

Academic Managers' Attitudes towards Key Employment Equity Determinants in Attaining Diversity Initiatives in South African Universities

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KEYWORDS Equity. Affirmative Action. Diversity. Transformation. Social Justice

ABSTRACT The quest for diversity is reliant on the successful implementation of employment equity particularly in the institutions of higher education. South Africa is a diverse nation and that should be replicated in all societal settings. However, the composition of staff in higher education institution fails to reflect the demographic realities of South Africa. As a result, Black people and women are still severely under-represented, especially in senior academic management positions. Quantitative research methods were employed to collect data in the University of Pretoria, University of Witwatersrand, and Free State University from the academic managers. The study explored the key determinants of employment equity namely, institutional ethics, career advancement within the employment equity developments. The findings showed that there are positive aspects within employment equity which universities could exploit in order to establish diversity.

INTRODUCTION

South Africa's political and social transformation has prompted higher education institutions to develop their respective transformation programmes based on the principles of democracy, equity, and social justice. South African higher education institutions have been encouraged to create a welcoming environment that embrace diversity and be able to meet the challenges of producing knowledgeable workforce capable of making a significant contribution in a non-racial society (Norries 2001: 219). To eliminate employment insecurity, higher education institutions ought to shift from the legacy of confrontational relationships to mutual interactions in serving humanity (Horwitz et al. 2005: 4).

South African government had recognized the scourge of inequality and discrimination in the workplace and demonstrated the determination to foster diversity (Smith and Roodt 2003: 32). The latter is supported by not but the Constitution which stipulated that South Africa belongs to everyone who lives in it, united in diversity (RSA 1996). Subsequently, Employment Equity Act (EEA) was introduced and the main aim was to eradicate the inheritance of racial segregation in the South Africa labour force and consequently ensure that employment equity is achieved. Tinarelli (2000: 2) asserts that employ-

ment equity regulations are intended toward abolishing unfair discrimination in the labour force and encourage respective employers to expedite the progression of the designated groups (Africans, Coloureds, Women and the people with disabilities).

Employment equity signifies equal treatment, equal consequences, and individual discrete recognition. Equal treatment refers to the conditions that do not favour discriminations whereas equal consequences denote lack of structural exclusion. Individual recognition is a principled objective that promotes diversity and calls for institutional cultural change in order to allow individuals to prove their potential in the workplaces (Verbeek 2011: 1943). Employment equity is commonly regarded as a change strategy intended to avert and remedy discrimination practices and improve representation in the workplace (Agocs and Burr 1996: 35). Employment equity is not only focused on improving representation of the designated groups, but provide essential support and enhance adaptive culture in the institution (Gultig 2000: 12). Employment equity is the consequences of both affirmative action and equal opportunity and it will be achieved once the employees reflect the composition of the population at all levels (Meyer 2002:225).

According to (Meyer 2002: 223), South African institutions are faced with the challenges of

implementing the employment equity plans and eliminate the effects of discrimination in the workplace and the society at large. Employers are not only faced with the challenge to ensure legal compliance, but also to foster productivity while considering the demographic labour market changes in the global perspectives (Boxall and Purcell 2007: 255). The quest for transformation in higher education institutions is communal inclusive and compels equity and diversity (Gause et al. 2010: 63). Furthermore, higher education institutions in South Africa are mandated by government to develop the society and promote unity in the spirit of national building (Wolhunter et al. 2012: 3).

Background to the Research Problem

South African higher education system was characterized by racial and ethnic disparities from its inception and consequently that influenced the policy development by the state (Reddy 2004: 9). Most managers in the public institutions in South Africa were raised in restricted communities and also attended restricted schools. As a result, this segregation limited the general public opportunities to interrelate with others from different cultures. In addition, these managers in the public institutions entrenched the stereotype belief on race, gender, and ethnicity which were successively transferred into the workplaces (Uys 2003: 42).

In the past, the labour force was subjected to inequalities and in the main access to education and professional occupations was based on race and ethnicity. Subsequently, the labour legislations were established to sanction racial discrimination (Bowmaker-Falconer et al. 1997: 222). However, these clauses were repealed in the 1980s following law restructuring.

