

**PERCEPTIONS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND THE POTENTIAL
UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES THEREOF IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT:
A STUDY OF THE DESIGNATED AND NON-DESIGNATED GROUPS IN
SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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Declaration

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December 2009

ABSTRACT

Jacques Schalk Pienaar, MA (University of Stellenbosch)

Perceptions of affirmative action and the potential unintended consequences thereof in the work environment: a study on the Designated and Non-designated groups in South Africa.

Supervisor: Ms G Ekermans, M Comm (Industrial Psychology)

Affirmative action is arguably one of the more controversial topics in the South African society today. Implemented in response to many years of apartheid which marginalised the Black population of South Africa specifically, this form of redress is aimed at reversing the wrongs of the past and at levelling the playing field in terms of access to scarce resources. Unfortunately, massive social structural changes such as these are hardly ever implemented without encountering resistance and unintended consequences. This is why the aim of this study was to explore the relationship between knowledge of affirmative action and attitudes towards affirmative action, as well as the relationship between attitudes towards affirmative action and the different forms of (dysfunctional) consequences this could have in the South African work environment for both the Designated-(Blacks, Indians, Coloured and White female employees) and Non-designated groups (White male employees) respectively. A non-experimental (ex-post facto) research design were utilised for these purposes. The constructs were defined as follows: knowledge of affirmative action as the respondents' actual knowledge of South Africa's Employment Equity Act, (1998) and attitudes towards affirmative action as the respondents' stance (in terms of negativity or sensitivity) towards 5 affirmative action-related debates. These include attitude towards merit, -quotas, -reverse discrimination, - drop in standards, and – tokenism (Charlton & Van Niekerk, 1994; Human, Bluen, & Davies, 1999; Lynch, 1989; Qunta, 1995). For the Non-designated group (White males), Adams' equity theory (1965) was used to explain how perceived inequity in the work environment could lead to certain forms of dysfunctional work behaviour, namely exit, voice, loyalty, stealing and silence (Hirschman, 1970; Pinder, 1998). For the Designated groups, relational demography theory (Riordian, 2000; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998) was used to argue how possible "out-group" status of affirmative action candidates could lead to lower levels of job satisfaction, group cohesion and organisational commitment, as well as to higher levels of conflict and role ambiguity. An availability sample of one-hundred-and-eighty respondents was drawn from the databases of several leading recruitment agencies in the Western Cape. Several scales were utilised, of which all were added into one composite questionnaire. For those constructs for which no scales were available from previous research studies, new scales were

developed (e.g. knowledge of affirmative action, attitudes towards affirmative action, etc.). In addition to these, the organisational commitment questionnaire (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), the role ambiguity scale, (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1977) the 26 item job satisfaction scale, (Churchill, Ford and Walker 1976) the perceived cohesion scale (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990) and the 4-item (task- and relationship conflict) scales of Jehn (1996) was used to measure organisational commitment, role ambiguity, job satisfaction, group cohesion and conflict respectively. One-hundred respondents completed and returned the questionnaires. The results showed that knowledge of affirmative action was significantly related to attitude towards affirmative action. To this regard it was found that respondents who were more knowledgeable on the Employment Equity Act (1998) generally had more positive attitudes towards affirmative action. In addition, it was found that attitude towards affirmative action (total score) was positively related to voice behaviour and inversely related to silence behaviour. Furthermore, the results revealed that attitudes towards affirmative action could account for a significant variance in (inverse) silence-behaviour in the Non-designated group. No significant relationship was found between attitude towards affirmative action (total score) and the different types of hypothesised work behaviour in the Designated groups. The conclusions of the study as well as the limitations and recommendations for future research were discussed.

OPSOMMING

Jacques Schalk Pienaar, MA (Universiteit van Stellenbosch)

Persepsies van regstellende aksie en die potensieël-onbedoelde gevolge daarvan in die werksomgewing: 'n studie op die Aangewese en Nie-aangewese groepe in Suid-Afrika.

Studieleier: Me Gina Ekermans, M Comm (Bedryfsielkunde)

Daar kan argumenteer word dat regstellende aksie waarskynlik vandag een van die mees kontroversieële temas is in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing. Regstellende aksie is gëimplimenter in reaksie op baie jare van apartheid waarin veral die Swart Suid-Afrikaanse populاسie ontsien is van baie geleenthede, en stel dus ten doel 'n ommeswaai in die verkeerde praktyke van die verlede sowel as die gelykmaking van die speelveld in terme van toegang tot skaars hulpbronne te bring. Ongelukkig is dit so dat massiewe sosiale strukturele veranderinge soos hierdie byna nooit gëimplimenter word sonder weerstand en nie-vooraf verwagte gevolge nie. Die doel van hierdie studie was daarom om die verhouding tussen kennis van regstellende aksie en houdings teenoor regstellende aksie, sowel as die verhoudings tussen houdings teenoor regstellende aksie en verskillende disfunksionele gevolge in die Suid-Afrikaanse werksplek as gevolg hiervan, vir beide die Aangewese (Swart, Indiër, Gekleurde en Wit vroulike werknemers) en Nie-aangewese (Blanke manlike werknemers) groepe onderskeidelik, te ondersoek. A nie-eksperimentele (ex-post facto) navorsingsontwerp was gebruik om hierdie doel te bereik. Die belangrike konstrakte was gedefinieër as volg: kennis van regstellende aksie as die respondente se werklike kennis van Suid-Afrika se Wet op Gelyke Indiensneming (1998) en houdings teenoor regstellende aksie as die respondente se standpunt (in terme van negatiwiteit of sensitiwiteit) teenoor vyf regstellende aksie-verwante debatte. Hierdie debatte sluit in houding teenoor meriete, - kwotas, - omgekeerde diskriminasie, - verlaging van standaard en -“tokenism” (Charlton & Van Niekerk, 1994; Human, Bluen, & Davies, 1999; Lynch, 1989; Qunta, 1995). Vir die Nie-aangewese groep (Wit mans), is Adams se billikheidsteorie (1965) gebruik om te verduidelik hoe die persepsie van onbillikheid in die werksplek kan lei tot sekere vorms van disfunksionele werksgedrag, naamlik “exit, voice, loyalty, stealing” en “silence” (Hirschman, 1970; Pinder, 1998). Vir die Aangewese groepe was “relational demography” teorie (Riordian, 2000; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998) gebruik om te beskryf hoe moontlike “uit-groep” status van regstellende aksie kandidate kan lei tot laer vlakke van werksatisfaksie, groep kohesie en organisatoriese betrokkenheid, en tot hoër vlakke van konflik en rol dubbelsinnigheid. 'n Gerieflikheidssteekproef van een-honderd-en-tagtig beskikbare respondente was geneem van die rekords van

verskillende gesogte werwingsagentskappe in die Wes-Kaap. Verskeie skale was gebruik en al hierdie skale was saamgevoeg in een groot saamgestelde vraelys. Vir die konstruke waar daar geen skale onmiddelik beskikbaar was vanuit vorige navorsing nie, is nuwe skale ontwikkel (bv. kennis van regstellende aksie, houdings teenoor regstellende aksie, ens.). Bo en behalwe hierdie skale, is daar ook gebruik gemaak van die organisatoriese betrokkenheidsvraelys, (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) die rol dubbelsinnigheidsvraelys, (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1977) die 26 item werksatisfaksie skaal, (Churchil, Ford, & Walker, 1976) die waargenome kohesie skaal, (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990) en die 4-item (taak- en verhoudingskonflik) skale van Jehn (1996) om organisatoriese betrokkenheid, rol-dubbelsinnigheid, werksatisfaksie, groep kohesie en konflik te meet. Een honderd respondente het die vraelyste voltooi en ingehandig. Die resulte het daarop gewys dat kennis van regstellende aksie betekenisvol verwant is aan houdings teenoor regstellende aksie. Meer spesifiek het die navorsing daarop gewys dat respondente wat meer kennis gehad het oor die Wet op Gelyke Indiensneming oor die algemeen meer positiewe houdings gehad het oor regstellende aksie. Dit was ook gevind dat houding teenoor regstellende aksie (totaal telling) positief verwant is aan “voice” gedrag en negatief verwant aan “silence” gedrag, met houdings teenoor regstellende aksie wat moontlik ‘n beduidende hoeveelheid variansie verklaar het in (omgekeerde) “silence” gedrag in die Nie-aangewese groep. Geen betekenisvolle verwantskappe is gevind tussen houding teenoor regstellende aksie (totaal telling) en die verskillende tipes van voorspelde disfunksionele gevolge vir die werksplek in terme van die Aangewese groepe nie. Die gevolgtrekkings van die studie sowel as die beperkinge en voorstelle vir toekomstige navorsing is ook bespreek.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

South Africa is in a period of transition. Since 1994, the African National Congress has propagated and enforced the philosophy and practice of affirmative action, thereby attempting to address the imbalances created by past regimes. The main purpose behind this decision was to achieve a representative workforce and equal employment opportunities for all South Africans by systematically promoting the employment and development of the Designated group (women, Blacks¹ and the disabled) without unduly trammeling the career aspirations of the Non-designated group (White males) who have enjoyed employment preference in the past.

