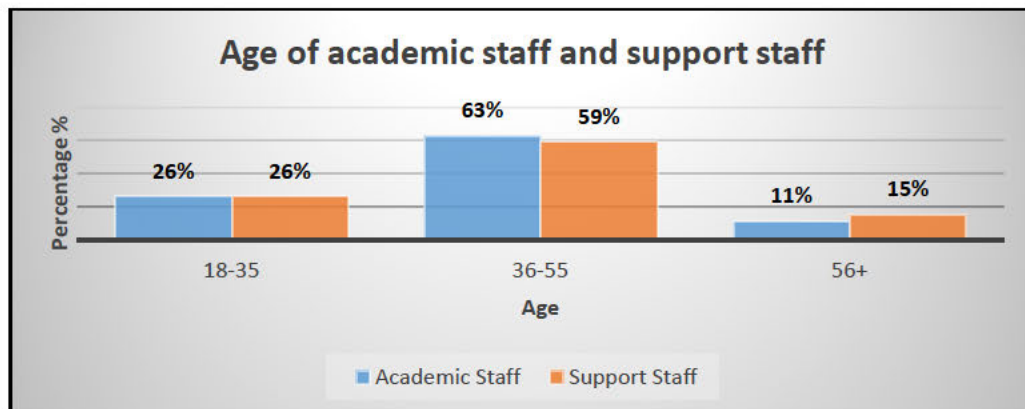


Respondents were asked if they were a member of academic staff or support staff (refer to question 4 in Appendix B). Out of the 54 respondents, 50% of the respondents were academic staff and 50% of the respondents were support staff.

These demographics are displayed in more detail, comparing age, gender and race amongst academic staff and support staff:

5.3.4.1. Age

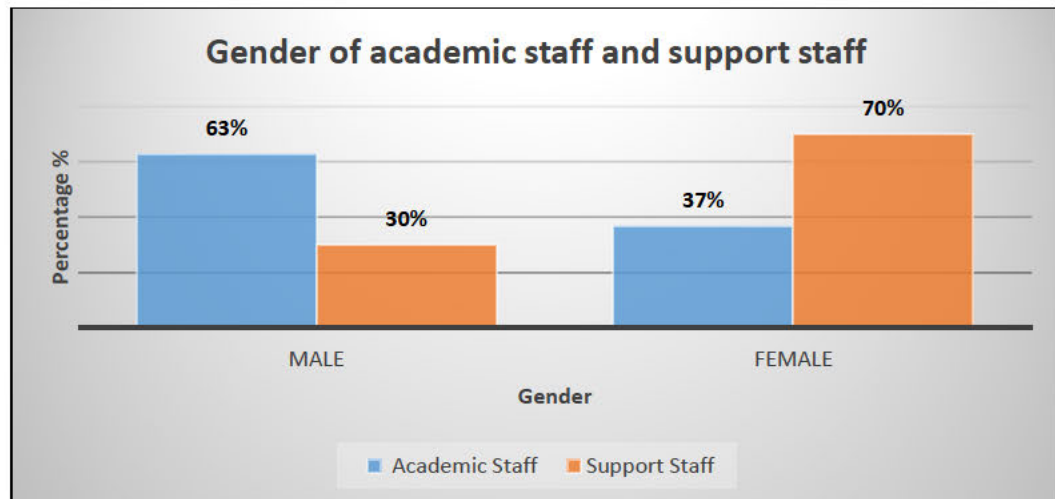
Column chart 5-5: Age of academic staff and support staff



Out of the 27 academic staff respondents, 26% of the respondents were between 18-35 years old, 63% of the respondents were between 36-55 years old, and 11% of the respondents were 56 and older. Out of the 27 support staff respondents, 26% of the respondents were between 18-35 years old, 59% of the respondents were between 36-55 years old, and 15% of the respondents were 56 and older.

5.3.4.2. Gender

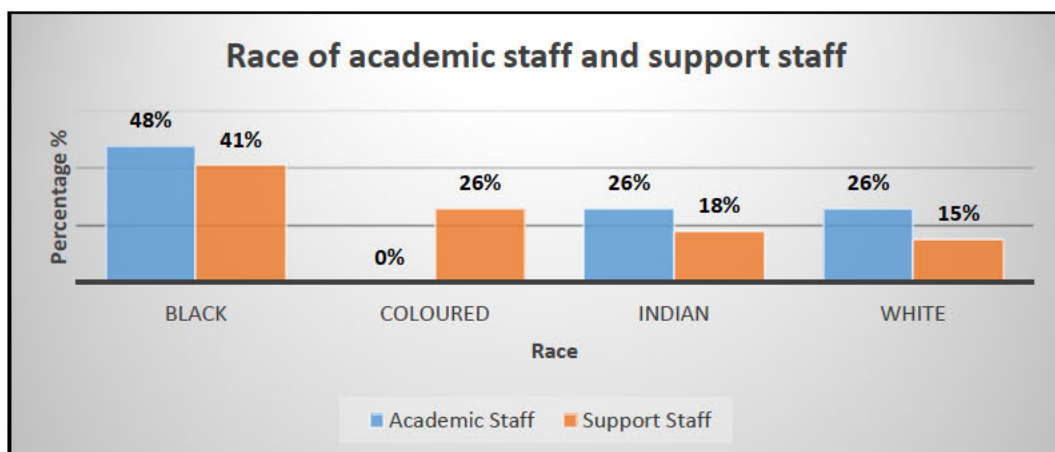
Column chart 5-6: Gender of academic staff and support staff



Out of the 27 academic staff respondents, 63% of the respondents were male and 37% of the respondents were female. Out of the 27 support staff respondents, 30% of the respondents were male and 70% of the respondents were female.

5.3.4.3. Race

Column chart 5-7: Race of academic staff and support staff



Out of the 27 academic staff respondents, 48% of the respondents were Black, 0% of the respondents were Coloured, 26% of the respondents were Indian, and 26% of the respondents were White. Out of the 27 support staff respondents, 41% of the respondents were Black, 26% of the respondents were Coloured, 18% of the respondents were Indian, and 15% of the respondents were White.

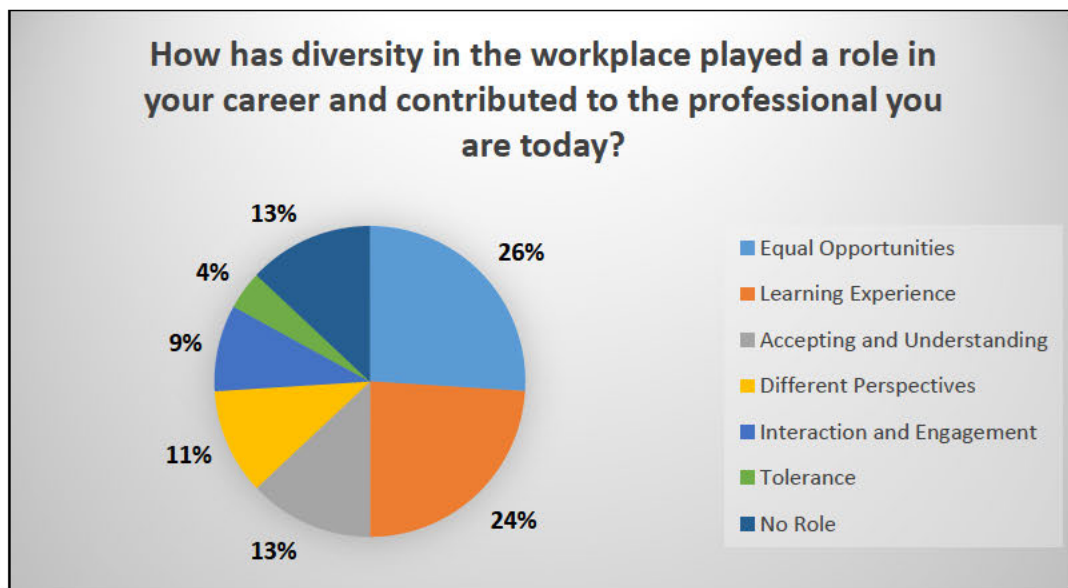
5.4. Research objectives

5.4.1. Research objective 1: To examine the role that diversity plays in the workplace

When addressing the first research objective, three main questions were asked.

The first question encouraged respondents to discuss how diversity in the workplace has played a role in their career and contributed to the professional they are today (refer to question 5 Appendix B).

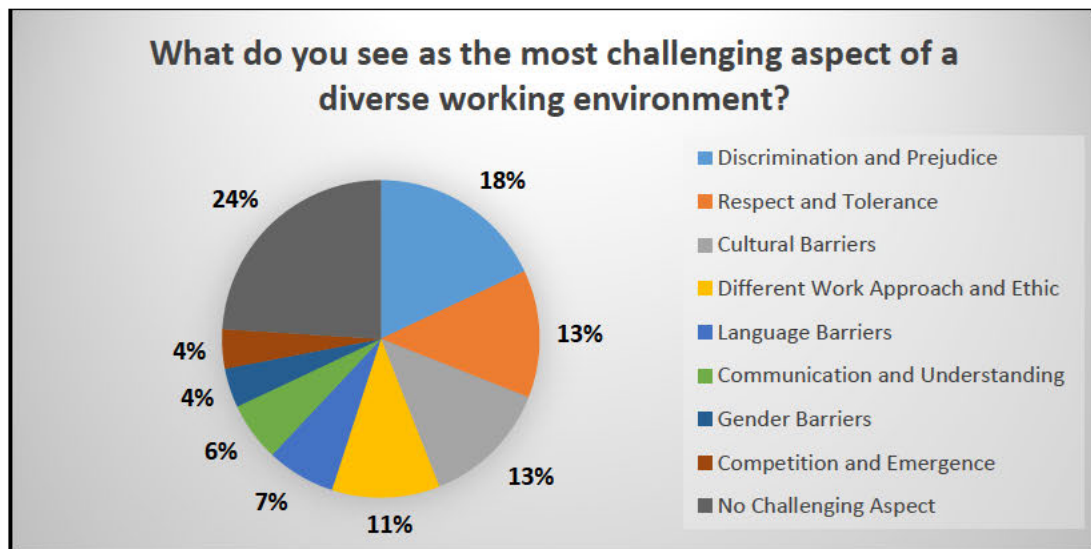
Pie chart 5-1: The role and contribution of diversity in the workplace



Out of 54 respondents, 26% responded equal opportunities, 24% responded learning experience, 13% responded accepting and understanding, 11% responded different perspectives, 9% responded interaction and engagement, 4% responded tolerance, and 13% responded that diversity has played no role in their career and has not contributed to the professional they are today.

The second question required respondents to state their most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment (refer to question 6 in Appendix B).

Pie chart 5-2: The most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment



Out of 54 respondents, 18% responded discrimination and prejudice, 13% responded respect and tolerance, 13% responded cultural barriers, 11% responded different work approach and ethic, 7% responded language barriers, 6% responded communication and understanding, 4% responded gender barriers, 4% responded competition and emergence, and 24% responded that they do not face any challenging aspects in a diverse working environment.

The third question required respondents to indicate whether or not they have been in a situation or know of a colleague that has been in a situation at UKZN, where a colleague was not accepting of another's diversity (refer to question 7 in Appendix B).