Jain et al. (2003: 35) assert that the segregated political system in South Africa left a large number of employees insufficiently trained and economically inactive particularly the designated groups. These designated groups bore the brunt of discrimination in the labour market. Coetzee and Bezuidenhout (2011: 76) highlight that the new dispensation in South Africa which introduced Affirmative Action (AA) policy changed the inheritance of discrimination and projected the new dawn of collective prosperity. Afore the introduction of AA, individuals from the designated groups who endeavoured to

pursue their source of revenue in higher education were also frustrated by discrimination and prejudice. In addition, those who sought promotions were also discriminated against.

The pursuit for equity and diversity in higher education institutions constitutes social justice and somewhat difficult to combine with the institution's mission (Nussbaum and Chang 2013: 5). Several higher education institutions have already advanced on equity and diversity while others are sluggish (Cassim 2005: 655). Joubert et al. (2013: 112) asserts that universities are significant agents for transformation. However, universities in South Africa inherited discrimination practices that were promoted by the previous regime and consequently struggle to transform their institutions. Some institutions are aware of the hurdles that put off transformation which inevitably brings about diversity. In addition, these institutions protect and defend the status quo citing university autonomy and academic freedom.

Culture of the Institution

Jackson et al. (2013: 1) asserts that South Africa is a nation that is culturally diverse, a virtue that is imperative to reflect in higher education institutions. The political and social change in South Africa compelled the higher education institutions to establish transformation. The fundamental element of transformation in higher education system manifest from the designated groups being allowed to participate (Shackleton et al. 2006: 572). By disallowing designated groups to participate, in essence, this practice prohibited vital foundation for mutual understanding of the nation's abundant diverse culture (Denton and Vloeberhs 2003: 84). Akoojee and Nkomo (2007: 390) avow that higher education institutions are obliged to eradicate the previous ethos and introduce a dynamic culture that supports diversity. In essence, access to higher education is the crucial springboard to bring about the new social change.

Culture is shaped by individuals in the institution and it (culture) entails the values, norms, and behaviour of the institution. In consequence, it is expected that once staff population in higher education changes, that certainly has an effect on the culture. South Africa higher education struggles to establish an adaptive culture that embraces transformation. Transforma-

tion is not exclusively about changing the staff and students composition in higher education institutions but as well establish an organizational culture that embraces diversity (Fourie 1999: 277).

Rationale of the Study

Limited research had been conducted in South Africa about the effect of diversity and employment equity. A lot of research focused on universities complying with affirmative action and employment equity without putting emphasis on the benefit of accomplishing diversity (Denson and Bowman 2013: 557). South African universities still struggle to implement employment equity (Govinder and Makgoba 2013: 76). Virtually 20 years after the apartheid regime transformation towards equity in higher education institutions remain slow (Jain et al. 2012: 13) and uncalled-for. Universities have the autonomy to regulate themselves but the results are not impressive (Govinder et al. 2013: 9).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to probe the academic managers' attitudes on the determinants of employment equity that are essential to establish diversity in the South African universities. This article surveyed the institutional ethics, career advancement opportunities, and the attitudes of the academic managers on change.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on critical theory as conceptualized by Smith et al. (1996). Critical theory encourages the individuals to reflect on how the human race is constructed and moreover it is against the empirical affirmations that prevailing social structures are unchallengeable. Critical theory examines the prospects for transformation and greater freedom in the society. In addition, critical theory rejects all forms of discriminations and advocates social construction that embraces open interactions.

This study underscores the principles of critical theory due to the fact that the social settings in South Africa were classified along the racial lines which resulted in all forms of discriminations. The greater freedom in the society that

critical theory advocates cannot be achieved without equality among the citizens particularly equal opportunities. Likewise, equality brings about diversity and diversity should be managed in order to be viable. Cross (2004:404) avers that diversity intentions involve critical theory that recognizes and support transformation which in turn leads to profound social equality. In the context of critical theory, this article explores the concepts of equality, equality of opportunity, and diversity.

The Concept of Equality

The concept of equality is associated with the inspiration of justice (Adams 2005: 279). Avila (2007: 104) affirms that equality is a principle that forbids discrimination and advances egalitarian ideology. Dieltiens et al. (2009: 366) state that equality is an inexplicable political model intended to treat people equally.