1.2 Background

In the past, members of the Designated groups (specifically Black males and –females) were discriminated against when it came to employment and promotion decisions and much blame for South Africa's current skewed labour market has been placed on the Nationalist government that ruled the country until not so long ago (Charlton & Van Niekerk, 1994).

The old saying of discrimination being as old as time (Charlton & Van Niekerk, 1994) holds true, also in South Africa, as discriminatory labour legislation (and non-labour laws) which was the tools through which previously disadvantaged groups were systematically oppressed, had their origins not in the coming of power of the Nationalist government in 1948, but much further back (Qunta, 1995). Hence, whilst the Nationalist party cannot avoid being blamed for having a stake in many problems that are experienced in the South African context today, it may be argued that at the time they simply built on the discriminatory measures that already existed.

¹ In the South African context, the term Blacks refer to Africans, Coloureds and Indians (Dupper, 2004).

Roughly, there were three broad categories of discriminatory measures in the history of South Africa that would have a profound effect on the ability of especially Blacks (Africans) to be a self-sustaining force in the South-African economy (Qunta, 1995):

- Those directed at getting Blacks (Africans) off the land and onto the farms and mining compounds; (i.e. the Vagrancy Act of 1809, the Glen Gray Act of 1894, the Native Regulation Act of 1911, etc.);
- Those that controlled the Africans' conditions of service once they were employed (i.e. the Mines and Works Act of 1911, the Apprenticeship Act of 1922, the Native Building Workers Act of 1951, etc.);
- Those that protected White workers from competition from Black workers (i.e. using inferior syllabuses for and investing significantly less in Black education than White education).

More specifically, apartheid was brought about by different forms of legislation such as the Group Areas Act of 1950 which forced different races to live in designated areas, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the Coloured and Indian Education Departments that controlled all aspects of education for the Africans, Coloured and mixed races, and the Asiatic races respectively (Sithole, 2001). In addition, the "Job Reservation Act of 1964 prescribed what job categories were open to Blacks, Coloureds and Indians," and "Blacks, Coloureds and Asians were denied the vote and all of their political parties were banned" (Sithole, 2001, p.11).

Consequently, the many years of apartheid has marginalised Blacks (Africans) not only from political power but from economic participation as well (Sangster, 1996) by restricting their ability to move around and sell their labour competitively and by limiting their potential to acquire critical skills (Qunta, 1995). Thus, an argument for affirmative action is founded in the active dispossession of the Black population from land and the deliberate exclusion of Black people from the economy (Ansty, 1997).

As a result of these and many other mal-practices, the South African social inequality situation escalated to the following dilemma three years after the official abolishment of apartheid by 1997 (Employment Equity Bill, 1997):

- The bottom fifth of income earners in South Africa earned 1.5 percent of national income whilst the wealthiest ten percent of households captured fifty percent of the national income;
- Ninety-five percent of the poor were Blacks (Africans) and two-thirds of the Blacks (Africans) were poor;
- Among Blacks (Africans), unemployment was approximately forty-one percent by 1997. At the same time unemployment was 6.4 percent among Whites, seventeen percent among Asians, and twenty-three percent among Coloureds; and
- More women were employed than men, but it was still five-thousand times more likely for a White male than a Black woman to be in a top management position.

In addition, almost ten years on, half of the population continues to live under the poverty datum line (Adelzadeh, 2006) and there are estimates that just over twenty million people in South Africa live in poverty (DBSA, 2005). The concentration of poverty also lies predominantly with Black people, women, in rural areas and with the Black youth (DBSA, 2005).

This is why affirmative action can be described as “the purposeful and planned placement or development of competent or potentially competent persons in, or to positions from which they were debarred in the past, in an attempt to redress past disadvantages and to render the workforce more representative of the population, on either a local or national level” (Bendix, 1996, p.592).

From the statistics presented above it is clear that a certain group of South Africans have succeeded in systematically impoverishing Blacks (Africans) by denying them access to education, training, and employment opportunities which would have allowed them to participate meaningfully to the countries’ future.

As one response to this dilemma, the South African government has launched a comprehensive affirmative action policy in the form of the Employment Equity Act (and other initiatives such as Black Economic Empowerment). This policy is aimed at redressing the imbalances created in the past and at increasing the representation of marginalised groups of the population in the South African labour force. As such, South Africa's affirmative action policy currently promotes the achievement of equal employment opportunities through a conscious and proactive effort to place and develop previously disadvantaged people in positions from which they were excluded in the past.

It is clear that change is required, and while this change carries a moral mandate, it is also an economic necessity (Charlton & Van Niekerk, 1994). According to Qunta (1995) the economic imperative (for affirmative action) is so clear that it cannot be ignored, and there is even recognition by the majority of big business that affirmative action is necessary from an economic point of view in South Africa. The South Africa economy can no longer rely on the skills of 12.8% of the population while ignoring the other 87.2% (Qunta, 1995).

1.3 The significance of the study

Since the inception of affirmative action in South Africa on 12 October 1998 when the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998) was assented to by Parliament it is evident that members of the Designated groups have rapidly embraced political life at various levels. Considering the past ten years some South Africans feel that progress has been remarkable. Examples of such progress includes “South Africa having managed to run three national elections with success”, “a marked decline in political violence” and “the substantial redistribution of wealth across racial lines that has been taking place in the last decade,”(Du Toit, 2004, p. 6) especially amongst the middle-class citizen.

however, and despite progress being made on a political level, Lawley (2003) points out that technology and technical management in Africa still tend to be associated with foreigners or Whites and that the legacy of apartheid is not easily thrown off. For

example, Qunta (1995, p.7) points out that the "White corporate world is not very receptive to anyone who does not conform to the Euro-centric world-view and that the policy of affirmative action is still not as voluntary an effort on the part of companies as it should be". Despite this, it can be argued that companies are becoming distinctly aware that their future financial success necessitates extending recruitment and selection to all races and that the "new" political environment has made discriminatory methods of recruitment and selection undesirable. Qunta (1995, p. 7) also argues that if it were not for these factors, (such as future financial success through government tenders) "some companies would still have very little compulsion to move away from the old order under which they prospered".

At an individual level, Wingrove (1991) argues that some White males (the Non-designated group) still resist affirmative action programmes even though it may not always look that way on the surface. This is because it could be argued that those who have benefited in the past and who have had access to education and wealth would naturally perceive affirmative action as a threat. In other words, sensitivity to past Black or White problems in the "old" South Africa and the need to appear "politically correct" in the "new" South Africa creates a reluctance in many White people to address the unpleasant truths and realities in a blatant, straightforward, open, and honest manner (Wingrove, 1991).

This resilience of racial attitudes (especially from the side of Whites) that has been widely noted in the literature (Malle, Pratto, Sidanius, & Stallworth; 1994) has been termed "covert resistance" or "covert sabotage" by Wingrove (1991) and has been proposed as one explanation for why affirmative action programmes often fail. Carrim (2000) and Sharp (1998) also claim that new political endorsements (like affirmative action) are simply reconstructing racism. This creates a (new) problem with attitudes where in the past the problem centered only on the gross differential access to resources by various groups. In fact, the most common point of criticism against affirmative action is that it is simply another form of discrimination (Loots, 2005).

Thus, it may be overly simplistic to argue that because affirmative action is meant to improve the lives of members of the Designated groups that this is always the case and that there exist no unintended and negative results inherent to the implementation of such programmes. For example, some research has shown that affirmative action programmes have actually succeeded in alienating the very people that it is supposed to empower and advance (Jackson, Thoits & Taylor, 1995; Young & James, 2001; Heilman & Alcott, 2001). This is mainly because affirmative action “allows disadvantaged groups the chance to gain experience and prove themselves, but at the same time it perpetuates the perception that they intrinsically lack the characteristics for success in employment and will always need special assistance” (Hodges-Aeberhard, 1999, p. 138.).