Pie chart 5-3: Acceptance of diversity at UKZN



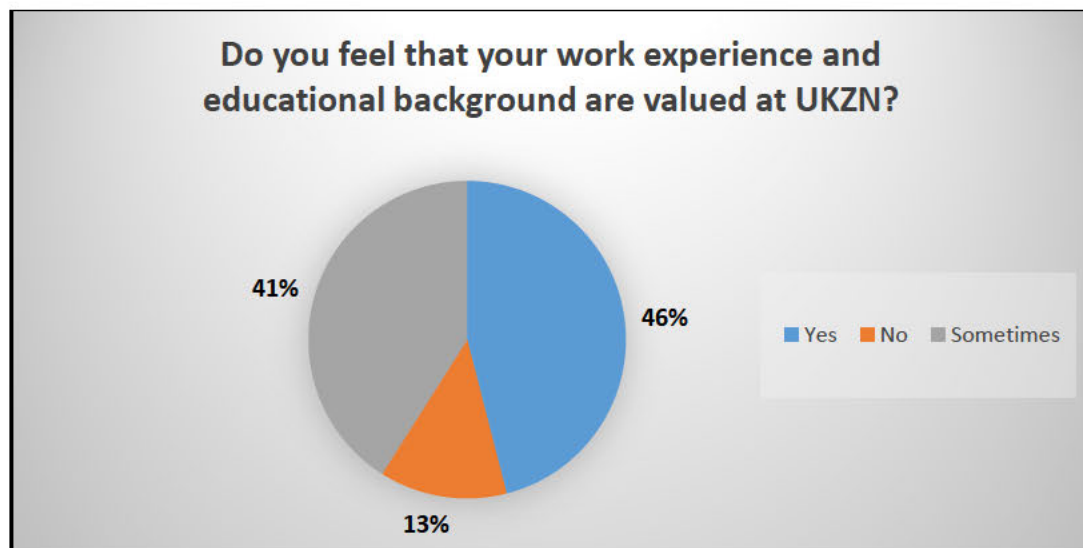
Out of 54 respondents, 22% responded yes and 78% responded no.

5.4.2. Research objective 2: To investigate to what extent workplace diversity affects employee performance

When addressing the second research objective, three main questions were asked.

The first question asked respondents if they feel that their work experience and educational background are valued at UKZN (refer to question 8 in Appendix B).

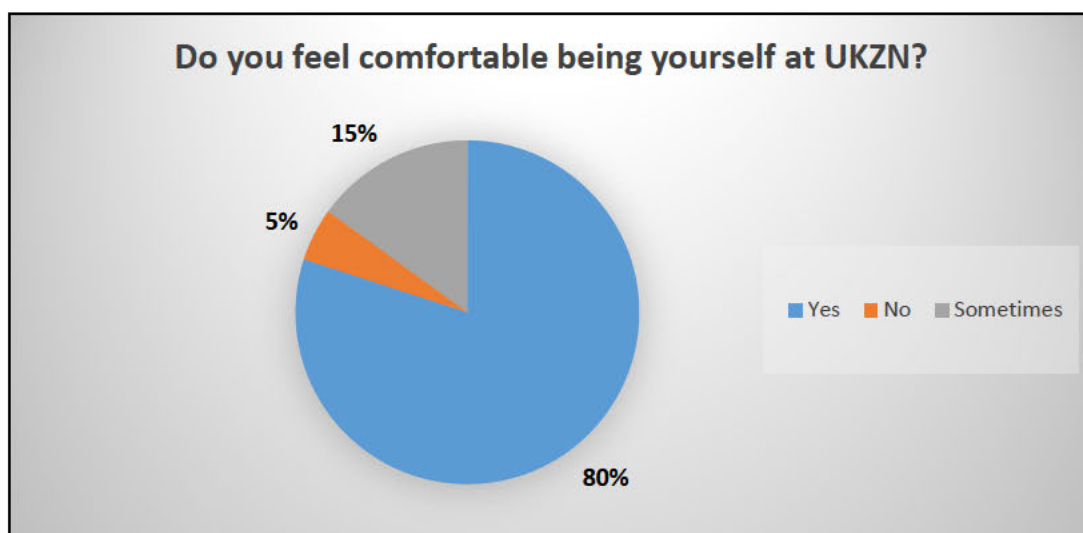
Pie chart 5-4: The value of employees' work experience and educational background at UKZN



Out of 54 respondents, 46% responded yes, 13% responded no, and 41% responded sometimes.

The second question asked respondents if they feel comfortable being themselves at UKZN (refer to question 9 in Appendix B).

Pie chart 5-5: Comfort at UKZN



Out of 54 respondents, 80% responded yes, 5% responded no, and 15% responded sometimes.

The third question asked respondents if they ever mask or downplay any of their cultural or spiritual self at UKZN (refer to question 10 in Appendix B).

Pie chart 5-6: Mask or downplay any cultural or spiritual aspects at UKZN



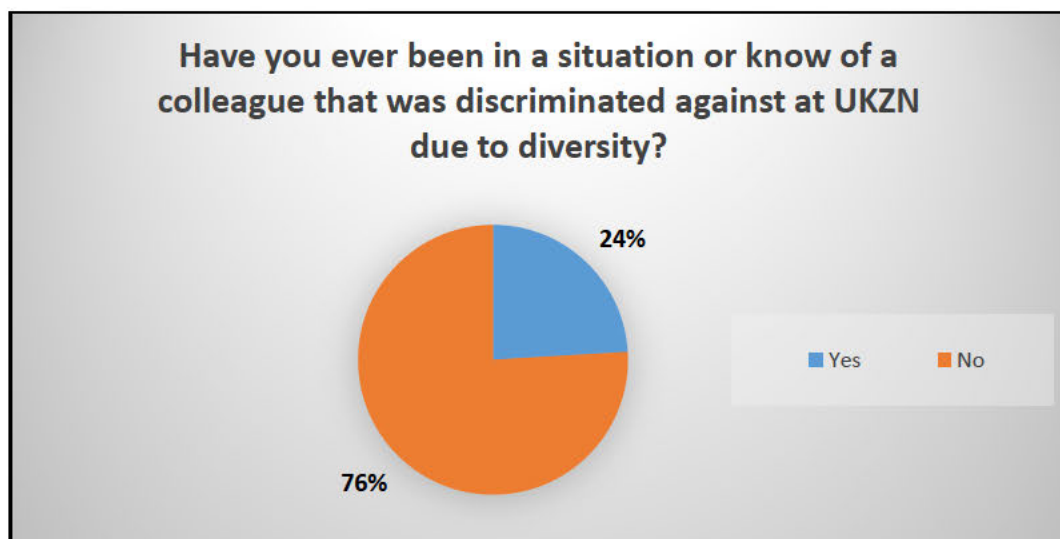
Out of 54 respondents, 19% responded yes, 76% responded no, and 5% responded sometimes.

5.4.3. Research objective 3: To understand the effectiveness of diverse employees' performance when working together

When addressing the third research objective, three main questions were asked.

The first question required respondents to state if they have ever been in a situation or know of a colleague that was discriminated against at UKZN due to diversity (refer to question 11 in Appendix B).

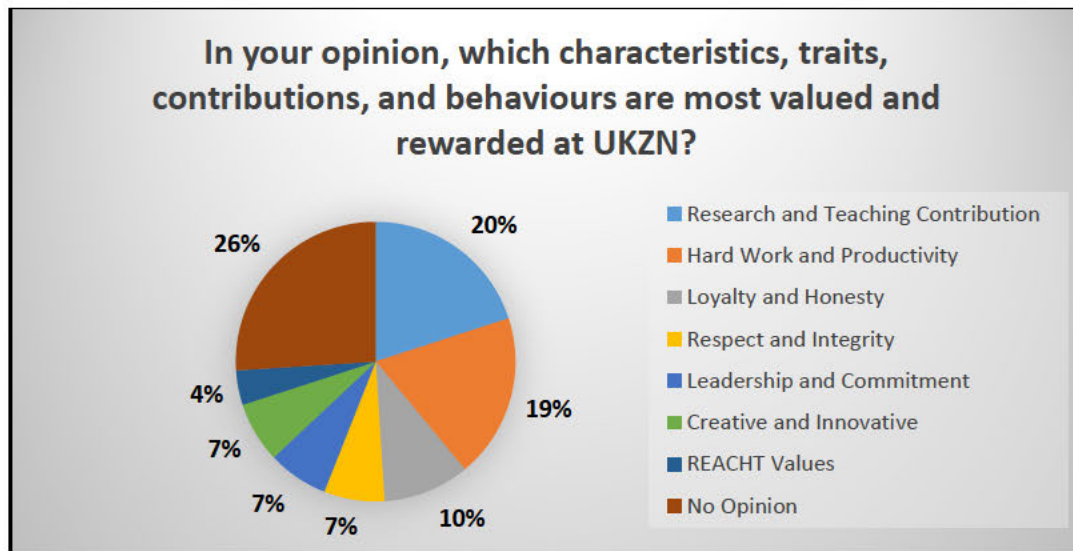
Pie chart 5-7: Discrimination at UKZN due to diversity



Out of 54 respondents, 24% responded yes and 76% responded no.

The second question required respondents to state their opinion about which characteristics, traits, contributions, and behaviours are most valued and rewarded at UKZN (refer to question 12 in Appendix B).

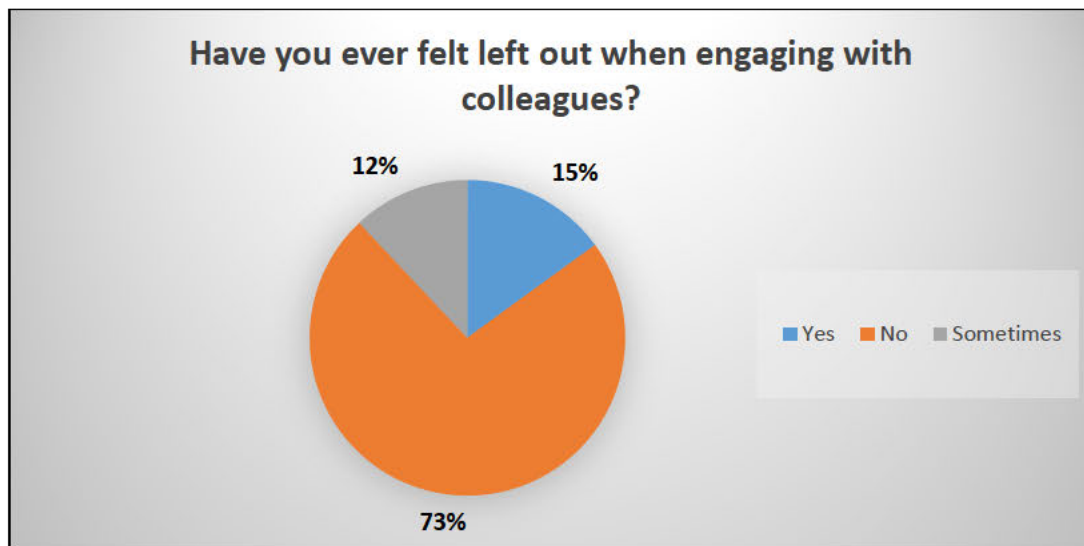
Pie chart 5-8: Most valued and rewarded characteristics, traits, contributions and behaviours at UKZN



Out of 54 respondents, 20% responded research and teaching contribution, 19% responded hard work and productivity, 10% responded loyalty and honesty, 7% responded respect and integrity, 7% responded leadership and commitment, 7% responded creative and innovative, 4% responded REACHT values, and 26% did not provide their opinion.