Menke (2006: 2) remarks that the notion of equality is the contemporary regulation based on ethical grounds whereby humanity uphold equal rights for everyone. According to Malik (2003: 1), equality refers to cherishing diversity in its multidimensional nature (gender, culture, and disabilities) creating suitable conditions that afford equal chances to every member of the society regardless of the social background, and advocate human rights without discrimination.

Equality is a multifaceted political ideal, but fundamentally endorses the same treatment amongst inhabitants. There are different types of equalities namely formal equality, moral equality, equality before the law, equality of outcomes, equal access, and equality of opportunity (Hoffman and Graham 2006: 62). West (2003: 141) describes *formal equality* as a principle that excessively emphasize adherence to the law. Hill (2009:163) affirms that formal equality espouses impartial rules applied similarly and unconditionally to all members of society. Pojman (2008: 7) asserts that everyone should obey similar *moral* imperatives accordingly.

In terms of *equality before the law*, equality depends on the specified criteria and taking into account the intention of the particular law (Avila 2007: 104). In accordance with liberal circumstances, people have particular basic rights, for example, the right to life, freedom of association including the right to vote (Wolff 2006: 115). Pojman (2008: 23) affirms that the principle of

equality liberty promotes equal social responsibility.

Distribution of income is regarded as the utmost substantial argument in the respective societies including physical material good. Quality of life tends to be based on material equality (Hoffman and Graham 2006: 62). *Equality of outcomes* is the model that promotes economic and social equality (Janda et al. 2008: 16). Equality of outcomes entail that people obtain goods (Blim 2007: 62). Unlike other forms of equality, equality of outcomes is regarded as a contentious concept since it requires intense policy intervention and directives (Gordon and Bridglall 2007: 101).

Equal access advocates the aspirations of social justice and it is a springboard for equal opportunity (De Jong and Rizvi 2008: 8). Equal access is different to other ideas of justice in the sense that it does not relate to distribution of capital. Equal access establishes appropriate environments for equal opportunity (Cournoyer 2008: 118).

The common trait in the above-mentioned types of equalities is fair treatment that is consistent amongst members of the society. Since higher education institutions are perceived to be the torchbearers of regeneration, it is rather imperative that they play a proactive role in eliminating the scourge of inequalities. Higher education institutions ought to establish the suitable platforms for individuals to reflect on how the society is constructed and in essence, sustain critical theory principles. Equality calls for a shared determination towards changing the landscape of public engagement irrespective of the individual background. Members of the society should be free to engage with each other without constraints and this is a virtue that should be conveyed back to the society. Equality is a notion that activates social settings which permit individuals to contribute meaningfully in the society without insignificant barriers.

Equality of Opportunity

Equality of opportunity is a prominent concept of social justice particularly in the civilized societies. In essence, equality of opportunity requires the institution of conducive conditions for individuals to contest for opportunities regardless of their background by "leveling the playing field" (Roemer 2006: 1). Mason (2006:

15) highlights that equality of opportunity is a compound model and it complements the principles of justice and encourages open competition for limited opportunities. Equality of opportunity is broadly identifiable with social justice (Jacobs 2004: 9).

Page and Simmons (2000: 167) argue that the essential rationale for equal opportunity is the idea that people should be given equal chances. The criteria for selection should be based on talent rather than superfluous considerations (Gray and Herr 2006: 39). Blim (2005: 62) affirms that equality of opportunity is a model that affords competent candidates to actively participate fruitfully in the economy and in social milieu. Equality of opportunity eliminates unfair discrimination in the workplaces (Clements and Spinks 2009: 1). Swift (2001: 98) remarks that equal opportunity is the suitable outlook of equality and supported broadly by policy makers.

Equality of opportunity is a democratic concept that promotes meritocracy (Heywood 1999: 291). In other words, equality of opportunity considers merit as the appropriate criterion for selection in the workplaces. Schmidtz (2006: 110) affirms that in a meritocratic society, people are judged on merit and satisfy the notion of similar remuneration for similar responsibility. Equal employment opportunity signifies equal probability of work and the criterion based on proficiency (Byars and Rue 2006: 22). In a meritocratic society, race and gender are immaterial and the emphasis is pinned on the state of being potential and competent (Swift 2001: 100).