It is therefore important to understand that any set of policies (e.g. employment equity) has both manifest and latent functions (Merton, 1968). Media and press coverage of affirmative action has typically focused on affirmative action’s manifest or obvious and intended functions, namely increasing female or minority representation in higher education and professions (Lynch, 1989).

However, while affirmative action measures are extremely necessary, certain fundamental questions remain. For example, what have been the latent, unintended, or hidden implications of affirmative action? Answers to these questions will be valuable for increasing the chances of successfully implementing affirmative action programmes in the future. It could also assist HR practitioners in understanding how to manage the motivation of employees given the realities of affirmative action in South Africa.

1.4 Problem statement and research objectives

More importantly, what has the effect of affirmative action been on the motivation and work behaviour of White employees (the Non-designated group)? Do many White employees still resist affirmative action and hide their negative attitudes and if so, how does this frustration manifest itself in the workplace? In addition, how do members of the Designated groups respond to being treated as tokens (e.g. being appointed in a

position without any real responsibilities or authority) in the work place? What types of behaviors do they demonstrate when they perceive themselves as not “deserving” of certain positions and/or responsibilities or when they are stigmatised or labeled as being token or affirmative action appointments?

In summary, the purpose of this research is threefold. The first objective is to investigate the work behaviour of employees, given the context of affirmative action in South-Africa, by investigating the attitudes of members of the Non-designated group towards affirmative action (i.e. underlying attitudes towards tokenism, merit, quotas, etc.) and the extent to which these underlying attitudes explain variance in their work behaviour by making use of Adam’s (1965) equity theory. To this regard it is argued that given the realities of affirmative action, members of the Non-designated group (White males) will compare their own input-output ratios² with that of members of the Designated groups (Blacks, women and the disabled) and in most cases, view the input-output ratios of the Designated groups (Blacks, women and the disabled) as being more favourable. According to equity theory, the members of the Non-designated group will then take action to try and restore balance to these ratios by engaging in any number of different behaviours meant to modify their job input (e.g. work harder or get a better degree), job output (e.g. fight for an increase or promotion) or to change their comparison group (e.g. move to another company or country).

A second objective is to explore the attitudes of members of Designated groups towards affirmative action (i.e. underlying attitudes towards tokenism, merit, quotas, etc.) and how these attitudes explain variance in their work behaviour by making use of relational demography theory. Relational demography theory (Riordian, 2000; Williams & O’Reilly, 1998) deals with minorities, diversity and discrimination in the work place. The theory proposes that due to being labeled as an affirmative action candidate, an individual will find it more difficult to classify him- or herself as being similar to the majority group (in this case the Non-designated group). Consequently this could lead to the bulk of affirmative action appointments being classified as members of the “out-groups” of

² The balance between what an individual brings to the job and what he or she get actually get from the job.

companies, which in turn leads to discrimination against them and eventually a wide array of negative consequences such as decreased job satisfaction, organisational commitment and group cohesion.

Finally, as there seems to exist a lack of understanding in South Africa on technical issues related to Employment Equity legislation such as quotas, (G. Cillié, personal communication, 22 October 2006) a third objective of this research study will be to investigate the relationship between employees' knowledge about certain affirmative action provisions in South Africa's Employment Equity Act and their attitudes towards affirmative action.

1.5. Composition of the thesis

The following chapter (2) will provide a theoretical basis for all of the concepts discussed up until this point. To this regard, relevant literature will be explored on the topics of affirmative action, the Employment Equity Act (1998), equity theory (Adams, 1965) and relational demography theory (Riordian, 2000; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). The focus of the discussion on affirmative action will be on the meaning (and therefore also the proper or ideal application of) affirmative action in South Africa, the success of affirmative action efforts to date, and also how the Designated and Non-designated groups in South Africa could possibly perceive current affirmative action efforts.

The Employment Equity Act will also be discussed in chapter two by exploring the responsibilities of the state and the employers with regards to the implementation of affirmative action in South Africa. This section will attempt to illuminate much of the potential grey areas that are often associated with long and complex legislative documents and in doing so, hopefully shed more light on the intended application of affirmative action in South Africa. Finally, equity theory and relational demography theory will be discussed in the light of the Designated- and the Non-designated groups respectively, and how their (different) perceptions of affirmative action could affect the respective groups' work behaviors in different ways. Chapter three will present the current study's research methodology with the focus on the research aims, the data collection- and analysis procedures as well as the measurement instruments used.

Chapter four will outline the study's research results whilst chapter 5 will conclude with a summarised discussion of the study's findings and possible future suggestions.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous section clarified the essence of this study. It provided a brief overview of the main objectives of the research. The following section will discuss in more detail the different constructs and theories that form the theoretical basis for this research. A logical argument in support of the objectives of this research is presented throughout this chapter.

2.2 Literature study: defining the concepts

At this point it is necessary to provide some conceptual clarity on the different components that are central to this study. This includes an in-depth discussion on affirmative action, an explanation of what the Employment Equity Act (1998) is and its intended application, as well as an evaluation of how successful affirmative action efforts have been to date in South-Africa. In addition, several popular debates that often surface whenever the topic of affirmative action are discussed will be presented, which is believed to greatly influence one's overall stance on affirmative action in general. These include the racism in reverse debate, the merit debate, the drop in standards debate, the quota debate, and the tokenism debate. Finally, an overview of equity theory and relational demography theory will be provided. These will be presented within the context of affirmative action in South Africa and will be used to explicate an argument regarding how the Non-designated and Designated groups respectively may be expected to react to affirmative action programmes.

2.2.1. Affirmative action

In South Africa, affirmative action (in its contemporary form) originated from the Equality clause (article 9) of the Constitution. Hence, in contrast to popular beliefs, in the purest sense affirmative action in South Africa did not originate directly because the political change that took place in 1994, but rather because of the current ruling party's

strive towards the achievement of broader equality in the South African society (G. Cillié, personal communication, 25 March 2009).

Although the term affirmative action originated in America, the concept of state intervention to remedy inequalities occurred also in India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and, it may even be argued in South Africa (in terms of protecting the interests of the Non-designated group) before a formal policy was introduced in the United States of America (Charlton & Van Niekerk, 1994). In addition, “while minorities are most often the beneficiaries of affirmative action, such as in the United States and Canada, some countries such as South Africa and Malaysia, have implemented affirmative action for majorities³” (McGregor, 2005, p. 4).

Most researchers and authors use the terms *Affirmative action* (Charlton & Van Niekerk, 1994), *Equal Employment Opportunity* (Human, 1993), *Reverse Discrimination* (Lynch, 1989), and *Black Advancement* (Wingrove, 1991) interchangeably, depending on their unique research focus and experiences. However, in order to advance this thesis, a consolidated working definition of affirmative action was needed. Hence it was necessary to consider and cull from the following definitions of affirmative action provided in the literature:

- “(Affirmative action is) a temporary intervention designed to achieve equal employment opportunity without lowering standards and without unduly trammeling the career aspirations or expectations of current organisational members who are competent in their jobs” (Human, 1993, p.2)
- “Affirmative action is the result of sets of policies or practices that has the purpose of working against inequalities that have come about on social, economic and educational spheres because of unfair discrimination against certain groups “(Barker, 2003. p. 264).
- “Affirmative action can be described as a systematic, planned process whereby the effects of colonialism and racial discrimination are being reversed in all areas of life” (Qunta, 1995, p.1).

³ This shows a definite difference between the purpose of affirmative action, with the programmes in the United States and Canada focusing on increasing diversity in the workplace and a country such as South Africa focusing on the alleviation of poverty and greater social imbalances.

- “Affirmative action is a system of racial- and ethnic preferences or quotas that have been the real-world results of goals and timetables” (Lynch, 1989, p.4).
- “Affirmative action is a proactive, conscious effort to redress disadvantages in the past and to increase representation of marginalised groups of the population in leadership positions in society” (Wingrove, 1991, p.6).
- Affirmative action is not meant to make identified victims (of past discrimination) whole, but rather aims to “dismantle prior patterns of employment discrimination and to prevent discrimination in the future. Such relief is provided to the class as a whole rather than individual members; no individual is entitled to relief, and the beneficiaries need not show that they were victims of discrimination” (Dudley v. City of Cape Town & another 2004 5 BLLR 413 (LC)).
- “Affirmative action should be seen as a temporary measure, because it is merely a measure and not a value or a right. ... measures are temporary and pragmatic” whilst “values and rights last forever” (George v. Liberty Life Association of South Africa 1996 8 BLLR 985 (IC)).