The third question asked respondents if they ever feel left out when engaging with colleagues (refer to question 13 in Appendix B).

Pie chart 5-9: Excluded when engaging with colleagues



Out of 54 respondents, 15% responded yes, 73% responded no, and 12% responded sometimes.

5.4.4. Research objective 4: To determine if workplace diversity improves or hinders employee performance

When addressing the fourth research objective, three main questions were asked.

The first question required respondents to indicate whether or not they have faced any obstacles in the workplace that compromised their ability to participate fully in work processes that are not experienced by all of their colleagues (refer to question 14 in Appendix B).

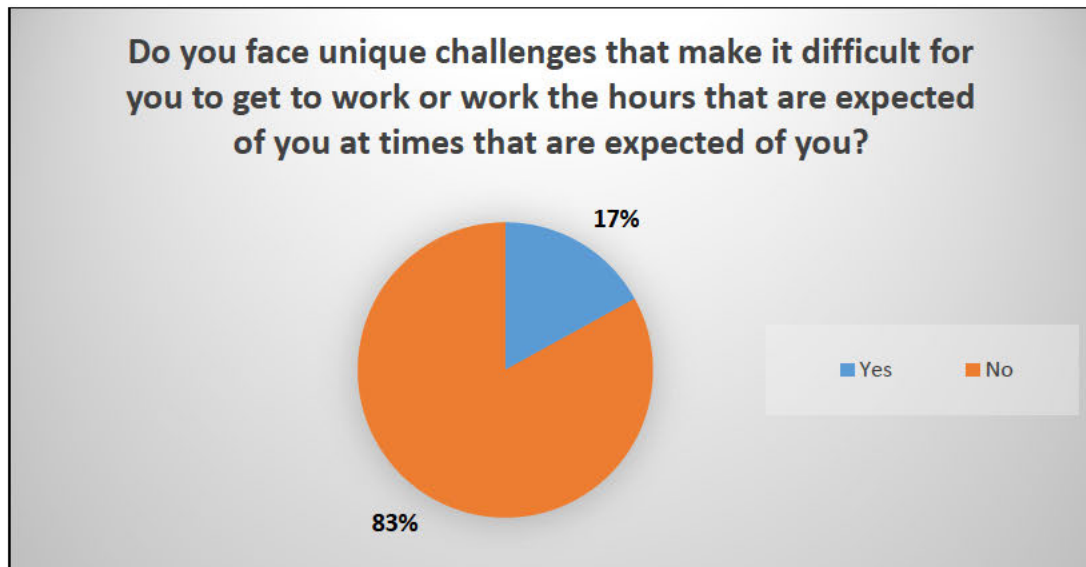
Pie chart 5-10: Obstacles in the workplace



Out of 54 respondents, 19% responded yes and 81% responded no.

The second question asked respondents if they face unique challenges that make it difficult for them to get to work or work the hours that are expected of them at the times that are expected of them (refer to question 15 in Appendix B).

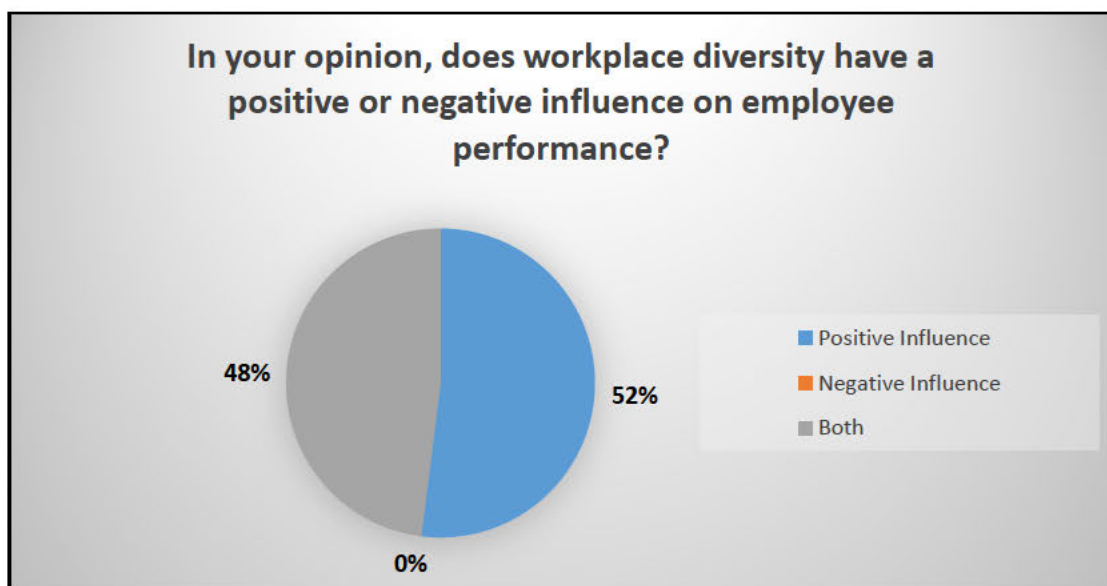
Pie chart 5-11: Unique challenges that make it difficult to work



Out of 54 respondents, 17% responded yes and 83% responded no.

The third question required respondents to state their opinion of whether workplace diversity has a positive or negative influence on employee performance (refer to question 16 in Appendix B).

Pie chart 5-12: The influence of workplace diversity on employee performance



Out of 54 respondents, 52% responded positive influence, 0% responded negative influence, and 48% responded both.

5.5. Summary

This chapter has provided the findings and results of the study. The data collected was presented in the form of tables, column charts and pie charts. This chapter first introduced the findings and results. The qualitative research methods that were used to collect data were discussed. The data for this study was collected at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, amongst three Colleges on the Pietermaritzburg Campus. The population was UKZN employees, using a sample size of 54 staff members. This study used personally administered questionnaires. The research objectives of the study were also outlined. Secondly, this chapter displayed the respondents' demographics. These demographics included the age, gender and race of respondents, as well as whether the respondents were a member of academic staff or support staff. Lastly, this chapter provided the results of the study. The questions that were asked in the questionnaire were in line with the research objectives of the study. The next chapter provides a discussion of the results.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the discussion of the results of the study. The data displayed in the previous chapter is analysed in this chapter, addressing each of the research objectives and presenting relationships and patterns. This chapter aims to provide a deeper insight by exploring the importance, meaning and applicability of the results (McCombes, 2019). This chapter first introduces the discussion of the results. Secondly, it defines content analysis and discusses the steps involved. Lastly, it provides the themes of the study.

6.2. Discussion of the results

The findings of this study were analysed and grouped into themes. The researcher distributed questionnaires to both academic and support staff at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus.

This study used content analysis to analyse the qualitative data that was collected. Content analysis is “an observational research method that is used to systematically evaluate the symbolic contents of all forms of recorded communications” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 350). The researcher was therefore able to analyse large amounts of raw data and thoroughly identify its properties; for example, the presence of certain or repeated words, concepts, or themes (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 350).

6.3. Content analysis

Qualitative research is beneficial when the researcher aims to acquire a deeper understanding of individuals’ knowledge, experiences and involvement (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). Content analysis involves transcribing texts. The purpose of content analysis is “to systematically transform a large amount of text into a highly organised and concise summary of key results” (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017, p. 94). There are five steps of content analysis, these are:

6.3.1. Meaning unit

The first step refers to the meaning unit. This involves reading and re-reading through the raw data to obtain a general overview and sense of what the respondents’ are expressing (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). Ideas and key points of the respondents’ feedback are generated; this

information is further divided into smaller groups called meaning units (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017).

6.3.2. Condensation of meaning units

The second step is condensation. Condensation is “a process of shortening the text while still preserving the core meaning” (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017, p. 94). The researcher needs to ensure that the fundamental parts of the text are not destructed.

6.3.3. Data coding

The third step refers to coding. The aim is to label the condensed meaning units in step two by developing codes (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). A code is “a name that most exactly describes what this particular condensed meaning unit is about. Usually one or two words long” (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017, p. 94).

6.3.4. Categorisation

The fourth step is categorisation. A category is “formed by grouping together those codes that are related to each other through their content or context” (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017, p. 94). Categories are developed when differences and similarities arise, which groups text that do and do not belong together (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017).

6.3.5. Theme

Lastly, the fifth step refers to the themes. A theme can be defined as conveying the underlying meaning in the text (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). Themes explain the data and answer questions. The theme allows the reader to connect with the text on both an emotional level and an intellectual level (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017).

6.4. Themes of the study

The themes of the study address each of the research objectives. The questions that the respondents were required to answer in the questionnaire were related to each of the themes. The questionnaire can be referred to in Appendix B. The themes of the study were:

6.4.1. Research objective 1: To examine the role that diversity plays in the workplace

The first theme addresses the first research objective. It focuses on the role that diversity plays in the workplace. In obtaining information under the first theme, three questions were asked, creating three sub-themes.

6.4.1.1. The role and contribution of diversity in the workplace

The first question encouraged respondents to discuss how diversity in the workplace has played a role in their career and contributed to the professional they are today. Refer to question 5 in

Appendix B. Out of 54 respondents, 26% responded equal opportunities, 24% responded learning experience, 13% responded accepting and understanding, 11% responded different perspectives, 9% responded interaction and engagement, 4% responded tolerance, and 13% responded that diversity has played no role in their career and has not contributed to the professional they are today.

Twenty-six percent of the respondents reported that diversity in the workplace has provided equal opportunities for employees. According to respondents, diversity in the workplace has allowed South Africans to study and obtain qualifications that they are passionate about and consider careers of their choice. It has provided equal opportunities for all, regardless of their inherent differences. This is in line with the definition of Affirmative Action which can be explained in the Employment Equity Act section 15(1), as “measures designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce of a designated employer”. Respondents stated that employees are free to be themselves, which allows them to demonstrate their abilities and contribute positively to their overall performance at work. By being free, respondents also reported that it has enhanced their career growth through promotions, applying for new positions or furthering their studies.

Twenty-four percent of the respondents replied that employees have been exposed to different learning experiences through diversity in the workplace. Respondents reported that they are able to learn from each other as different employees in the workplace have different backgrounds and experiences. According to respondents, the meeting of different cultures, beliefs and religions has exposed employees to how others think and interact; this moulds employees to create a work ethic of a very high calibre, as well as facilitates inclusion in the workplace so that employees are not made to feel left out or distracted from their work. Respondents indicated that diversity in the workplace has also encouraged employees to learn from others and be more flexible, this has influenced mutual respect.

Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated that employees have been able to be more accepting and understanding due to diversity in the workplace. According to respondents, through workplace diversity, employees are able to understand each other better, which makes the workplace easier to manage. Respondents stated that they are able to adapt and accept diversity as a positive tool that makes their work life more convenient. According to respondents, employees now have the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of colleagues which allows them to understand and accept other cultures.