Equality of opportunity emphasizes that people should be given a fair chance to compete for existing opportunities. The broad idea of equality of opportunity is that higher education institutions should create an appropriate environment for all prospective candidates to be selected on merit. Equality of opportunity is a significant principle of equality than equal access, since this principle is based on meritocracy. The more radical notion of equal opportunity is often thought to have followed naturally from the idea of formal equality. Equality of opportunity is an endeavour to eliminate prejudice and provide everyone with the same advantage to participate in the labour market particularly in the higher education institutions. Higher education institutions are exceptional structures that provide both opportunities for studying and employment, essentially, higher education institutions

are the relevant platforms to promote equal opportunity in the classroom and implement equal opportunity.

Diversity

Diversity is not a term that is stipulated in any law or policy, instead it emanates from academic discourse. Diversity accentuates that every individual is distinctive and shares biological and ecological characteristics with other (Grobler et al. 2006: 75). Price (2007: 385) argues that people differ in terms of gender, race, culture, and psychological perspectives, but diversity in the workplace refers to recognition of people with different personalities.

Diversity fundamentally denotes that people are not the same and thus emphasis the variety of differences such as genetic, environmental, and how they were raised and educated (Swanepoel et al. 2008: 129). Nel et al. (2008: 175) claim that diversity is different to universality, an overt implication that may be made about all cultures. Likewise, some activities are common to all cultures, but their manifestation is somewhat exceptional to a certain society. Diversity in the workplace is an authoritative aspect to embrace change.

There is an extensive description of diversity that brings about divergence with respect to diversity attributes (Patrickson and OBrien 2001: 2). Kreitner et al. (2002: 34) assert that diversity symbolizes numerous differences and similarities that are perceived in individuals and expose the uniqueness. In diversity people bring in different perspectives and in some cases share similar viewpoints.

Harris et al. (2007: 52) argue that institutions should promote diversity in order to remain competitive. For instance, Hunter and Swan (2007: 43) affirm that diversity implores creativity in the organization and cultivate a solid foundation for prosperity in business amid a pool of different perspectives. The attributes of diversity are essentially instigated in the process of recruitment and also after recruitment: once an institution appoints a candidate who complements diversity, it is important to determine the welfare of the candidate continuously (Brief 2008: 33).

South Africa is a diverse nation, but the workplace demographics which include higher education institutions, do not reflect this. It is interesting to note that diversity is not a law or

policy but a concept that originated from the open dialogue among academics. The latter signifies that diversity is neither predetermined nor planned. Basically, diversity is the end-product of affirmative action or employment equity and it cannot be achieved unless employment equity is successfully implemented.

Furthermore, diversity is about accepting that people are different and being different in higher education institutions bring about distinctive perspectives. Higher education institutions stand to benefit from different viewpoints in both teaching and managing the institutions. South African higher educations are currently characterized by diverse student population and it is rather fair for staff to follow suit. Accordingly, diverse student and staff profile enable the institution community to understand and appreciate each other's culture and eventually this will result in resonate effect in the large society.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative survey design. Quantitative research methods emphasize the production of precise and generalizable statistical findings (Rubin and Rabbie 2010: 34). Thus, the researchers sought to describe the attitude of the academic managers and be able to generalise them. A research design focuses on the logic of the research and it is a careful planning of the operations to be done to collect the data in a rigorous, systematic ways, in accordance with the methods and ethics of social research (Antonuis 2003: 26).

The researchers therefore applied cluster sampling since academic managers are already clustered in accordance with the institution's organogram. According to Lehtonen and Pakkinen (2004:86), cluster sampling is commonly used in practice because many populations are readily clustered into natural sub-groups. The academic heads of departments (HoDs) and the Deans of Faculties are already a cluster in higher education.

The academic staff members of Free State University (UFS), the Witwatersrand University (WITS) and the University of Pretoria (UP) were considered as the population of the study, and the Deans of Faculties, and academic HoDs as the sample. These three universities were considered as the population since they stated in their respective institutional strategies that they

are committed to employment equity (WITS, 2011: 3; UFS 2010: 3; UP 2011: 2), but the statistical information submitted to the Department of Labour (DoL 2011: 3) fails to substantiate successful implementation of employment equity. The study sought to obtain the views of all the Deans, and HoD's in each university.