For the purposes of this study, the concept of affirmative action will therefore be defined as, a temporary, systematic, and planned intervention to achieve equal employment opportunities through a proactive and conscious effort to place and develop competent or potentially competent persons (in the collective sense) in, or to positions from which they were debarred in the past (a fact which they do not need to prove), thereby rendering the workforce more representative of the population.

Having taken note of the definition provided above, and in trying to construct a true-to-the-cause understanding of affirmative action, the following characteristics of affirmative action that would typically manifest themselves in affirmative action programmes, deserve attention (Human, 1993; Wingrove, 1991):

1. Affirmative action focuses solely on the *development, employment, and promotion* of the disadvantaged group;

2. Contrary to popular opinions, affirmative action in employment equity guidelines are a means of *overcoming barriers* to equal employment opportunities rather than as a means of preferentially advancing the interests of some groups at the expense of others. Thus, affirmative action were conceived as a process to eliminate discrimination, *not to reverse discrimination*;
3. Affirmative action seek to increase the opportunities of formerly excluded groups without *recourse to tokenism* (in the sense of bringing in “unqualified persons”);
4. Affirmative action aims to redress imbalances. It identifies positions that have previously been inaccessible to the disadvantaged group and launches special recruitment and selection practices for these groups as well as *engaging them in training and development*; and
5. Finally, affirmative action was conceived as a *temporary intervention*, which will cease as soon as equal employment opportunity is achieved. It is therefore not a practice that is meant to carry on indefinitely.

In contrast to the intended characteristics mentioned above, the general public and students of affirmative action in South Africa should therefore not think that affirmative action is about “window-dressing” change in which a small number of the people of the Designated groups are appointed into key positions without the necessary skills and potential (Commission to Investigate the Development of a Comprehensive Labour Market, 1996). Affirmative action should also not be seen as a measure that starts off with vague outlines and that is intended for temporary implementation, but that invariably ends up as being a comprehensive and permanent institution in societies (Hodges-Aeberhard, 1999).

Affirmative action should rather be perceived as the strategic and systematic advancement of groups that was previously disadvantaged in terms of job opportunities and labour market security, coupled with the necessary tuition and training. (Commission to Investigate the Development of a Comprehensive Labour Market, 1996). Affirmative action measures target equal employment opportunities and equal representation of different demographical groups in the work place and should therefore

cease to be necessary when equal employment opportunities and representation has been achieved.

Change in the work place must also take place in conjunction with wider general transformation outside the labour market, designed to lower the levels of socio-economic discrimination against the Designated groups in order to be successful (Commission to Investigate the Development of a Comprehensive Labour Market, 1996). However, regardless of the form, nature or success of an affirmative action policy, plan or strategy, it will never be free of criticism. This is because affirmative action is, by definition, discriminatory, and when dealing with affirmative action the interest and expectations of all races and both genders are at stake (Rycroft, 1999).

2.3. South Africa's Employment Equity Act: The intended application

In the previous section affirmative action was conceptually clarified by taking into account some of the more popular definitions that have been used to describe the concept. These provided insight into the concept, rather than a set of strict rules for practicing affirmative action. As different forms of affirmative action is practiced in many countries in the world, it is necessary at this stage to clarify South-Africa's unique approach by exploring the intended application of the Employment Equity Act.

2.3.1. A summary of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (amended since 1994)

In October 1991, former President Nelson Mandela made a speech which was meant to be cornerstone in the application of affirmative action measures in South Africa:

“What we are against is not the upholding of standards as such but the sustaining of barriers to the attainment of standards; the special measures that we envisage to overcome the legacy of past discrimination are not intended to ensure the advancement of unqualified persons, but to see to it that those who have been denied access to qualifications in the past can become qualified now, and that those who have been qualified all along but overlooked because of past discrimination, are at last given their due” (RSA, 1996. p. 5).

In 1994, the South African government recognised that as a result of apartheid and other discriminatory practices in the past, there were great disparities in employment, occupation and income within the national labour market. Additionally, the government also recognised that those disparities pronounced disadvantages for certain people that could not be redressed by simply repealing discriminatory laws (RSA, 1998). For these reasons the Employment Equity Act was drafted and accepted by parliament in its first form in 1994.

The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 places certain responsibilities on both designated employers and the state in order to:

- a) Promote equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and
- b) Implement affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by Designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

(RSA, 1998. p.12).

*Designated groups*⁴ in this context refer to Black people, women and people with disabilities. *Designated employers* refer to all organisations with a certain threshold in terms of annual turnover (see appendix 1) as well as all organisations that employ 50 or more staff members, municipalities, organs of state, and finally all those organisations that are bound by a collective agreement (in terms of Section 23 or 31 of the Labour Relations Act) which appoints it as a designated employer (RSA, 1998. p. 8). The Employment Equity Act also makes provision for other employers who do not fall within

⁴ Though not explicitly stated in the Employment Equity Act, recent findings in the Labour Court suggests that there does exist a “priority list” when it comes to deciding between the employment and advancement of different members of the designated groups. A ruling by a judge took the following sequential racial preference into account (Biggs v. Rand Water 2003 (24) ILJ 1957 (LC)).

1. Black females
2. Black males
3. Indians
4. Coloureds
5. People with disabilities
6. White females

the parameters mentioned above to voluntarily comply with its requirements (RSA, 1998, p. 18).

2.3.2. The responsibilities of the employer

The responsibilities of designated employers are two-fold, namely they have to take steps to promote equal opportunity in the work place by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice⁵ and also implement affirmative action measures. With regards to the promotion of equal opportunities, designated employers may not “unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly, against an employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth” (RSA, 1998, p.14). At the same time, however, it must be considered that the Employment Equity Act states that taking the stipulated affirmative action measures and to distinguish, exclude or prefer any person based on the inherent requirements of the job does not constitute unfair discrimination (RSA, 1998, p. 14). The Act therefore equates affirmative action to fair discrimination but also qualifies the selection of specific individuals for a job if they possess an inherent skill, knowledge or experience, (which other candidates do not have) even if they are not members of the Designated groups. Therefore, any absolute barriers to the prospective employment or advancement of White males (as the Non-designated group) specifically do not exist under the Employment Equity Act (RSA, 1998, p.14).

⁵ 'employment policy or practice' includes, but is not limited to-

- (a) recruitment procedures, advertising and selection criteria;
- (b) appointments and the appointment process;
- (c) job classification and grading;
- (d) remuneration, employment benefits and terms and conditions of employment;
- (e) job assignments;
- (f) the working environment and facilities;
- (g) training and development;
- (h) performance evaluation systems;
- (i) promotion;
- (j) transfer;
- (k) demotion;
- (l) disciplinary measures other than dismissal; and
- (m) Dismissal (RSA, 1998. p. 10).

The Employment Equity Act does not provide many details with regards to how unfair discrimination must be eliminated from an employer's employment policies and practices but does give specific instructions with regards to medical- and psychometric testing. To this regard any medical testing is prohibited unless:

- a) legislation permits or requires the testing; or
- b) it is justifiable in the light of medical facts, employment conditions, social policy, the fair distribution of employee benefits or the inherent requirements of a job.

HIV testing is also prohibited unless the Labour Court judges such testing to be justifiable under special circumstances (RSA, 1998, p. 14). Similarly, any psychological- or similar type of testing is also prohibited unless the employer can scientifically prove that these are not biased against a specific group, can be applied fairly to all employees, and that they are valid and reliable for use in making employment decisions (RSA, 1998, p.16).