Eleven percent of the respondents stated that diversity in the workplace has allowed for different perspectives. Respondents reported that employees are able to approach situations differently and

broaden their perspectives; diversity has contributed by exposure to a complexity of different experiences and insights. As stated by respondents, workplace diversity improves employees' ability to view situations and problems from different perspectives, which improves the overall responsiveness and understanding of others. According to Ayres (2019), when working with teams that are diverse, organisations have the chance to allocate tasks in relation to each employee's strengths. Respondents indicated that diversity in the workplace provides employees with faster problem solving skills and creativity as they all have different skills and backgrounds, resulting in effective, sustainable solutions. This is in line with Ayres (2019), who states that different perspectives results in an increased job satisfaction level and a decreased turnover rate.

Nine percent of the respondents reported that they are able to interact and engage with others due to diversity in the workplace. According to respondents, networking is a rewarding experience as evidenced by growth. Respondents reported that diversity in the workplace tends to broaden one's mind; it has helped to shape the way employees interact and react to situations at work.

Four percent of the respondents answered that tolerance has been a contributing factor for employees that are in a diverse workplace. As stated by respondents, diversity brings about tolerance since employees are exposed to different people. Respondents indicated that being exposed to different races, genders and age groups encourages employees to be more tolerable and open minded about the views of others.

The findings of this sub-theme have revealed that diversity in the workplace has played a positive role in employees' careers and has contributed positively to the professionals they are today. Out of 54 respondents, only 13% of the respondents indicated that diversity has played no role in their career and has not contributed to the professional they are today.

6.4.1.2. The most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment

The second question required respondents to state their most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment. Refer to question 6 in Appendix B. Out of 54 respondents, 18% responded discrimination and prejudice, 13% responded respect and tolerance, 13% responded cultural barriers, 11% responded different work approach and ethic, 7% responded language barriers, 6% responded communication and understanding, 4% responded gender barriers, 4% responded competition and emergence, and 24% responded that they do not face any challenging aspects in a diverse working environment.

Eighteen percent of the respondents reported that discrimination and prejudice have been seen as the most challenging aspects of a diverse working environment. According to respondents, employees are sometimes unable to focus on the current demands of their work as they are not able to look past the historical exploitations that have previously taken place. Employees need to share an understanding of joint priorities and how they can all contribute to nation building.

Respondents shared their point of view that by creating equal opportunities in a diverse working environment, when a certain race or gender is offered an opportunity, it is sometimes viewed as being taken away from another group. This may cause tension amongst employees as it can be viewed as favouritism, and even if it is not always the case, this decreases employees' performance. Respondents indicated that they may be working with individuals who may still hold prejudicial ideas about others and may not see the need for diverse and inclusive workplaces. According to respondents, employees need to understand their value as a professional and the skills that they bring into the working environment.

Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated that they are faced with a lack of respect and tolerance in the workplace. As stated by respondents, employees may find it hard to embrace others that are not the same. A fundamental aspect of a successful diverse workplace is respect amongst employees; where there is a lack of respect, conflict may arise. Respondents specified that they need to treat each other with humility and be accommodating of each other; intolerance occurs as a result of employees that are resistant to changes and are inflexible. Respondents reported that explaining different cultures and the varying ways of life may help employees cope. Employees should prioritise communication, treat each other with respect, be open-minded and encourage team work among diverse groups of individuals in the workplace.

Thirteen percent of the respondents reported that diversity in the workplace creates cultural barriers. Respondents pointed out that employees need to learn about diverse cultures as well as their likes and dislikes. The different cultures sometimes misunderstand other cultures' beliefs and traditional systems; however, getting along with people that are diverse may take time. Respondents reported that sometimes management might not clearly outline the culture of the organisation. According to respondents, employees can try to put more effort into learning and building relationships, and this can be done by creating interactions and discussions. Communicating with other cultures could create an open and inclusive workplace environment.

Eleven percent of the respondents replied that they find it challenging to deal with different work approaches and ethics. Respondents stated that diversity breeds an environment where you have to engage with different people who have different perspectives from your own, thus a diverse working environment can be both positive and challenging at the same time. According to respondents, some demographic groups tend to be protective of their space and opportunities, while others are not. However, it is more common to witness demographic groups looking out for each other. According to Ayres (2019), employees from different backgrounds will have varying attitudes in the workplace. They will have their own set of standards as well as behaviours and etiquette they believe in. Respondents reported that the challenge is learning how to organise, build and encourage teams that can be called upon to provide an inclusive direction in an effective

way. Employees need to feel accepted and included for participation to occur. As stated by respondents, when working in a diverse environment, employees have to be open to new ideas and new ways of performing their tasks.

Seven percent of the respondents reported that diversity in the workplace creates language barriers. According to respondents, employees sometimes do not speak a language that is understood by everyone. This may result in miscommunications, delays in work processes and errors. Respondents shared that although English is the language that is understood by most, it may be beneficial to try and learn new languages.

Six percent of the respondents specified that communication and understanding is a challenging aspect of a diverse working environment. Respondents indicated that employees are sometimes accidentally offended due to communication issues or a lack of understanding. This can be due to differences in language and the way that diverse employees communicate. For instance, jokes that are translated may not be funny in different languages, and some issues that seem to be important and bothering one colleague may not be important to another. As stated by Ayres (2019), it is important to recognise that diverse employees have different backgrounds, so although everyone may, for example, speak English, they will have different accents and slang that can cause miscommunications. The same applies to different cultures. According to Ayres (2019), if employees do not understand each other, they may offend someone without knowing it; for example, a handshake may be a kind gesture for some, while having cultural implications for others. According to respondents, employees can get to know each other better by interacting with each other in a way where they learn more about their backgrounds and cultures. Respondents reported that employees can improve their listening skills and adapt to work well with everyone in their workplace.

Four percent of the respondents reported that diversity in the workplace creates gender barriers. As stated by respondents, employees feel as if the recognition that is received is different amongst different genders. Some genders need to work harder than others. This creates tension in the workplace and decreases an employee's performance. Respondents stated that different genders also find it difficult to balance their work-home life, due to different responsibilities. This may result in employees not giving their best at work.

Four percent of the respondents indicated that competition and emergence can be seen as a challenging aspect in a diverse working environment. According to respondents, employees are compelled to learn new things all the time, and try to understand and adjust to different cultures. Respondents reported that employees need to be open-minded and focus on their skills and abilities.

The findings of this sub-theme indicated that the majority of employees are faced with varying challenges in a diverse working environment. Out of 54 respondents, 24% of the respondents reported that they do not face any challenging aspects in a diverse working environment.

6.4.1.3. Acceptance of diversity at UKZN

The third question required respondents to indicate whether or not they have been in a situation or know of a colleague that has been in a situation at UKZN, where a colleague was not accepting of another's diversity. Refer to question 7 in Appendix B. Out of 54 respondents, 22% responded yes and 78% responded no. The yes respondents answered as follows; 42% due to race, 18% due to appointment and promotion, 8% due to age, 8% due to sexual orientation, 8% due to disability, 8% due to culture, and 8% due to other reasons. Employees have mainly not been accepted due to their internal dimension of the Gardenswartz and Rowe Four Layers of Diversity Model (1994), specifically race, age, sexual orientation, disability, and culture.

Forty-two percent of the respondents reported that race seems to be the main cause where colleagues are not accepting of each other's differences. According to respondents, some employees seem to resent the success of others or discriminate against others with a different skin colour. Employees are sometimes not aware of differences and may make jokes that are offensive to some. Respondents indicated that being discriminated against due to race can cause employees to feel uncomfortable or cause tension amongst each other. This results in employees not being themselves in the workplace. According to respondents, employees can make the effort to attend diversity workshops in UKZN which alerts them of their biased behaviour.

Eighteen percent of the respondents indicated that appointment and promotion causes employees to not be accepting of each other. Respondents reported that appointment to posts may not occur due to differences in race or nationality; the same goes for promotions which are often not offered. According to respondents, the consequence of employees not being appointed or promoted may result in a lack of motivation. However, this may not always be the case due of affirmative action measures.

Eight percent of the respondents reported that employees may feel that they are questioned or judged by the way that they perform their tasks due to differences in age. Younger employees are often underestimated by older employees, and this puts pressure on them to perform better. Eight percent of the respondents indicated that employees may be discriminated against due to sexual orientation. Employees are often teased or mocked due to differences in their sexual orientation. According to respondents, employees should be able to embrace who they are in the workplace. Eight percent of the respondents identified that employees with disabilities are often not accommodated for, and the work environment needs to be more accessible. Eight percent of the respondents reported that culture causes employees to not be accepting of each other; this can be

seen in the way colleagues deal with situations based on cultural backgrounds. According to respondents, employees need to compromise and be more accommodating of each other. While eight percent of the respondents said other reasons that occur are due to the general day to day processes in a diverse working environment, and these experiences may not be experienced by all colleagues. This is in line with Ayres (2019), who states that many teams find it difficult to stay on track and meet their deadlines due to everyday issues, therefore, it is helpful to have a management figure to direct the debates.

The findings of this sub-theme have revealed that acceptance of diversity is common at UKZN. Out of 54 respondents, 78% of the respondents indicated that they have never been in a situation or know of a colleague that has been in a situation at UKZN where a colleague was not accepting of another's diversity.

6.4.2. Research objective 2: To investigate to what extent does workplace diversity affect employee performance

The second theme addresses the second research objective. It focuses on the extent to which workplace diversity affects employee performance. In obtaining information under the second theme, three questions were asked, creating three sub-themes.

6.4.2.1. The value of employees' work experience and educational background at UKZN

The first question asked respondents if they feel that their work experience and educational background are valued at UKZN. Refer to question 8 in Appendix B. This question reflects on the external dimensions of the Gardenswartz and Rowe Four Layers of Diversity Model (1994), specifically work experience and educational background. Out of 54 respondents, 46% responded yes, 41% responded sometimes, and 13% responded no.

Out of the yes respondents, 21% responded appreciation and recognition, 9% responded effective working environment, 9% responded decision making, and 7% left their response blank.

Twenty-one percent of the respondents reported that employees feel that their work experience and educational background are valued as they are appreciated and recognised. According to respondents, some employees receive verbal appreciation from their colleagues, as it is good for employees to know that their efforts are appreciated in the workplace. Other employees receive feedback from their mentors and leaders, which is positive and valuable. Respondents shared that when feedback is constructive and in line with what an employee has been doing, it allows an employee to know what they are doing right and wrong, and further improve if necessary. According to respondents, employees are recognised by the various ceremonies or workshops that the University hosts, such as award ceremonies, college outings, and wellness programmes. Respondents stated that when employees are treated equally according to their status, this allows

them to feel valued as they feel as if their work experience and educational background are being used appropriately.

Nine percent of the respondents stated that an effective working environment allows employees to feel that their work experience and educational background are valued. Respondents reported that a structured and effective work environment is one where employees are free to be themselves within the bounds of the University's policies and procedures. This allows employees to carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. This is consistent with Ayres (2019), who states that diverse teams allow employees to create stronger bonds and have increased productivity levels.