The Deans, and the academic HoDs were selected because of their expertise and experience in managing their faculties, schools and departments respectively and they represent their departments in various strategic committees which make decisions about the welfare of the university. Moreover, these academic managers will play a leading role in establishing diversity in the respective universities.

Data Collection

The study used a questionnaire as the data collection instrument. For many good reasons the questionnaire is the most widely used procedure for obtaining information and it is relatively economical, respondents in distant locations can be reached, the questions are standardized, anonymity can be assured, and questions can be written for a specific purpose (Opie 2004: 65). In this study the questionnaire was used considering the responsibilities assigned to the deans and HoDs. Academic managers carry enormous responsibilities in leading and managing their respective departments and have hectic schedules. Respondents were able to complete the questionnaire at their own time without any interference.

The employment equity determinants were sketched in the questionnaire: institutional ethics; career advancement opportunities, and the attitudes of the academic managers on change. The questionnaire consisted of three sections focusing on the three latter employment equity determinants using closed ended questions, each relating to one of the determinant identified in literature as important to successful employment equity and supporting diversity. Each section listed the sub-sets of question statements required responses from the participating respondents on a three-point rating to indicate respondents' attitudes ('1' indicating *positive*; '2' indicating *average*, and '3' indicating *negative*).

Data Analysis

The study applied the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) version 9.2 using frequency tables with condensed rating scales. According to William (2006: 54), quantitative data have features that can be more or less exactly measured. Measurement implies some form of magnitude, usually expressed in numbers. The analysis strategy designed for this study was aimed at addressing the academic managers' attitudes on the factors of employment equity that are essential to establish diversity in the South African universities.

Validity and Reliability

Scale reliability testing and Cronbach alpha coefficients were used to validate the internal consistency reliability of the above three employment equity success determinants and the composite frequency tables were used for comparisons of mean tests. In determining the attitudes of the respondents on the three employment equity success determinants, ratings scales were used to compare the ratings between positive, averages, and negative.

Scale Reliability Testing

The testing was conducted to test a form of reliability of the constructs used in the questionnaire to success determinants of employment equity. The type of reliability is referred to as internal consistency reliability and tests whether the sub-sets of questionnaire items which describe a factor all truly contribute towards explaining the construct. Separate scale reliability testing was conducted on the rating responses of each subset of questionnaire items (describing each employment equity success determinants). The tests were conducted to confirm internal consistency reliability of the three defined employment equity determinants, thereby establishing whether the subsets of questionnaire items truly all contribute towards explaining the relevant aspects.

Table 1 presents the results from these analyses. Each row in the table reports on the results of a separate test. The first column lists the particular construct evaluated; the second column the subset of questionnaire items describing the specific factor; the third column ques-

tionnaire items which the test/s indicated as not contributing towards explaining the particular construct; fourth column the indicator of internal consistency reliability, namely a Cronbach alpha coefficient, and, as discussed in the next section, employment equity construct score means describing the general perception of respondent as to whether the specific aspect of employment equity implementation was regarded as successful according to respondents' perceptions. Cronbach alpha values in the region of, or greater than 0.70, can be regarded as indicators of internal consistency reliability.

The values of all alpha coefficients were greater than 0.7 which indicated internal reliability of all employment equity success determinants. Measures of attitudes of successful implementation of aspects of employment equity - calculated as mean rating values for each subset of questionnaire item responses - can therefore be regarded as reliable measures of attitude (a condition which has to be satisfied before calculated scores can be used to represent measures of attitude).

Calculation of Construct Scores

Once the internal consistency reliability of constructs had been established and confirmation has thus been obtained that the sub-sets of questionnaire items truly explain specific employment equity success determinant, a measure of respondents' attitudes on each employment equity determinant was calculated as the mean performance rating of the sub-set of questionnaire statements that describe a specific employment equity aspect. The calculated measure is referred to as a construct score.

The construct scores of individuals and the construct mean scores for each employment equity determinant describes the respondents' general attitudes regarding the aspect of successful employment equity implementation. The results of the study reflected in three tables below. The initial table probed amongst others, determinants such as honesty and openness within the institutions and the capability of the institution to promote equal opportunities. Table 3 inquired the academic managers' attitudes about career advancement in the employment equity environment. Table 4 examined the attitudes of the academic managers towards change.