With regards to affirmative action measures designated employers are required to:

- a) Implement measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers, including unfair discrimination, which adversely affect people from Designated groups,
- b) Implement measures designed to further diversity in the workplace based on equal dignity and respect for all people,
- c) Make reasonable accommodation for people from Designated groups in order to ensure that they enjoy equal opportunities and are equitable represented in the workforce of a designated employer,
- d) Apply preferential treatment and numerical goals, excluding quotas which implies:
 - a. ensuring the equitable representation of suitably qualified people from Designated groups in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce, and
 - b. retaining and developing people from Designated groups and to implement appropriate training measures, including measures in terms of an Act of Parliament providing for skills development. (RSA, 1998, p. 18)

In practical terms the employer needs to consult with its employees and produce an employment equity plan (and other related documents) in order to operationalise the above requirements (RSA, 1998, p.20). This exercise concerns taking reasonable steps to consult with a representative trade union or representatives (reflecting the interests of employees from all occupational categories and levels as well as from Designated and Non-designated groups) nominated by the employees on the following matters:

- The preparation and implementation of an employment equity plan,
- The preparation of an employment equity report⁶,
- The collection of information and an analysis of the employer's employment policies, practices, procedures and working environment in order to identify employment barriers which adversely affect people from Designated groups, and
- An analysis that includes a profile of the designated employer's workforce within each occupational category in order to determine the degree of underrepresentation of people from the Designated groups in various occupational categories and levels in the workforce. (RSA, 1998, p. 22).

The employment equity plans resulting from this process of consultation is the strategy that spells out how the organisation plans to implement affirmative action within a given time-frame. Thus, employment equity plans should contain objectives, numerical goals for equitable representation, timetables, the affirmative action measures to be used, and procedures that will be used to monitor and evaluate the plan (RSA, 1998, p. 22).

Additionally, employment equity plans should contain the internal procedures that will be used to resolve any related disputes between individuals in the workplace, including guidelines for senior managers, who will be responsible for the monitoring and implementation of the plan (RSA, 1998, p. 22-23). These plans are therefore created by organisations themselves, and as such reflect their own commitment and unique approach to employment equity. Therefore, arguments involving the perception that the state "forces" quotas on businesses as part of affirmative action are consequently unfounded

⁶ This report is submitted to the Director-General every year or biannually depending on the size of the employer's workforce (RSA, 1998, p. 24).

and are simply not true⁷. The Employment Equity Act simply creates the wider framework for the realisation of employment equity whilst the employers in consultation with the workforce come up with their own plans, procedures, and numerical goals.

At this point it must be stated that there exists a big difference between quotas and numerical goals. The difference between quotas and numerical goals lies in the fact that quotas places a definitive and measurable responsibility on employers (i.e. 20% of the workforce must be of the Black population group by a certain deadline) whilst numerical goals (as should be used in South Africa) provides the employer with a degree of discretion (i.e. in reporting on progress, what (more) can we do to increase representation of specific population groups within a certain time-frame?) in how they implement affirmative action (Ellis, 2005).

The goal is to look at the degree of underrepresentation in different occupational categories and levels and come up with a plan and numerical goals of how this could be corrected in a specific time period. In addition, another goal is to get all staff involved in the elimination of employment barriers that adversely affect members of the Designated groups.

In giving feedback on what has been achieved, employers are also required to submit employment equity reports. These reports are summaries of what has been happening in the company regarding affirmative action in the workplace and imply the provision of numbers and facts to indicate what progress has been made in relation to the employment equity plan that was initially submitted. Additionally, employment equity reports should contain information regarding income differentials – e.g. information on the remuneration and benefits received in each occupational category and level of the employer's workforce (RSA, 1998, p.24-26).

⁷ For example, in a recent survey on South Africa's research and development capacity and quality, it was found that a significant segment of respondents believed that "too much attention (is given) to racial quotas," (versus a focus on competence) and that this was one of the main reasons the country's R&D system is deteriorating (Grobbelaar, S.S., & Buys, A.J., 2007, p. 226).

Finally, some general provisions of the Employment Equity Act also place the onus on employers to:

- publish their employment equity reports in the company's annual financial report,
- make the employment equity plans available to all staff,
- display the Employment Equity Act at prominent places in the organisation, and
- maintain records about the workforce, the employment equity plans, and any other documents related to the Employment Equity Act (RSA, 1998, p. 24-26).

2.3.3. The responsibilities of the state

The state has a regulatory and capacitating role within the framework of the Employment Equity Act. Several parties act on the state's behalf to monitor and enforce the Act, whilst the state also sees to it that regulatory bodies are established, staffed and maintained.

Along with the Labour Court, the Employment Equity Commission is one such regulatory body that was established in 1999 and that consists of representatives of NEDLAC⁸ for organised labour, organised business, the state, and NEDLAC's development chamber. The Employment Equity Committee is funded by the government and its main purpose is to advise the Minister on all issues relating the Employment Equity Act. This could include:

- Making awards to recognize employers who further the purpose of the Act,
- Researching and investigating norms and benchmarks for proportionate income differentials and advising the Minister on appropriate measures for reducing disproportionate differentials,
- Advising the Minister on regulations made,
- Advising the Minister on codes of good practice,
- Submitting an annual Employment Equity Report to the Minister, and
- Any other prescribed function (RSA, 1998, p. 30).

In turn, the Minister must make public all submitted employment equity plans that are compliant in parliament. Additionally, the Minister must keep a register of designated

⁸ National Economic Development and Labour Council

employers that have submitted their employment equity reports and also issue codes of good practice about the Employment Equity Act. Finally, the Minister must ensure that a chair person for the Employment Equity Commission is selected, that the Department of Labour monitors the progress of designated employers with regards to their employment equity plans and that labour inspectors are appointed to enforce the legislation (RSA, 1998, p. 32).

The Department of Labour is another role-player within this equation and is charged with the inspection of submitted equity plans and –reports, and must ensure that the plans submitted and reports comply with the necessary requirements as set out in the Act. Furthermore, the Department of Labour along with the Minister regulate the issuing of certificates to designated employers for the allocation of state contracts. These are required by employers to conclude any agreement with an organ of state to furnish supplies or for the hiring or letting of equipment and facilities (RSA, 1998, p.44). This provides an incentive for designated employers to comply with the provisions of the Act as they will not be able to do any business with government organisations without a certificate from the Minister which validates them as being compliant with the Employment Equity legislation.

A final important role-player acting on behalf of the state is the labour inspectors which have the authority to enter, question and inspect any premises of designated employers. Labour inspectors must request and obtain written letters of undertaking from employers that they will comply with the Act, and may issue compliance orders if designated employers has refused or failed to comply with their written undertakings of compliance. In such cases the labour inspectors will advise the employers of what steps need to be taken to comply along with a specific time period in which those steps must be taken (RSA, 1998, p. 32-34).

Compliance orders may be taken on review by the Director-General should employers have sufficient grounds for this, and failing any satisfactory outcome here (i.e. a reasonable appeal was not granted) the employer may take the matter for further review

to the Labour Court. The Labour Court has the authority to force the organisation to comply with the steps advised, reward compensation and damages, and may also fine designated employers depending on the severity of the case and also the employer’s prior history in complying with employment equity legislation as is indicated in table 1 (RSA, 1998, p. 52).

Table 2.1

Fines for the contravention of the Employment Equity Act.

PREVIOUS CONTRAVENTION	CONTRAVENTION OF ANY PROVISION OF SECTIONS 16, 19, 20, 21, 22 AND 23
No previous contravention	R500 000
A previous contravention in respect of the same provision	R600 000
A previous contravention within the previous 12 months or two previous contraventions in respect of the same provision within three years	R700 000
Three previous contraventions in respect of the same provision within three years	R800 000
Four previous contraventions in respect of the same provision within three years	R900 000

The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998.

2.4. How far have we come with affirmative action?

People have differing views regarding the success or non-success of affirmative action efforts in South Africa to date (G. Cillié, personal communication, 22 October 2006). For example, protagonists believe that there has been a substantial redistribution of wealth across racial lines in the last decade (Du Toit, 2004), whilst detractors believe that it is only the affluent members of the Designated groups that are benefited (more) by affirmative action, as “it focuses on a form of group compensation as opposed to encouraging victim specific policies of redress” (Twala, 2004, p. 147).

Differing views on the success of affirmative action probably exist because of the fact that there was little evidence available in the form of quantitative data to properly gauge the success of these efforts earlier on (Hodges-Aeberhard, 1999). These differing views

⁹ Supporters of this argument will focus on selected individuals of the emerging elite that have benefited disproportionately from affirmative action (Twala, 2004).

are strengthened further because there also seems to be a general uncertainty about what “success” would mean within the context of affirmative action efforts in South Africa (G. Cillié, personal communication, 25 March 2009). Some people would define success within this context as the appropriate redistribution of wealth across racial lines whilst others would cite social upliftment and equality in general, and yet others would support the appropriate representation of different racial groups in the workplace debate. General consensus seems to indicate that affirmative action would or could be done away with at a point where the different workplaces in South Africa reflect the local societal demographics in which they operate. However, this definition of success is still somewhat flawed as affirmative action should in essence not only be about getting the numbers right but it should also be supported by a wider effort (training, development, etc.) in which the fundamental causes underlying inequalities are addressed (G. Cillié, personal communication, 25 March 2009).