Nine percent of the respondents indicated that employees feel valued when their input and opinions are taken into consideration when decisions are taking place in the workplace. According to respondents, when new challenges arise in the workplace, employees' input and opinions are considered before any major decisions are made or put into practice. This enables employees to continue being productive as they are comfortable and aware of changes that are taking place. Workplace diversity develops a working arrangement where everyone is able to join the labour force (Ayres, 2019). Respondents reported that when employees' concepts and models are used to provide sustainable solutions for UKZN and other educational institutions, it enables the feeling of self-fulfilment and success.

Out of the sometimes respondents, 13% responded unfair differences, 7% responded contract or external differences, 7% responded under-valued, 6% responded performance management, 4% responded diversity, and 4% left their response blank.

Thirteen percent of the respondents reported that employees feel that their work experience and educational background are only sometimes valued due to unfair differences. Respondents indicated that in the case of support staff, they feel that there is no clear career path for them in terms of studying further or moving up the ladder, while in the case of academic staff, they are continuously conducting research and publishing their work. Respondents reported that the professional qualifications of support staff are often not held in the same light as academic qualifications of academic staff. According to respondents, there are sometimes staff that are more experienced than those that have qualifications and vice versa.

Seven percent of the respondents stated that contract or external differences leads to employees feeling that their work experience and educational background are only sometimes valued due to unfair differences. According to respondents, contract staff contribute to the university in different ways as compared to permanent staff. This makes employees feel as if they are not valued as much. In the same way, respondents reported that when applying for better job opportunities in

different departments within the University, the feedback that employees receive varies. This negatively affects employee performance as they feel that what they have to offer is not valued.

Seven percent of the respondents indicated that employees feel that their work experience and educational background are only sometimes valued due to being under-valued by the University. As stated by respondents, in some departments, there is an expectation to do more and yet it is not acknowledged. According to respondents, this leads to staff being taken for granted, as their extended hours of work is not appreciated, resulting in employees putting in less effort and not performing their best.

Six percent of the respondents stated that performance management leads to employees feeling that their work experience and educational background are only sometimes valued, due to unfair differences. According to respondents, UKZN focuses on performance management which monitors different aspects of performance. However, employees' time, effort, energy and dedication are not reflected fairly.

Four percent of the respondents reported that employees feel that their work experience and educational background are only sometimes valued due to diversity. According to respondents, South Africans have a long history when dealing with diversity, which may affect their judgement and their work processes.

Out of the no respondents, 9% responded work experience and educational background are irrelevant, and 4% responded remuneration.

Nine percent of the respondents reported that employees feel that their work experience and educational background are irrelevant. According to respondents, while employed, some employees have not been asked about their experience or qualifications. Respondents further reported that staff on a higher grade with qualifications can earn less than staff on a lower grade with no qualifications, depending on their years of service. Therefore, employees do not always feel the need to study further or progress in their career path.

Four percent of the respondents indicated that employees' remuneration results in them not feeling as if their work experience and educational background are not valued. According to respondents, in the experience of most support staff, UKZN does not remunerate by education and experience as there are no incentives linked to progression or obtaining new qualifications. Respondents reported that this results in employees not going the extra mile as it will not be recognised.

The findings of this sub-theme showed that majority of employees feel that their work experience and educational background are valued at UKZN. Out of 54 respondents, only 13% of the respondents stated that they feel as if their work experience and educational background are not valued at UKZN.

6.4.2.2. Comfort at UKZN

The second question asked respondents if they feel comfortable being themselves at UKZN. Refer to question 9 in Appendix B. This question reflects on the external dimensions of the Gardenswartz and Rowe Four Layers of Diversity Model (1994), specifically appearance and personal habits. Out of 54 respondents, 80% responded yes, 15% responded sometimes, and 5% responded no.

Out of the yes respondents, 24% responded freedom of expression, 18% responded good work environment, 13% responded equal treatment and mutual respect, 7% responded that they never experienced problems, 6% responded adapt and flexible, and 11% left their response blank.

Twenty-four percent of the respondents reported that freedom of expression allows employees to feel comfortable being themselves. As stated by respondents, employees are able to express themselves and raise their concerns freely without fear. Some employees do not ever feel threatened or intimidated to be whom they are or vocal about the way they feel about any given situation. It can be seen as an invitation that welcomes everyone to become active, as different individuals bring their unique education and past experiences and these are treated with great value (Ayres, 2019). Respondents reported that employees are able to freely express their opinions on matters that affect their career growth. Employees are therefore able to be comfortable in their work environment which allows for focus and productivity.

Eighteen percent of the respondents stated that a good work environment allows employees to feel comfortable being themselves. According to respondents, employees feel as if they contribute to the functions of the University. Employees perceive a happy work environment, where they feel appreciated by staff and always have people to assist in problems regarding work. Respondents reported that employees enjoy the interaction they have with students; this provides them with a feeling of fulfilment. According to respondents, at most times, employees are free to grow and develop at their own pace; UKZN is an environment that will always be conducive for growth.

Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated that employees are comfortable being themselves as they receive equal treatment and mutual respect. Respondents reported that employees have equal rights, and although they are from different backgrounds, they need to be tolerant of each other. According to respondents, employees are surrounded by colleagues who encourage and support each other, and everyone is represented equally. This allows employees to feel comfortable enough to be themselves and build relationships with those around them. Respondents stated that employees are more relaxed and focused on their work knowing that they have colleagues that they can rely on.

Seven percent of the respondents reported that employees that have never experienced problems feel comfortable being themselves. According to respondents, there are some employees that at no time have been made to feel uncomfortable. Employees have the freedom to operate as professionals and have not experienced any prejudice.

Six percent of the respondents stated that employees are comfortable being themselves as they are able to adapt and be flexible. Respondents reported that employees are able to adapt to most situations, especially staff that have been employed for a long period of time. According to respondents, employees are aware of their privilege or disadvantages and conduct themselves accordingly based on the situation. This results in employees not losing focus and their pace of work remaining constant.

Out of the sometimes respondents, 7% responded bias or discrimination, 4% responded working environment, and 4% left their response blank.

Seven percent of the respondents reported that bias or discrimination results in employees sometimes being comfortable being themselves. As stated by respondents, not all senior academics are comfortable with junior staff who speak up or stand up for themselves, while some staff are reminded by others that their race or gender is not favourable in the workplace. Respondents reported that this makes employees doubt their contribution and capabilities. According to respondents, employees have to keep in line with the culture of the University; there are times when being themselves is not taken in the same light, as perceptions change regularly.

Four percent of the respondents stated that the working environment has an impact on employees sometimes being comfortable being themselves. According to respondents, in some departments, management does not create a conducive environment, resulting in employees sometimes feeling as if they are just numbers on a payroll system.

Out of the no respondents, 2% responded lack of support, 2% responded lack of respect, and 2% responded unfair.

There are a few reasons why employees do not feel comfortable being themselves. Two percent of the respondents reported that there is a lack of support for employees, and some employees feel as if their voices are not heard. According to Ayres (2019), when working in teams, workplace diversity definitely helps to improve intellect and understanding in an organisation. However, it does not create a working environment where every employee feels comfortable or safe to share their ideas (Ayres, 2019). Two percent of the respondents reported that there is a lack of respect which occurs due to employees feeling victimised. Certain races, genders or age groups feel as if they are put in difficult situations. While two percent of the respondents reported that unfair circumstances arise as employees feel as if the salaries that they earn are not fair given the

workload that they have. According to respondents, if employees are not comfortable in their work environment, they will always be distracted from performing their tasks effectively.

The findings of this sub-theme indicated that the bulk of employees feel comfortable being themselves at UKZN. Out of 54 respondents, only 5% of the respondents reported that they do not feel comfortable being themselves at UKZN.

6.4.2.3. Mask or downplay any cultural or spiritual aspects at UKZN

The third question asked respondents if they ever mask or downplay any of their cultural or spiritual self at UKZN. Refer to question 10 in Appendix B. This question reflects on the external dimensions of the Gardenswartz and Rowe Four Layers of Diversity Model (1994), specifically recreational habits and religion. Out of 54 respondents, 76% responded no, 5% responded sometimes, and 19% responded yes.

Out of the no respondents, 22% responded free to express myself, 13% responded good work environment, 11% responded never needed to, and 30% left their response blank.

Twenty-two percent of the respondents reported that employees do not feel the need to mask or downplay any aspect of their cultural or spiritual self as they feel free to express themselves. According to respondents, employees are proud of who they are, they are accepted and allowed to speak freely without judgement. Respondents stated that employees respect each other's choices, they are honest about who they are and what they believe in. When employees have a good understanding of each other, they are able to communicate effectively and work as a team.

Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated that a good work environment enables employees to not mask or downplay any aspect of their cultural or spiritual self. Respondents reported that employees need to be proud of who they are and what they contribute to the institution; their individuality should be encouraged and respected. According to respondents, employees respect each other's beliefs. Culturally, employees have so much to learn from each other. By using an individual's skills and abilities as the primary tool when hiring, everyone will be have a chance at success (Ayres, 2019).

Eleven percent of the respondents stated that employees have never needed to mask or downplay any aspect of their cultural or spiritual self. According to respondents, there is no discrimination at all due to their cultural and spiritual background.

Out of the sometimes respondents, 5% responded not completely myself.

Five percent of the respondents reported that employees sometimes mask or downplay aspects of their cultural or spiritual self as they are not completely themselves. According to respondents, as employees need to be tolerant of others, they also need to not put others in a position where they

feel uncomfortable or criticised. Respondents reported that some employees feel as if they need to negotiate parts of their identity in order to survive. It is good for employees to think of others and their feelings, however it is not good to pretend or act differently than you feel. Respondents indicated that a good working environment is built on good relationships and employees need to communicate effectively.

Out of the yes respondents, 7% responded professional, 4% responded understanding, 4% responded do not impose, and 4% left their response blank.

Seven percent of the respondents reported that employees mask or downplay aspects of their cultural or spiritual self as they feel the need to be professional. Respondents stated that in a work environment, they prefer to put their professional capacities first rather than their cultural or spiritual self. According to respondents, in some departments, there is a lack of trust among employees. Employees do not feel as if they can be open with others, resulting in a strictly professional relationship. As stated by Ayres (2019), this matter is customary in cultures which emphasise being respectful or polite. For example, employees may not feel free to voice their opinions or ideas even if they are asked to. This may be due to keeping to their roles and what their job position requires of them (Ayres, 2019).

Four percent of the respondents stated that employees mask or downplay aspects of their cultural or spiritual self due to understanding. According to respondents, employees feel as if their colleagues will not be understanding of their differences. Respondents reported that employees need to learn from each other, understanding that the differences that exist amongst each other will promote an effective working environment.

Four percent of the respondents indicated that employees mask or downplay aspects of their cultural or spiritual self as they do not want to impose on others. As stated by respondents, due to different religious beliefs, some employees do not want to impose or regularly express their religious beliefs which are not practiced by all at the workplace.

The findings of this sub-theme revealed that most employees do not feel the need to mask or downplay any aspect of their cultural or spiritual self at UKZN. Out of 54 respondents, 19% of the respondents indicated that they feel the need to mask or downplay any aspect of their cultural or spiritual self at UKZN.