In the totals-row of Table 2, the positive total (123 of 267 responses to all statements on this employment equity success determinants; representing 46%). In addition, Table 2 confirms the 2.61 score mean (approximately a '3' average performance rating) for the institutional ethics score mean. The details of the table furthermore indicate that academic manager perceived the successful employment equity implementation-performance of especially the elements of fair management, (29%) and justice (23%) rather negatively.

Just over 50% of the respondents indicated success on performance as well on the ethical elements of institutional honesty and equal opportunities. For employment equity to be implemented, determinants such as honesty and openness within the institutions are essential. The academic managers' responses in this regard are not affirmative; an average of 46% against 35.5% reveals a suspicious attitude towards the institutions' ethics. In addition, the respondents provided unimpressive positive attitude towards justice and fair management. This could be de-

Table 1: Scale reliability testing

Scale reliability testing conducted on each of the three subsets of questionnaire item response ratings of participants to verify the internal consistency reliability of each construct (or aspect) on employment equity.(Each row presents the results of a separate analysis)

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Questionnaire items included in the construct</i>	<i>Items omitted</i>	<i>Standardized Cronbach alpha</i>	<i>(Standard deviation)</i>
Institutional ethics	q1-q6	-	0.93	2.61 (0.86)
Career advancement	q7-q14	-	0.90	2.55 (0.78)
Attitudes towards change	q15-q20	-	0.90	2.94 (0.81)

Scale reliability is established for any given construct if the value of the Cronbach alpha coefficient is approximately 0.6-0.7 or greater

Table 2: Institutional ethics (score mean of 2.61)

<i>Attitudes on institutional ethics Issues probed</i>	<i>Condensed rating scale</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Frequency Percent Row Pct.</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Average</i>	
<i>Institution's Promise to Delivery</i>	20 7.49 45.45	18 6.74 40.91	6 2.25 13.64	44 16.48
<i>Honesty Within Institution</i>	23 8.61 52.27	14 5.24 31.82	7 2.62 15.91	44 6.48
<i>Openness Within Institution</i>	16 5.99 35.56	21 7.87 46.67	8 3.00 17.78	45 16.85
<i>Justice</i>	20 7.49 45.45	14 5.24 31.82	10 3.75 22.73	44 16.48
<i>Equal Opportunities</i>	24 8.99 53.33	13 4.87 28.89	83 3.00 17.78	45 16.85
<i>Fair Management</i>	20 7.49 44.44	12 4.49 26.67	13 4.87 28.89	45 16.85
<i>Total</i>	123 46.07	92 34.46	52 19.48	267 100.00

Frequency Missing = 15Probability (Chi-square=9.33) = 0.50

tering determinants for successful employment equity and attaining diversity.

In the totals-row of Table 3, the positive total (169 of 345 responses to all statement on this employment equity success determinants; representing 49%) agrees that almost average perceived performance rating score mean of 2.55 (approximately a '3' average performance rating) for the career advancement score mean. The details of the Table 3 indicate that the academic managers perceived the successful employment equity implementation.

The respondents regarded the performance of especially the elements of development opportunities, skills aligned with work opportunities, job satisfaction and collegial relations statistically significantly more positive than the other elements of career advancement opportunities. The positive responses on career advancement opportunities signify the fertile grounds for successful employment equity and diversity. Those who were historically disadvantaged and the designated groups might take advantage of the opportunities to develop themselves academically.

In the totals-row of Table 4, the average total (99 of 258 responses to all statement on this Employment Equity success factor; representing 38%) agrees the almost average perceived

performance rating score mean of 2.94 (very close to a '3' average performance rating) for the effect of Employment Equity score mean. A general feeling of ambivalence was expressed on all elements of this construct since response ratings for all elements indicated a high proportion of average performance ratings.