Additionally, according to Dupper (2004, p. 187) the fact that people could in general be scared to do research on affirmative action “because attacking a legislative measure that has redress for past wrongs as its subject might appear in bad taste” (Dupper, 2004, p. 187) could substitute a further reason for the lack of research on this topic. Thus, “reluctance (to do research on the topic of affirmative action) proceeds from a fear of the complexities involved” (Dupper, 2004, p. 188) and could also be as a result of the fear of being labeled a racist.

However, the limited data that is available regarding unemployment, monthly earnings and the representation of different races in highly skilled occupations can be used to make inferences regarding the state of discrimination that still exists in the South African Labour market. In addition, other sources of information can be consulted to provide information on:

- in general, which individuals occupy the top management decisions,
- who the top, middle and bottom income earners are,
- what number of compliance and contravention orders have been issued, and
- what the quality of the equity reports submitted to date, are.

This additional information can serve to complement the hard data and would provide a deeper understanding in general of how successful affirmative action efforts have been in South Africa to date.

Table 2.2

Unemployment Rate (broad definition) by race and gender: 1995 and 2006.

	1995	2006	Increase
All workers	31%	39%	8.2%
Race			
Black males	27%	35%	8.2%
Black females	44%	50%	5.8%
White males	4%	6%	2.7%
White females	9%	12%	2.9%

Own calculation from 1995 OHS and March 2006 LFS, Statistics South Africa, various years.

Table 2.2 indicates that general unemployment levels have increased since 1995. This may be ascribed to the fact that many South Africans have entered the formal labour market since the general time period that transformation started taking place in the country (e.g. this is due to an increase in people entering the labour market). Regardless of the increase in unemployment in this period across all races and genders, it is important to note that Black males (35% unemployment) and Black females (50% unemployment) still remained the two groups that were the hardest hit by unemployment levels in 2006.

Table 2.3

Average monthly earnings by race and gender: 1995 and 2006.

	1995	2006	Growth
All workers	2919	3330	14.1%
Race			
Black males	2176	2577	18.4%
Black females	2076	2461	18.6%
White males	7650	8106	6%
White females	4054	5269	30%

Own calculation from 1995 OHS and March 2006 LFS, Statistics South Africa, various years.

Table 2.3 indicates that except for large differences in unemployment, there also exist a considerable earnings gap between Black and White formal sector employees (for both genders) as well as for White men and -women. This is shown by comparing the average earnings by White males (R8106) in 2006 with that of White females, (R5269) Black females (R2577) and Black males (R2461).

It appears that White females have made the most gains in this period (e.g. growth of 30%) followed by Black females (18,6%) and then Black males (18,4%). The post-transition period therefore saw all the previously disadvantaged groups gain on White men in terms of their earnings.

However, there still appears a substantial earnings gap between Whites and Blacks as well as between White males and White females despite the White male earnings only growing by 6% since 1995.

Table 2.4

Share of workers in skilled occupations, by race and gender: 1995 and 2006.

	1995	2006	Increase
All workers	19%	25%	6%
Race			
Black males	10%	16%	6%
Black females	23%	26%	3%
White males	44%	49%	5%
White females	33%	49%	16%

Own calculation from 1995 OHS and March 2006 LFS, Statistics South Africa, various years.

Finally, Table 2.4 reveals the share of the formal sector employees who were working in skilled occupations for the period between 1995 and 2006. From the data it appears that White men were much more represented in skilled occupations in 1995 (44%) as compared to Black men (16%) and Black women (26%), and that this gap remained largely unchanged between 1995 and 2006. Only White females managed to increase their representation in the skilled occupations since 1995 at a substantially faster rate and appear to be relatively equal in terms of representation in skilled occupations to White males by the end of 2006.

Further research from other sources shows that Blacks in key decision making positions only account for 32.4% of all top management positions whereas Whites account for 65.2% of these top management positions. Moreover, “White representation is more than five times their Economic Active Population (EAP) whilst Blacks are three times below their EAP” (Commission for Employment Equity Report, 2006-2007, p.8)

Furthermore, the equity reports that were submitted to the Department of Labour¹⁰ received by October 2002, showed limited improvement with regard to the equitable representation of Black people (SA pace of change too slow, 2005). In 2003 the department issued 178 contravention orders and 60 compliance notices in five provinces. Contravention orders are given to companies that have practices that are inconsistent with specific parts of the Act and compliance notices force companies to meet the requirements of the Acts. Mpumalanga organisations topped the list for non-compliance with the Employment Equity Act with 59 notices followed by the Northern Cape with 44 and the Free State with 39 (SA pace of change too slow, 2005).

Over and above this, a challenge still exists to improve the quality of the reports submitted to the department by employers who continue to submit incomplete and incorrectly prepared information. This was the case despite an initiative from the side of government where they started with an online service in September 2005 to help employers complete and submit their reports online (Quota reports stream in, 2006).

In summary, therefore, it may be argued that it appears that the implementation of affirmative action and employment equity legislation has not had the intended effect for most of the members of the Designated groups in terms of unfair discrimination in the labour market, with White women being the only possible exception here. Racial disparities still exist in the South African labour market. Clearly, this notion is supported by the data which indicate that Black men and women were still the most heavily hit by unemployment by the end of 2006, that there still exists a massive earnings gap between White males and the rest of the work force, (despite some gains made by all Black men, Black women and White women) and that the gap in terms of representation in skilled occupations has not narrowed between White males and Blacks since 1995. Here again it appears that the only group that has made sufficient gains in terms of representation in skilled occupations was White females.

¹⁰ It is important to note that the comparisons between the yearly submissions of these reports remain problematic. Different organisations submit equity reports annually and the numbers submitted are more often than not incorrectly used to make inferences regarding the yearly improvement or non-improvement of national workforce representation (G. Cillié, personal communication, 25 March 2009).

A possible explanation for this advancement of White females in most areas lies in the fact that employers often view the appointment of White females as an “easy shortcut” – e.g. they will rather appoint White women under the banner of affirmative action as they also suffered under discrimination in the past as part of the “Designated group” category (Loots, 2005). Finally, it appears that a small number of Black males and Black females have been appointed in senior or key positions since 1994. However, the hard data seems to indicate that the majority of the Black population has been left behind in terms of persisting high levels of unemployment and low levels of average monthly earnings.

Whilst it is therefore encouraging to see the plight of White females and selected Black individuals improving in South Africa, a deeper issue still remains. Will the plight of the majority of the Designated groups ever improve under affirmative action measures? This is a massive challenge especially if it is taken into account that the success of affirmative action in South Africa “depends very much on the willingness of the White male managers to open up their domain so that Black and female managers can be appointed” (Twala, 2004, p. 134) and that seemingly a lot of South African businesses are not implementing the Employment Equity Act correctly. According to Twala (2004, p.130) examples of this incorrect implementation can be found when looking at some of the strategies employed by White males to protect their domains. This includes “employing people who are not competent and who are not prepared to challenge critical issues” or “embarking on constructive dismissal whereby affirmative action appointments are frustrated and are ultimately forced to leave the company” (Twala, 2004, p. 130) to name just a few.

It may also be argued that even if indeed affirmative action has been successful in terms of the appropriate proportion increase in the appointment of competent members of the Designated groups, a lack of empirical evidence to support this may be interpreted in terms of the general failure of these measures in terms of the stated objectives. Put differently, whilst affirmative action might not be a bad idea in theory, it may be that it is not properly planned for and implemented in practice, and also opens up exploitation opportunities (Hodges-Aeberhard, 1999).

2.5. Perceptions of affirmative action: Persistent and raging debates in South Africa

One could argue that South Africa has come a long way since 1994 in terms attitudes towards affirmative action. This change in attitudes required that society from the top to bottom re-evaluated what they have come to believe about themselves, their place in the world, and the place of people of color (Qunta, 1995). However, there still exists a discrepancy between the way individuals perceive the success of affirmative action programmes (Qunta, 1995) with its protagonists arguing that affirmative action constitutes a crucial mechanism for overcoming racism and sexism and its detractors arguing that it will eventually lead to reverse discrimination and increased hostility in the country (Human, 1993).