6.4.3. Research objective 3: To understand the effectiveness of diverse employees' performance when working together

The third theme addresses the third research objective. It focuses on the effectiveness of diverse employees' performance when working together. In obtaining information under the third theme, three questions were asked, creating three sub-themes.

6.4.3.1. Discrimination at UKZN due to diversity

The first question required respondents to state if they have ever been in a situation or know of a colleague that was discriminated against at UKZN due to diversity. Refer to question 11 in Appendix B. Out of 54 respondents, 24% responded yes and 76% responded no. Out of the yes respondents, 15% responded recruitment and selection, 5% responded failure to accommodate, and 4% responded unfair treatment.

Fifteen percent of the respondents stated that discrimination occurs when recruiting and selecting employees. According to respondents, good potential recruits are often passed by due to affirmative action. Diversity profiles should be more reflective of local conditions, as opposed to being based on institution-wide statistics. Employees are often not appointed due to their citizenship status, race or qualifications. Respondents reported that when employees are employed on a contract basis, they are often overlooked or not considered when the posts become permanent. According to respondents, there are some employees that apply for positions but are never considered. This results in employees staying in their positions knowing that the chances of exploring new opportunities is limited; employees may feel very demotivated.

Five percent of the respondents reported that employees often feel discriminated against when there is a failure to accommodate them. According to respondents, this is the case with employees with disabilities. Although the institution does make the work environment accessible, employees sometimes spend extra time trying to access venues or equipment that are not suited to everyone. Respondents reported that the same can be the case with pregnant or breast-feeding mothers who are not supported, especially those employees in the field. Respondents indicated that employees spend extra time seeing to their needs whereas this time can be used to perform their tasks and contribute to their overall employee performance. This is in line with Prieto, et al. (2009), who state that diversity can have a negative influence on both individuals and groups in an organisation. For example, employees who differ from the majority in an organisation usually have decreased levels of psychological commitment, increased turnover levels, and higher absenteeism rates than other employees (Prieto, et al., 2009).

Four percent of the respondents indicated that unfair treatment results in discrimination. According to respondents, employees are sometimes treated differently when going away for work conferences, in terms of their flights, accommodation and car hire. Employees feel that they are treated differently simply because of their differences in diversity. Respondents reported that employees often will not represent the institution to the best of their ability when they feel as if they are not being treated fairly.

The findings of this sub-theme showed that discrimination is not common at UKZN. Out of 54 respondents, 76% of the respondents reported that they have never been in a situation or know of a colleague that was discriminated against at UKZN due to diversity.

6.4.3.2. Most valued and rewarded characteristics, traits, contributions, and behaviours at UKZN

The second question required respondents to state their opinion about which characteristics, traits, contributions, and behaviours are most valued and rewarded at UKZN. Refer to question 12 in Appendix B.

Out of 54 respondents, 20% responded research and teaching contribution, 19% responded hard work and productivity, 10% responded loyalty and honesty, 7% responded respect and integrity, 7% responded leadership and commitment, 7% responded creative and innovative, 4% responded R.E.A.C.H.T values, and 26% did not provide their opinion.

Twenty percent of the respondents indicated that employees' research and teaching contributions are most valued and rewarded. Respondents reported that high research outputs, contributions, collaborations and publications seem to receive the most respect and value. According to respondents, academic staff conduct research and in turn their work is published which brings much recognition for the University. Respondents reported that employees' professional contributions are also valued and rewarded, by performing your tasks in teaching and engaging with students in order to allow them to succeed.

Nineteen percent of the respondents stated that employees that are hardworking and very productive are valued and rewarded. This can be compared to behavioural performance. The behavioural actions refer to the way employees act and behave to complete a task, while the expected outcome refers to consequences of an employee's behaviour (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). As stated by respondents, employees that work hard are most likely to be recognised, in particular, employees who are always present and help others outside of their job description.

Ten percent of the respondents reported that loyalty and honesty are valued and rewarded. Respondents indicated that employees that are loyal are most likely chosen for important tasks and deadlines. According to respondents, these employees are dedicated, honest and trustworthy; they may receive more recognition and be thought of for future opportunities.

Seven percent of the respondents indicated that respect and integrity are valued and rewarded. Respondents reported that employees respond to respect, patience and a good attitude. It is good to always communicate in a respectful manner with colleagues; this can be achieved through teambuilding. According to respondents, employees that solve problems with integrity, focus and the ability to plan strategically are appreciated.

Seven percent of the respondents stated that employees that show leadership and commitment are valued and rewarded. According to respondents, commitment results in employees always doing what they are expected to do when they are expected to do it; these employees are valued as they are dependable. Respondents reported that good leadership is also valued as employees are willing to go the extra mile to assist others. This is in line with contextual performance. Contextual performance requires employees to have a voluntary attitude when it comes to “extra work, helping others in solving difficult tasks, upholding enthusiasm at work, cooperating with others at the time of need, sharing critical resources and information for organizational development, abiding by the prescribed rules and regulations, and supporting organizational decisions for a better change” (Pradhan & Jena, 2017, p. 4).

Seven percent of the respondents reported that employees that are creative and innovative are valued and rewarded. According to respondents, instead of the corporate language that is often used, being creative and innovative sometimes improves work processes.

Four percent of the respondents reported that R.E.A.C.H.T values are valued and rewarded. R.E.A.C.H.T stands for “Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Client Orientation, Honesty, and Trust” (UKZN, 2019, p. 1). According to respondents, this allows employees to be professional at all times and reflects positively on the University.

The findings of this sub-theme revealed that UKZN values and rewards many different characteristics, traits, contributions, and behaviours. Out of 54 respondents, 26% of the respondents did not provide their opinion.

6.4.3.3. Excluded when engaging with colleagues

The third question asked respondents if they ever feel left out when engaging with colleagues. Refer to question 13 in Appendix B. Out of 54 respondents, 15% responded yes, 12% responded sometimes, and 73% responded no.

Out of the yes respondents, 7% responded beliefs and understanding, 4% responded age, and 4% responded language.

Seven percent of the respondents reported that employees often feel left out due to different beliefs and understanding. According to respondents, employees are often left out of both social and work activities and events due to these differences; this is more common with employees that are not flexible or do not feel the need to fit in and are proud of who they are. Four percent of the respondents stated that employees feel left out when engaging with colleagues due to differences in age. Junior members of staff are often ignored or undermined. Respondents reported that this occurs more frequently during meetings or decision making processes where their input is disregarded; employees therefore feel discouraged which affects their self-esteem. Four percent

of the respondents indicated that language causes employees to feel left out when engaging with colleagues. According to respondents, often employees will communicate in their home language, while others are not conversant and do not know enough of the language to keep track of a conversation. Respondents reported that it is particularly bad at when this affects an employee's work due to a lack of understanding as their instructions were not clearly communicated.

Out of the sometimes respondents, 4% responded language, 4% responded inequality and exclusion, and 4% responded resistance.

Four percent of the respondents reported that employees feel left out when engaging with colleagues due to differences in language. According to respondents, this occurs in both social and work environments; employees are left out because in the middle of a discussion, the language changes. Employees therefore do not have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Four percent of the respondents indicated that inequality and exclusion causes employees to feel left out. Respondents reported that employees feel left out when they do not receive equal treatment; some employees seem more valued or important than others. According to respondents, employees feel excluded as during deliberation on important matters, their experience could come in handy but is rather disregarded. Employees therefore do not feel as if they are valued and this results in poor performance. Four percent of the respondents stated that employees feel left out when engaging with colleagues, due to resistance. Respondents reported that employees are sometimes not inclined to venture beyond safe zones, and this results in enthusiasm not always being shared or actually resisted by some employees.

The findings of this sub-theme indicated that the majority of employees do not feel excluded when engaging with their colleagues. Out of 54 respondents, 73% of the respondents stated that they do not feel excluded when engaging with their colleagues.

6.4.4. Research objective 4: To determine if workplace diversity improves or hinders employee performance

The fourth theme addresses the fourth research objective. It focuses on whether workplace diversity improves or hinders employee performance. In obtaining information under the fourth theme, three questions were asked, creating three sub-themes.

6.4.4.1. Obstacles in the workplace

The first question required respondents to indicate whether or not they have faced any obstacles in the workplace that compromised their ability to participate fully in work processes that are not experienced by all of their colleagues. Refer to question 14 in Appendix B. This question reflects on the external dimensions of the Gardenswartz and Rowe's Four Layers of Diversity Model (1994), specifically parental status and marital status. Out of 54 respondents, 19% responded yes

and 81% responded no. Out of the yes respondents, 11% responded unfair treatment, 6% responded overworked, and 2% left their response blank.

Eleven percent of the respondents indicated that unfair treatment compromises an employee's ability to participate fully in work processes. As stated by respondents, employees are treated differently based on their employment contract being on a permanent or contract basis. Despite all an employee's efforts, depending on their contract basis, they may not receive funding or attend conferences. According to respondents, this makes it difficult for employees to be aware of what is going in the workforce and participate fully. Respondents reported that employees also feel that they receive recognition in different ways due to diversity differences, or that their waiting period to receive assistance such as repairs or maintenance differs.

Six percent of the respondents reported that employees that are overworked have a compromised ability to participate fully in work processes. According to respondents, in some departments employees have to fulfil the duties of their colleagues; this can be due to employees that neglect their responsibilities, are not reliable or are always absent from work, while other departments are short staffed causing employees to work overtime and weekends. Respondents reported that employees that are overworked are usually more tired than most, resulting in errors, mistakes or not performing to their full potential.

The findings of this sub-theme indicated that majority of employees do not face any obstacles. Out of 54 respondents, 81% of the respondents reported that they are not faced with any obstacles in the workplace that compromise their ability to participate fully in their work processes that are not experienced by all of their colleagues.

6.4.4.2. Unique challenges that make it difficult to work

The second question asked respondents if they face unique challenges that make it difficult for them to get to work or work the hours that are expected of them at the times that are expected of them. Refer to question 15 in Appendix B. This question reflects on the external dimensions of the Gardenswartz and Rowe's Four Layers of Diversity Model (1994), specifically parental status and marital status. Out of 54 respondents, 17% responded yes and 83% responded no. Out of the yes respondents, 7% responded overtime and high volume of work, 6% responded work-related, and 4% responded home-related.

Seven percent of the respondents shared that employees are faced with a high volume of work or have to work overtime. According to respondents, academic staff have a high workload, such as marking students' tests and assignments. Support staff have to work extended hours due to extra responsibilities, which results in them working in their own time or taking their work home. Respondents reported that this can be very tiring for employees.

Six percent of the respondents reported that employees are faced with work-related challenges. According to respondents, this can be perceived in many ways, such as unexpected plans of renovations or construction in the workplace which disrupts the daily work routine. Others are faced with diversity issues which hinder them from contributing and feeling free. Respondents stated that if employees are disrupted or do not feel free to perform their duties, this can be very distracting and affect their performance negatively.