It is absurd that the respondents perceive change as a determinant that does not create the culture that is tolerant. The response in this regard implies that most academic managers are not prepared to embrace change. Basically, the responses on all the sub-set statements on the attitudes toward change are not impressive since they range from 13.9% to 48.8% positive. This is the area that institutions ought to pay attention to in order to transform the doubtful attitudes into successful determinants of employment equity and attain diversity initiatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The institutions' promise to delivery was the initial sub-set statement to determine the institutional ethics. The rating from the respondents indicated 45% positive and 40.9% average. By implications, this signifies that the academic managers in the selected institutions are to a certain extent convinced that the institutions are

Table 3: Career advancement opportunities (score mean of 2.55)

<i>Attitudes on career advancement opportunities Construct issues</i>	<i>Condensed perception rating</i>			
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Row Pct.</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Promotion Opportunities</i>	14	4.06	4.06	41
	34.15	34.15	3.77	11.88
<i>Development Opportunities</i>	26	7.54	8	43
	60.47	60.47	2.61	12.46
<i>Skills Aligned With Work Challenges</i>	26	7.54	11	44
	59.09	59.09	2.03	12.75
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>	26	7.54	11	44
	59.09	59.09	2.03	12.75
<i>Collegial Relations</i>	34	9.86	4	44
	77.27	77.27	1.74	12.75
<i>Feedback on Work Performance</i>	16	4.64	19	43
	37.21	37.21	2.32	12.46
<i>Employee Development Plans</i>	15	4.35	18	43
	34.88	34.88	2.90	12.46
<i>Professional Development and Institution's Challenges</i>	12	3.48	21	43
	27.91	27.91	2.90	12.46
<i>Total</i>	169	48.99	106	345
			30.72	100.00

Frequency Missing = 31 Probability (Chi-square=42.47) = 0.0001***

capable to implement policies. However, 40.9% average suggests uncertainty in policy implementation. EEA is a crucial legislation that institutions should deliver particularly when the institution has announced that they are committed to employment equity. Higher education institutions management should allay suspicions on its ability to implement EEA by displaying determination to deliver on the promises.

The academic managers responded positively on both honesty and openness within the institutions. The latter signifies a suitable environment in the institutions that have established an affectionate culture. Likewise, this represent fruitful ground for interaction and individuals within the institutions are free to express their pleasure and discontentment. Furthermore, the positive attitudes for both honesty and openness are key determinants for employment equity and the catalysts to attain diversity initiatives.

The positive responses on equal opportunities also provide a springboard for successful employment equity implementation. Linking the

responses on honesty and openness with equal opportunities, it is clear that there is determination to implement employment equity and successfully attain diversity. Moreover, the institutions display justice and fair management.

In investigating the aspects of career advancement opportunities as one of the key employment equity determinants to attain diversity, the researchers noticed the overwhelming positive responses by the academic managers. By implications, the institutions provide appropriate environment for development opportunities and in the process the staff members acquire the skills that are aligned with their work challenges.

In addition, almost 60% of the respondents indicated positive response on job satisfaction, this could have an effect on diversity management and staff turnover. The responses designated that there are sound collegial relations at work. The preceding signifies professional interactions amongst fellow colleagues. However, the respondents did not indicate positive response on promotion opportunities, feedback on

Table 4: The attitudes of the academic managers towards change (score mean of 2.94)

<i>Issues probed</i>	<i>Attitudes towards change</i>			
	<i>Condensed rating scale</i>			
<i>FrequencyPercentRow Pct.</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Create Tolerance Culture</i>	17 6.59 39.53	20 7.75 46.51	6 2.33 13.95	43 16.67
<i>Improved Quality Education</i>	9 3.49 20.93	19 7.36 44.19	15 5.81 34.88	43 16.67
<i>Improved Student Throughput</i>	6 2.33 13.95	18 6.98 41.86	19 7.36 44.19	43 16.67
<i>Institution Promote Change</i>	20 7.75 46.51	14 5.43 32.56	9 3.49 20.93	43 16.67
<i>South African Representative Workforce</i>	21 8.14 48.84	13 5.04 30.23	9 3.49 20.93	43 16.67
<i>Eliminate Unfair Discrimination</i>	15 5.81 34.88	15 5.81 34.88	13 5.04 30.23	43 316.67
<i>Total</i>	88 34.11	99 38.37	71 27.52	258 100.00

Frequency Missing = 24Probability (Chi-square = 24.41) = 0.007***

work performance, and professional development with enable staff to face institutions' challenges.

It is rather an oversight on the part of the institutions' top management team to ignore the preceding determinants of diversity. An institution that does not provide promotion opportunities and feedback on performance chase away proficient personnel regardless of their race. It is rather unprofessional to develop staff without promotion opportunities. The lack of employee development plans in the institution confirms an oversight on the part of top management. Only 35% indicated positive response on employee development plans. If the development plans do exist, then only a few academic managers are aware and chances of the entire academic population being familiar with the plan are slim.