This situation is exacerbated if it is taken into account that the average employee seems to be rather poorly informed about the intended application of the Employment Equity Act, which often leads to employers and employees taking highly questionable stances on whether to support affirmative action or not (G. Cillié, personal communication, 22 October 2006). For example, some employers might take a very strong stance against affirmative action because they feel a quota system is unreasonable. However, in reality South Africa's affirmative Employment Equity Act does not even mention the use of quotas but only refer to "numerical goals", (RSA, 1998, p. 18) which makes arguments such as these, redundant and misguided.

It therefore seems as if the present debates surrounding the concept of affirmative action no longer revolves around whether or not affirmative action is a moral necessity, but many employees and employers are now rather questioning the way in which affirmative action programmes are being implemented in organisations and fear the latent consequences of such programmes.

In this regard it has been suggested that an individual's attitudes towards affirmative action are influenced by his or her stance (positive or realistic versus negative or pessimistic) on the following five affirmative action-related debates (Charlton & Van Niekerk, 1994; Human, Bluen, & Davies, 1999; Lynch, 1989; Qunta, 1995;) 1) Racism

(in reverse), 2) Merit, 3) (Drop in) standards, 4) Tokenism, and 5) Quotas. These debates will be discussed in more detail in the sections that follow¹¹.

2.5.1. The racism (in reverse) debate: reverse discrimination

Reverse discrimination is one of the most prevalent accusations directed at affirmative action programmes (Sangster, 1996). Individuals that hold negative views of affirmative action as a result of the fact that they believe it leads to reverse discrimination, view the process as being nothing less than yet another form of discrimination. That is to say that just like apartheid, South Africans feel that affirmative action perpetuates racial discrimination and increases the already strained tensions in the country (Sangster, 1996). For example, according to Dupper (2004, p. 121) “...affirmative action programmes often perpetuate patterns of discrimination” and ...“any preferences based on race, sex or disability is as much a form of invidious discrimination – as objectionable as the discrimination it is meant to remedy”.

On the one side it can be argued that members of the Non-designated group (White males) that feel strongly about reverse discrimination are those that have been negatively affected by affirmative action in their careers (i.e. those that were not promoted or did not get the job they were hoping for) and have therefore formed a negative opinion of affirmative action as being a system that actively “works against them”.

Similarly, it can be argued that the members from the Designated groups (e.g. Blacks, coloureds, etc.) that feel strongly opposed to reverse discrimination are those that also have a problem with the idea of discrimination in general. These individuals might have been negatively impacted by discrimination under apartheid in the past, but it is because of these experiences that they now choose to oppose discrimination in any form.

Research has shown that potential victims of discrimination might frequently recognise that their group was discriminated against but tend to deny the same level of personal

¹¹ It is important to consider these debates in detail, even though they may - according to actual legislation involved - only be relevant to the South African context in varying degrees, and in some cases not even be relevant at all.

experience with discrimination (Crosby, 1984). It is believed that the denial of discrimination in such a way helps individuals to maintain a positive self-concept (Dipboye, & Cotella, 2005) and could be one of the main reasons why members of the Designated groups struggle to justify reverse discrimination, because that would require them labeling themselves as “victims” in the first place. It might therefore also be reasonable to assume that there are members of the Designated groups that have had subjective experiences of affirmative action which has made them feel like “victims”, and that they are therefore inclined to oppose reverse racism.

Bendix (1996, p.593), however, argues that, “affirmative action will only become unfair and discriminatory if a previously disadvantaged person is appointed at all costs and without allowing other persons the opportunity to compete.” Thus, if South Africa’s affirmative action legislation is properly implemented, there is no reason why any employee will not be able to compete in the labour market, and consequently no reason to oppose affirmative action programmes or have a negative attitude towards affirmative action on the basis of it constituting reverse discrimination. This notion is supported by South Africa's Employment Equity Act (1998), which states that the employer is not required to, “...take any decision concerning an employment policy or practice that would establish an absolute barrier to the prospective or continued employment or advancement of people who are not from the Designated groups” (Employment Equity Act, 1998, p.20).

In practice, South Africa’s Employment Equity Act (1998) have also recently been “tested” in this regard when a White male magistrate applied for, and won a case, of unfair discrimination in the equality court against the Port Elizabeth Magistrate’s Court (Azzakani, 2006). Ignatius Du Preez, who has 19 years’ experience as a magistrate and who holds the degrees BJuris, LLB and Master of Public Administration, did not get short listed after he applied for a position at the Magistrate’s Court on the grounds that he is a White male. Instead, several inexperienced Black women made the list (Azzakani, 2006). The judge in the case ruled that the Magistrate’s Court’s short-listing procedures for appointing regional court magistrates, discriminated unfairly against White male

applicants and that these procedures made it impossible for any White man to be promoted over a Black woman, irrespective of experience or any other non-race factors (Azzakani, 2006). Consequently the position had to be re-advertised as the short-listing procedures amounted to unfair discrimination as is outlined in South Africa's Employment Equity Act.

In another ground-breaking case, an applicant (a Black female) applied for the position of Director: City Health, was informed that she was unsuccessful, and took the matter to the CCMA and eventually to the Labour Court because a White male was appointed in the position instead. She asked the court to set aside the appointment of the successful candidate and to appoint her to the post, or to reconsider the appointment in compliance with the City's non-discrimination and affirmative action obligations. The judge held that the EEA does not establish an individual right to affirmative action that could be decided by the Labour Court and refused the order sought by the applicant. The court distinguished between Chapter 2 (which prohibits unfair discrimination) and Chapter 3 of the EEA (which concerns affirmative action measures and which can only be brought into operation within a collective environment) and held that the EEA clearly does not provide an individual entitlement to affirmative action¹². Instead, a failure to implement affirmative action measures by an employer can only give rise to an enforcement issue (e.g. non-compliance can result in a fine, which is determined by a court) (*Dudley v City of Cape Town & another* 2004 5 BLLR 413 (IC)).

In both these particular cases, therefore, a White male was protected from "reverse discrimination" by the same Act that promotes affirmative action in this country. It may therefore be reasonable to propose that there may well be White employees (members of the Non-designated group) in South Africa that fall on the other side of the spectrum, (i.e. those that do not really believe affirmative action constitutes reverse discrimination), that these White employees are less sensitive about competing with previously disadvantaged

¹² The Labour Court found that affirmative action under the EEA should not be used by an individual employee as a "sword" in the prosecution of a claim based on affirmative action, but that affirmative action should rather be used by the Designated group (a collective) as a "shield" to protect their employment rights.

groups, and do not perceive members of previously disadvantaged groups as being a threat to their careers.

Similarly, it is entirely possible that there are people from the Designated groups that perceive affirmative action as a source of entitlement, in the same way that many members of the Non-designated group (White males) used the system of apartheid as a source of privilege (Barker, 2003). These would be the people that are not overly sensitive about justifying the concept of reverse discrimination in their daily lives because they feel “entitled” to now enjoy preferential treatment under the new Employment Equity legislation. It could be argued that these members of the Designated groups would tend to readily identify affirmative action as being synonymous with the concept of reverse discrimination (or that it should be), not only because they are comfortable with it being so, but also because they assume reverse discrimination to be a natural part of affirmative action measures meant for their own benefit.

Depending on different subjective experiences, therefore, both members of the Designated- and Non-designated groups could have different motives for believing the reverse racism debate to be more or less pertinent to the current South Africa affirmative action context.

2.5.2. The merit debate

A second debate that influences individual attitudes towards affirmative action is that of merit. The application of affirmative action raises the question of whether race or gender is being substituted for merit, which refers to qualifications and experience (Idasa, 1995). In this regard it may be argued that the members of the Non-designated group (White males) in South Africa that are sensitive to the merit issue, are those that have invested heavily in terms of resources and time in educating themselves (earning merit) so as to position themselves in certain careers. One could imagine them being competent, efficient and at the forefront of their respective fields, but struggling to get the job they always dreamed of due to those jobs being reserved for members of the Designated group that meets (or sometimes do not meet) the position's minimum requirements. If exposed to employment practices where merit was not perceived to be the primary selection consideration, it can be argued that such individuals would probably be resentful towards affirmative action programmes.