Four percent of the respondents reported that employees are faced with home-related challenges. Respondents reported that some employees have children that are young. According to respondents, support staff do not have much flexibility in terms of how the work week and hours are structured. The flexibility would allow them to be more present in their families, kids' school engagements and vacation time. Respondents indicated that employees are less engaged in their work duties as they sometimes get side-tracked dealing with their home-life. According to Natter (2019), employees are no longer able to work constantly for eight hours, with the exception of a tea or lunch break. Employees have families that are structured differently; there is no longer set roles for parents as it was in the past (Natter, 2019). Both parents share the responsibilities with regards to home, children, and so on. Nowadays, employees' work-home balance may be intertwined.

The findings of this sub-theme revealed that the bulk of employees do not face unique challenges. Out of 54 respondents, 83% of the respondents stated that they do not face unique challenges that make it difficult for them to get to work or work the hours that are expected of them at the times that are expected of them.

6.4.4.3. The influence of workplace diversity on employee performance

The third question required respondents to state their opinion of whether workplace diversity has a positive or negative influence on employee performance. Refer to question 16 in Appendix B. Out of 54 respondents, 52% responded positive influence, 48% responded both positive and negative influence, and 0% responded negative influence.

Out of the positive respondents, 17% responded problem solving and different perspectives, 15% responded good work environment, 13% responded learning experiences and understanding others, and 7% left their response blank.

Seventeen percent of the respondents stated that workplace diversity has a positive influence on employee performance due to problem solving and different perspectives. According to respondents, diversity broadens employees' ways of thinking; it provides exposure to different ways of solving problems while improving their interpersonal skills. There is a lot that can be learnt from others, and this results in employees being able to complete their work faster due to a wide range of ideas. Respondents reported that workplace diversity provides opportunities for

collaborations between staff who offer different perspectives and ideas; it equips people with skills that teach them how to work with people of different backgrounds. As stated by Natter (2019), employees who are from different backgrounds will have different cultures and experiences, and therefore view issues differently, as well as think of different solutions. According to respondents, as the student population is becoming more diverse, it is important for faculties to reflect diversity in order to effectively serve the students as educators and mentors; as a result a knowledge can be acquired. Respondents indicated that workplace diversity presents a platform for innovation and creativity. It facilitates teamwork, leading to synergies, which builds relationships and creates a good work environment.

Fifteen percent of the respondents reported that workplace diversity has a positive influence on employee performance as it facilitates a good work environment. Respondents stated that workplace diversity enables employees to practice good ethics and humane behaviours, which in turn makes the workplace a pleasure to go to and employees are able to get more done. According to Leonard (2019), office morale often increases when employees perform their tasks effectively. It is essential to create an optimistic, active working environment. According to respondents, having a diverse workforce builds organisational strength, it shapes departments and creates a very congenial environment. It provides employees with a positive attitude to perform their work.

Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated that workplace diversity has a positive influence on employee performance as it provides employees with learning experiences and a better understanding of each other. According to respondents, workplace diversity breaks stereotypes or over-generalised ideas about a particular group or class of people. Employees learn to understand and value the differences that exist among them. Respondents reported that mutual understanding amongst colleagues coming from different background and experiences will help improve performance as staff develop and learn about each other.

Out of the both positive and negative respondents, 15% responded human behaviour and work ethic, 11% responded different perspectives, 9% responded allows for growth, 4% responded stereotypes, bias and discrimination, 4% responded lack of understanding, and 5% left their response blank.

Fifteen percent of the respondents reported that human behaviour and work ethic results in workplace diversity having both a positive and negative influence on employee performance. According to respondents, workplace diversity assists in providing a better service to the institution's diverse clientele. Employees perform better if they feel as if their clients understand them or they understand their needs. Respondents indicated that workplace diversity is all about the behaviour of human beings. However, the attitude of some staff makes workplace diversity to be perceived as negative. According to respondents, it depends on the team that employees belong

to, the people employees are dealing with, and the type of line management. It is important for employees to respect each other and understand that they all contribute in different ways.

Eleven percent of the respondents reported that workplace diversity has both a positive and negative influence on employee performance as it results in different perspectives. Respondents indicated that workplace diversity has a positive influence as it introduces multiple perspectives in the work environment and promotes tolerance. It can help employees with different perspectives and discover more solutions. This is in line with Natter (2019), who states that diverse employees will vary in most circumstances in the way that they think, identify problems, and find potential solutions. According to respondents, workplace diversity can also be negative in the sense that there can be miscommunication or dysfunctional adaption of behaviours. Respondents reported that workplace diversity can expose employees to differences which can affect employee performance negatively, while at other times it leads to groupings of different employees which affects employee performance positively.

Nine percent of the respondents indicated that workplace diversity has both a positive and negative influence on employee performance as it allows for growth. Employees are able to communicate about their new ideas and expand an organisation's market, resulting in corporate growth (Natter, 2019). If all the employees in an organisation were similar, they would have similar viewpoints, resulting in less products or services emerging (Natter, 2019). Respondents reported that token diversity is counterproductive; it opens up space for institutional growth. As stated by respondents, workplace diversity exposes individuals to many academic and social opportunities; employees are able to find a common ground to work together. According to respondents, some groups may be protective of their space and interests. Employees can be discriminated against, which can be demotivating and demoralizing.

Four percent of the respondents stated that stereotypes, bias and discrimination results in workplace diversity having both a positive and negative influence on employee performance. According to respondents, workplace diversity is the product of different cultures coming together with different approaches and work dynamics. However, some employees prefer their own groups and do not value other groups' input regardless of how hardworking they are. Respondents reported that at times if staff are not performing, they say they are reprimanded because of their diversity differences, which might not be the case.

Four percent of the respondents reported that workplace diversity has both a positive and negative influence on employee performance due to a lack of understanding. According to respondents, employees may not always understand each other; this is the same with academic and support staff. Respondents reported that academics might not understand the issues of support staff and vice versa, which makes it difficult for employees to perform their tasks if they are not supported.

The findings of this sub-theme showed that workplace diversity has a positive influence on employee performance. Out of 54 respondents, 0% of the respondents reported that workplace diversity has a negative influence on employee performance.

6.5. Summary

This chapter has discussed the results of the study. The data was analysed using content analysis. The research objectives were addressed by creating themes and presenting relationships and patterns. The first theme addressed the first research objective, focusing on the role that diversity plays in the workplace. The role of diversity in the workplace, the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment and acceptance of diversity at UKZN were discussed. The second theme addressed the second research objective, focusing on the extent to which workplace diversity affects employee performance. The value of employees work experience and educational background, employees comfort, and the need to mask or downplay any cultural or spiritual aspects at UKZN were discussed. The third theme addressed the third research objective, focusing on the effectiveness of diverse employees' performance when working together. Discrimination due to diversity, the characteristics, traits, contributions, and behaviours that are most valued and rewarded, and employees that feel left out when engaging with colleagues at UKZN were discussed. Lastly, the fourth theme addressed the fourth research objective, focusing on whether workplace diversity improves or hinders employee performance. The obstacles in the workplace, the challenges that make it difficult to work, and whether workplace diversity has a positive or negative influence on employee performance were discussed. The next chapter discusses the limitations, recommendations and conclusion.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the limitations, recommendations and conclusion of the study. It first provides a summary of the key findings of the study. Secondly, it discusses the limitations of the study and any restrictions that may have been faced by the researcher. Thirdly, it provides recommendations for employees and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, based on the findings and results of the study. Fourthly, the chapter discusses areas for future research, followed by a conclusion.

7.2. Summary of the key findings of the study

The conclusions of the study, based on the research objectives are discussed below:

7.2.1. Research objective 1: To examine the role that diversity plays in the workplace

The findings from question 5 (refer to Appendix B) revealed that diversity in the workplace has played a positive role in employees' careers and has contributed positively to the professionals they are today. Based on the responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that employees have been granted equal opportunities and have been exposed to different learning experiences. Employees have learnt to be more accepting and understanding of others and to take different perspectives into account. Employees have also been able to interact and engage with others while becoming more tolerant of different situations.

The findings from question 6 (refer to Appendix B) indicated that the majority of employees are faced with varying challenges in a diverse working environment. Based on the responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that employees have been discriminated and prejudiced against, and received a lack of respect while learning to be tolerant of each other. Employees have faced cultural, language and gender barriers. Employees have had difficulty with different work approaches and ethics of colleagues, as well as differences with communication and understanding. Employees have also faced challenges of competition and emergence amongst one another.

The findings from question 7 (refer to Appendix B) revealed that acceptance of diversity is common at UKZN. Based on the yes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that where employees have not been accepted, it has been mainly due to internal dimensions as indicated by the Gardenswartz and Rowe Four Layers of Diversity Model (1994), specifically,

race, age, sexual orientation, disability, and culture. This also occurs in the case of appointment and promotion of colleagues.

These findings are in line with the literature. It is clear that the first research objective has been addressed. Diversity plays a very important role in the workplace. Diversity has played a positive role in employees' careers and has contributed positively to the professionals they are today, although diversity may negatively result in a majority of employees being faced with varying challenges in the working environment. However, employees' acceptance of diversity is common at UKZN.

7.2.2. Research objective 2: To investigate to what extent workplace diversity affects employee performance

The findings of question 8 (refer to Appendix B) showed that the majority of employees feel that their work experience and educational background are valued at UKZN. Based on the yes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that some employees feel that their work experience and educational background are valued as they receive appreciation and recognition. Employees are able to have an effective working environment and be a part of decision making. However, based on the sometimes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that some employees feel that their work experience and educational background are sometimes valued as they sometimes face unfair differences in the workplace. Employees that are employed on a contract basis or are external to the University are treated differently. Employees sometimes feel under-valued as their performance is not measured effectively, and diversity leads to employees feeling as if their work experience and educational background are only sometimes valued at UKZN.

The findings of question 9 (refer to Appendix B) indicated that the majority of employees feel comfortable being themselves at UKZN. Based on the yes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that most employees have freedom of expression and are provided with a good work environment. Employees receive equal treatment and mutual respect and have never experienced any problems. Employees are able to adapt and be flexible. At the same time, based on the sometimes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that a few employees have experienced bias and discrimination and do not always feel comfortable in their working environment.

The findings of question 10 (refer to Appendix B) revealed that most employees do not feel the need to mask or downplay any aspect of their cultural or spiritual self at UKZN. Based on the yes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that a few employees have felt the need to be professional in the workplace. Employees feel as if they need to be understanding of others and do not want to impose on others by discussing or practising their personal beliefs or cultures.

Based on the sometimes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that very few employees are not completely themselves in the workplace and feel the need to mask or downplay aspects of their cultural or spiritual self at UKZN.

These findings are consistent with the literature. It is evident that the second research objective has been addressed. The extent to which workplace diversity affects employee performance is minimal. The majority of employees feel that their work experience and educational background are valued at UKZN. The majority of employees feel comfortable being themselves at UKZN. Most employees do not feel the need to mask or downplay any aspect of their cultural or spiritual self at UKZN.

7.2.3. Research objective 3: To understand the effectiveness of diverse employees' performance when working together

The findings of question 11 (refer to Appendix B) showed that discrimination is not common at UKZN. However, based on the yes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that a few employees have been discriminated against during recruitment and selection processes. Employees have not been accommodated fairly, and have received unfair treatment.