Culture is a fundamental determinant of employment equity and a vital instrument that could either sustain diversity or obstruct it. However, the academic managers' responses on the culture that create tolerance in the institution were less than 40%. This implies that the respondents perceive the existing culture in the respective institutions not sufficiently tolerant and this has

the effect on both employment equity and diversity. An average of 46% displayed mistrust in accepting change. Furthermore, the respondents recognized that the South African workforce is not sufficiently representative.

A positive response of 49% and an average of 30% substantiate that there is relatively insufficient representation in the workforce. This implies that the designated groups are not fully participating in the higher education institutions. In addition, 34.8% indicated that change eliminate unfair discrimination. This indicates that a large number of the academic managers are not convinced that change is an instrument that eradicates unfair discrimination.

Diversity management is a course that encompasses variety (planning, organizing, directing, and supporting) of measures to enhance organizational performance (Hubbard 2004: 8). Kreitner et al. (2002: 39) perceive diversity management as a phenomenon that enables people to exercise their ultimate capabilities and change the culture of the organization. Clegg and Cooper (2009: 318) argue that diversity management is in essence the repercussion of both affirmative action and equal opportunity policies.

Meyer (2002: 225) states that diversity management is a complete broad process that es-

establishes a suitable environment in which all employees feel appreciated and being recognized irrespective of their social standings. Diversity management expedites the platform for both affirmative action and employment equity promoting a diverse workforce and it is a strategic instrument to achieve employment equity (Walbrug and Roodt 2003: 28).

Diversity management and equal opportunity are two concepts that are capable of being used in the place of each other. Equal opportunity is a policy to strengthen and appreciate representation in the workplace while diversity management establishes an inclusive culture that stimulates employees' optimal participation that yields competitive advantages (Noon and Ogbonna 2001: 32). Diversity management requires commitment to change; functional cultural change; dedicated and proficient leadership; and changing the nature of the organizational structure (Werner and DeSimone 2009: 515).

CONCLUSION

The extent of positive responses on honesty and openness within higher education institutions demonstrate effective institutional ethics to attain diversity initiatives. Honesty and openness are key employment equity determinants in attaining diversity initiatives and the preceding support what critical theory stands for. Critical theory assesses the social construction by their ability to establish insightful open dialogue. Furthermore, critical theory supports prospects for greater freedom that is engrained in the social construction. Honesty and openness are the features of freedom in the institutions.

The academic managers expressed a general feeling of uncertainty in terms of the university culture. Bureaucratic culture that does not embrace change has potential to hamper the implementation of employment equity and diversity management. Institutions that used to be homogeneous in staff composition ought to acknowledge change and embrace it. Culture that is collaborative and adaptive instills an open and friendly environment where people willingly share their experiences and most importantly develop the sense of belonging. Adaptive culture that embraces diversity inspires people to perform at their ultimate capabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Effective management of diversity is fundamental to preserve a diverse staff composition and stimulate different perspectives to find solutions in the institution. In essence, the latter view augurs well with the notion of equality of opportunity whereby people are encouraged to compete freely for limited opportunities in the workplace. The senior management commitment to diversity management cannot be over-emphasized. It is very important that change be driven by the senior management in order to inspire the entire workforce in the institution. Sound diversity management enables exceptional perspectives and insights since individual come from different backgrounds and diversity embrace wide-ranging individual differences.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Academic managers are relatively a small cluster of the academe in any university. The researchers were determined to acquire attitudes of all the academic managers in the selected institutions in order to make generalizations of the findings with confidence that most academic manager participated hence the random sampling were not considered. However, the sample was relatively small; most of the questionnaires were not returned despite numerous attempts to remind the academic managers.

The nature of the study was rather sensitive; this was observed when the questionnaires were delivered. Some academic managers were reluctant to complete the questionnaire citing their busy schedules and some citing limited experience heading their respective departments. Some academic managers mentioned that they were not involved in hiring the employees and would not be able to complete the questionnaire. The attitudes of the academic managers who participated were insightful since to a great extent they share the sentiments of their fellow academic managers. Their views were indispensable in this study.

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