The findings of question 12 (refer to Appendix B), revealed that UKZN values and rewards many different characteristics, traits, contributions, and behaviours. Based on the responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that employees' research and teaching contributions have been valued and rewarded, as well as employees who are hardworking and productive. Employees who are loyal and honest and show a high level of respect and integrity are valued and rewarded. Leadership and commitment is valued and rewarded, as well as employees that are creative and innovative. "Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Client Orientation, Honesty, and Trust" are the R.E.A.C.H.T values that are also valued and rewarded at UKZN (UKZN, 2019, p. 1).

The findings of question 13 (refer to Appendix B) indicated that the majority of employees do not feel excluded when engaging with their colleagues. Based on the yes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that a few employees have felt excluded when engaging with colleagues due to differences in beliefs and understanding amongst employees. Employees have also felt excluded when engaging with colleagues due to differences in age and language. Based on the sometimes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that a few employees have only sometimes felt excluded when engaging with colleagues due to language differences, inequality and exclusion, and resistance to conform.

These findings are in line with the literature. It is clear that the third research objective has been addressed. The effectiveness of diverse employees' performance when working together is significant. Discrimination is not common at UKZN. The University values and rewards many

different characteristics, traits, contributions, and behaviours. The majority of employees do not feel excluded when engaging with their colleagues.

7.2.4. Research objective 4: To determine if workplace diversity improves or hinders employee performance

The findings of question 14 (refer to Appendix B) indicated that the majority of employees do not face any obstacles. Based on the yes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that a few employees have received unfair treatment. Employees feel as if they have been overworked.

The findings of question 15 (refer to Appendix B) revealed that the majority of employees do not face unique challenges. Based on the yes responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that a few employees have needed to work overtime and have been given a high volume of work. Employees face work-related and home-related challenges.

The findings of question 16 (refer to Appendix B) showed that workplace diversity has a positive influence on employee performance. Based on the positive influence responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that some employees feel that workplace diversity has a positive influence on employee performance as it provides them with problem solving skills and different perspectives. Workplace diversity allows for a good work environment. Employees are faced with new learning experiences and they are able to understand each other more effectively. Based on the both positive and negative influence responses from the questionnaire, it can be concluded that some employees feel that workplace diversity has both a positive and negative influence on employee performance as it promotes positive human behaviour and a better work ethic. Employees are exposed to different perspectives and it allows them to grow. However, some employees experience stereotyping, bias, and discrimination, and are faced with a lack of understanding.

These findings are consistent with the literature. It is evident that the fourth research objective has been addressed. Workplace diversity improves employee performance. The majority of employees do not face any obstacles. The majority of employees do not face unique challenges. Therefore, workplace diversity can be seen as having a positive influence on employee performance.

7.3. Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study acknowledge that the researcher is aware of possible areas of weakness of the study and they have been taken into account. While the study provided insightful arguments on the findings of the influence of workplace diversity on employee performance, there were a few limitations:

- 7.3.1. Due to a lack of resources, the study was conducted only on the Pietermaritzburg Campus. There were time constraints as the research had to be conducted within a specific time period. There were also financial constraints as no funding was provided so that the research could be conducted on a wider scale.
- 7.3.2. The data collected during this study was limited to academic and support staff in the three colleges at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus. The generalisation of the results will be limited, as the findings of the study are unique to the Pietermaritzburg Campus and may not be applicable to other organisations.
- 7.3.3. When conducting the research, convenience sampling was used on the Pietermaritzburg Campus. Therefore, staff members that were conveniently available to participate in the study completed questionnaires, resulting in a sample that is not entirely representative of the population.
- 7.3.4. The sample for this study comprised both academic and support members of staff, therefore the researcher received questionnaires that were incomplete or were not helpful. This may be due to staff members being preoccupied during working hours when they were expected to complete the questionnaires.
- 7.3.5. The researcher used personally administered questionnaires as a research instrument to collect data. Thus, staff members may not have been entirely honest in their responses, which could result in bias. The data collection method was very time consuming.
- 7.3.6. The questions in the questionnaire refer to the internal and external dimensions of the 'Four Layers of Diversity' model of Gardenswartz and Rowe (1994). Therefore respondents may have found the questions too sensitive or personal, resulting in blank responses.

7.4. Recommendations of the study

Recommendations are made based on the findings and results of the study. The following recommendations are suggested by the researcher for employees and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus:

- 7.4.1. UKZN should invest in diversity awareness initiatives. Diversity is present in our everyday lives, and employees need to be educated about how to deal with diversity in the workplace. Therefore, by educating employees, they will know how to behave in certain situations, as well as what is appropriate and what is not.

- 7.4.2. Employees should be encouraged to communicate with each other regularly. This will allow for an informal way to build relationships. Academic and support staff may recognise the differences that are present and reduce conflict situations. All members of staff may learn from each other based on their different backgrounds.
- 7.4.3. Employees are regularly faced with diversity challenges. UKZN needs to provide support channels where employees feel comfortable to discuss their issues without feeling victimised or thinking that their jobs may be threatened.

7.5. Areas for future research

The following areas of research can be undertaken:

- 7.5.1. The responses of academic staff and support staff should be researched separately. This would allow the researcher to see the differences and similarities that exist amongst academic and support members of staff.
- 7.5.2. A larger sample should be used, encompassing all five campuses and all four colleges of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. These findings and results would allow for generalisation.
- 7.5.3. The researcher could conduct a similar study by comparing different universities in South Africa to determine if the results would vary or not in different parts of the country where the workplace culture may be different.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed consent

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
School of Management, IT and Governance

Dear Respondent,

Research Project

Researcher: Synade Teneil Volson (Telephone number: 082 074 0703) (Email: 214542811@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

Supervisor: Praversh Sukram (Telephone number: 033 260 6194) (Email: Sukram@ukzn.ac.za)

Research Office: Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Administration, Govan Mbeki Building, Westville Campus, Tel: 031 260 8350, Email: hssreclms@ukzn.ac.za

I, Synade Teneil Volson, am a Masters in Human Resource Management student in the School of Management, IT and Governance, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: **The Influence of Workplace Diversity on Employee Performance: A case study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus.**

The aim of this study is to find out whether workplace diversity has a positive or negative influence on employee performance. This study is important because it will examine whether or not everyone is treated fairly, and determine whether or not it affects an employee's performance. It will also examine any problems that may arise, and in this way, they can be corrected and strive for a better working and learning environment. This study will contribute by creating an understanding of the effectiveness of diverse people working together, as well as examine the role that diversity plays in the workplace and how it influences employee performance.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this research project. Confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained by the researcher and the School of Management, IT and Governance, UKZN. All collected data will be used solely for research purposes and will be destroyed after 5 years.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (**protocol reference number: HSSREC/00000893/2019**). The questionnaire should take about 20 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely

Researcher's signature : _____ Date : _____
Synade Teneil Volson

This page is to be retained by the participant

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
School of Management, IT and Governance

Research Project

Researcher: Synade Teneil Volson (Telephone number: 082 074 0703) (Email: 214542811@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

Supervisor: Praversh Sukram (Telephone number: 033 260 6194) (Email: Sukram@ukzn.ac.za)

Research Office: Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Administration, Govan Mbeki Building, Westville Campus, Tel: 031 260 8350, Email: hssreclms@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT

I _____ (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of Participant

Date

This page is to be retained by the researcher

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Diversity in the workplace is a very broad topic. It can be described as a combination of differences in individuals (Dyson, 2017). Diversity includes how individuals perceive themselves, as well as how others identify them. This study will focus on the internal dimensions and external dimensions of diversity.

- Internal dimensions refer to age, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, ethnicity and race (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2016).
- External dimensions refer to geographic location, income, personal habits, recreational habits, religion, educational background, work experience, appearance, parental status and marital status (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2016).

1. What is your age?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ 18 - 35
- ☐ 36 - 55
- ☐ 56 and older

2. What is your gender?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other

3. What is your race?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Black
- ☐ Coloured
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other

4. Are you a member of academic staff or support staff?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Academic staff
- ☐ Support staff

5. How has diversity in the workplace played a role in your career and contributed to the professional you are today?

6.1. What do you see as the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment?

6.2. How have you tried to overcome this challenge in 6.1?

7.1. Have you ever been in a situation or know of a colleague that has been in a situation at UKZN, where a colleague was not accepting of another's diversity?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please continue to 7.2 and 7.3. If no, continue to 8.1.

7.2. What was the situation?

7.3. What was the outcome?

8.1. Do you feel that your work experience and educational background are valued at UKZN?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

8.2. Give a reason(s) for your answer in 8.1.

9.1. Do you feel comfortable being yourself at UKZN?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

9.2. Give a reason(s) for your answer in 9.1. Why do you feel this way?

10.1. Do you mask or downplay any aspect of your cultural or spiritual self at UKZN?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

10.2. Give a reason(s) for your answer in 10.1.

11.1. Have you ever been in a situation or know of a colleague that was discriminated against at UKZN due to diversity?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please continue to 11.2 and 11.3. If no, continue to 12.

11.2. What was the situation?

11.3. What was the outcome?

12. In your opinion, which characteristics, traits, contributions, and behaviours are most valued and rewarded at UKZN?

13.1. Have you ever felt left out when engaging with colleagues?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

If yes or sometimes, please continue to 13.2. If no, continue to 14.1.

13.2. Explain why you felt this way? And was it in a social or work environment?

14.1. Have you faced any obstacles in the workplace that compromised your ability to participate fully in work processes that are not experienced by all of your colleagues?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please continue to 14.2. If no, continue to 15.1.

14.2. Describe the obstacles.

15.1. Do you face unique challenges that make it difficult for you to get to work or work the hours that are expected of you at times that are expected of you?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please continue to 15.2. If no, continue to 16.1.

15.2. If yes, describe the challenges.

16.1. In your opinion, does workplace diversity have a positive or negative influence on employee performance?

Tick the correct box below.

- ☐ Positive influence
- ☐ Negative influence
- ☐ Both

16.2. Give a reason(s) for your answer in 16.1.

Appendix C: Gatekeeper's letter



3 September 2019

Synade Teneil Volson (SN 214542811)
School of Management, IT & Governance
College of Law and Management Studies
Pietermaritzburg Campus
UKZN
Email: 214542811@stu.ukzn.ac.za sukram@ukzn.ac.za

Dear Synade

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

"The Influence of Workplace Diversity on Employee Performance: A case study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus."


It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by handing out questionnaires to Academic and Support staff within the College of Humanities, College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science and College of Law and Management Studies on the Pietermaritzburg campus.

Please ensure that the following appears on your notice/questionnaire:

- Ethical clearance number;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the Protection of Public Information Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

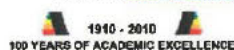

DR KE CLELAND
REGISTRAR (ACTING)






Office of the Registrar

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 7824/2204 Email: registrar@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

Appendix D: Ethical clearance



05 December 2019

Miss Synade Teneil Volson (214542811)
School of Management, IT & Governance
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Miss Volson,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/0000893/2019

Project title: The influence of workplace diversity on employee performance: A case study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 04 December 2019 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid for one year until 05 December 2020.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Urmilla Bob
University Dean of Research

/ms

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

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