In the same vein (Schermund, Sellers, Mueller, & Crosby, 2001, p.760) note that “whilst most Blacks or minority groups endorse affirmative action, some do not”. Such individuals may feel insulted as they perceive their appointment to be a political one; instead of being appointed as the best person for the job. Individuals that fall in this category will naturally perceive affirmative action programmes as a menace if they believe that their hard work has been for nothing and that their qualifications and experience are not taken into consideration when it comes to appointment decisions. Worse still, it is not difficult to imagine that individuals that fall within this category could even start to resent other members of the Designated group that accept positions because of their race or gender, and not because they are actually suitably qualified for the positions in question.

The main concern here is therefore that they will also be stigmatised as being incompetent (as a member of the Designated groups) because of the perception that their selection was based on affirmative action considerations rather than their individual merit

(Heilman, Block, & Lucas, 1992). As Qunta (1995, p. 116) points out, “serious Black employees want equal treatment, not special favors, as if they are not as capable as White employees to cope with the demands of a career” (Qunta, 1995, p. 116).

However, if the Employment Equity Act is implemented correctly, there is no reason why any employee should be appointed in a position without the necessary qualifications, potential or experience. This notion is supported by the Employment Equity Act itself which has as one of its objectives to “ensure the equitable representation of suitably qualified people from Designated groups in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce (RSA, 1998, p. 18). Put differently, employers in South-Africa are not required to appoint unqualified individuals just because of their group membership. However, when faced with a decision between two individuals of the non- and the Designated groups that both meet the minimum requirements of the position, the employer is within his/her rights (and encouraged) to appoint the member of the Designated group.

On the other side of the spectrum, it is also possible that members of the Non-designated group could have more of a progressive view and be less sensitive to the merit issue. These individuals would probably have had less exposure to employment practices where hard political appointments were made and/or have not missed out on a job opportunity due to a company’s affirmative action policy. Alternatively, individuals that fall within this category could simply have a more accurate view or experience of South-Africa’s Employment Equity legislation and therefore disregard the merit debate

It is also possible that members of the Designated groups support this other side of the debate, namely that the concept of merit is not used to make selection decisions in any case (e.g. selection decisions are based on race in any case), and that without affirmative action measures Blacks, the disabled and women would rarely be selected above White males¹³. These could be the type of individuals that favors a “strong” affirmative action

¹³ This could be because “to date there is less commitment from White male managers to appoint Black and female workers into decision-making positions” (Twala, 2004, p. 134) or this phenomenon could reflect the effectiveness with which affirmative action was implemented in the past.

approach – one in which hiring or promotion decisions are affected in such a way that members from the Designated groups are appointed above other candidates that are better qualified (Dupper, 2004). Put differently, it is entirely possible that some members of the Designated groups are not overly sensitive about proving that their qualifications, skills and experiences are better or equal to that of applicants from the Non-designated groups. This could be because they feel that affirmative action programmes should substitute merit for race or gender and if this is not done – they will probably not have a good chance of getting a job due to unequal access to education and training in the past and managers still holding on to past stereotypes. Depending on different subjective experiences, therefore, both members of the Designated- and Non-designated groups could have different motives for believing the merit debate to be more or less pertinent to the current South Africa affirmative action context.

2.5.3. The (Drop in) standards debate

This debate is related to the previous debate of merit, as it assumes that once a country does not have merit-based employment opportunities it is inevitable that (work and performance) standards will drop. This, of course, is an economics-based argument: putting less qualified people into positions will damage South Africa's economy. For example, individuals that are negatively inclined towards this debate argue that affirmative action will decrease economic productivity and international competitiveness because hiring standards are lowered. Consequently, the most basic principle of the labour market, namely competition, is not paramount when making selection decisions (Barker, 2003).

Furthermore, more often than not, the drop in standards debate has another more negative assumption underlying it, namely, that Black/African people are generally not as capable as White people (Qunta, 1995). According to Human (1999) a prevailing belief that Black people, women and the disabled just do not have what it takes to perform in the business world, are said to be the primary reason for why advancement programmes often fail.

Thus, White males that use this argument in opposing affirmative action programmes often have a deeply embedded consciousness of racial stereotypes and also question the ability of specifically Black (African) people to govern themselves and others (Qunta, 1995). Other reasons why members of the Non-designated group could have such strong negative feelings towards a drop in standards could range from an unpleasant experience with an organisation's (private or public) service delivery or product, the loss of a performance bonus because of a mistake that was made in a work team, or embarrassment bred from public humiliations that are visible both nationally and internationally. The same arguments could hold true for some members of the Designated groups which again imply that it is possible that both members of the Designated and Non-designated groups could have a strong and negative opposition to a drop in standards – i.e. the opposition to a possible drop in standards is not restricted to members of the Non-designated group alone.

However, several opposing arguments to this debate, notably from Qunta (1995) and Adams (1993) should be mentioned. Firstly, it has been argued that if affirmative action has nothing to do with the appointment of unqualified people or the appointment of people that do not have the potential to perform in a position at a later stage, then the fears of those genuinely concerned with the maintenance of standards will be unnecessary. Thus, if the South Africa's affirmative action legislation is properly implemented, there is no reason for standards to drop, and consequently no reason to oppose affirmative action programmes or have a negative attitude towards affirmative action. This notion is supported by South Africa's Employment Equity Act (1998), which states that the employer is not required to appoint or promote people who are not suitably qualified, even if they originate from the Designated groups.

Secondly, Adams (1993) argues against the assumption that affirmative action programmes necessarily leads to a drop in work standards, and is of the opinion that no evidence exists to prove that effective affirmative action programmes inevitably leads to lower work performance. He proposes that in those situations where work standards have actually deteriorated as a result of the implementation of affirmative action programmes,

that it was the result of ineffectual implementation and management, and not because of the inherent nature of affirmative action itself (Adams, 1993).

In addition, the flipside of the argument is that members of the Non-designated group could also not ascribe any recent drop in standards in a private or public organisation to affirmative action programmes at all. The reasons for this could range from being involved in a work team where an “affirmative action” team member really excelled in a task to not believing that there was actually any deterioration of standards in public or private organisations since affirmative action was implemented. Similarly, it is not hard to imagine that there are members of the Designated group that do not believe affirmative action necessarily leads to a drop in standards, especially if they believe in their own abilities and deem themselves to be as competent as any other candidate.

Henceforth, with regards to this debate it may therefore be realistic to propose that there could be some employees in South Africa from both the Designated and Non-designated groups that believe the time for arguing the merits or demerits of affirmative action is over. Such individuals may well believe that there should rather be focused on using the country’s capacity for creative thoughts in formulating more comprehensive strategies for affirmative action to ensure that no drop in standards take place.

2.5.4. The tokenism debate

The fourth debate that is noted to influence a person’s attitude towards affirmative action, centers on the issue of tokenism. Tokenism occurs when a company appoints a person (from a previously disadvantaged group) not because they believe that the person has the necessary skills for the position, but because it will look good to the public to have such a person in that position (Qunta, 1995).

As tokenism is closely related to other debates such as the dropping of standards and merit specifically, members of the Non-designated group that ascribe to those debates will probably hold a negative view of tokenism. These negative views may become more

exacerbated if token appointees are given grand offices and –titles without concomitant responsibilities (Charlton & Van Niekerk, 1994).

Research studies have also documented the negative perceptions that some members of the Designated groups may have of tokenism of which a loss of self-confidence and negative feelings of distinctiveness and vulnerability were the most frequent concerns reported (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998). Affirmative action could lead to employment equity candidates feeling they do not deserve their positions and in turn, this leads to negative feelings of self-worth (Joubert, 1994). The perception of the practice of tokenism in itself therefore often elicits negative perceptions from both the Designated and Non-designated groups.

However, and as is the case with all of the other debates surrounding affirmative action, the question of whether or not an individual will choose to support or oppose specific affirmative action programmes is dependant on that person's subjective experiences, his/her level of knowledge concerning what actually happens with regards to affirmative action in South Africa, and his/her level of optimism with respect to where the country is going to with affirmative action. For example, if people believe that accelerated development programmes are the cornerstones of token appointments (i.e. token appointees are actually developed to contribute their fair share at a later stage), the question of whether or not "tokenism" is perceived as positive or negative changes dramatically. Within this type of belief system, it may be possible that some members of both the Designated and Non-designated groups may respond more positively to practices of "tokenism" as there is a moral and developmental purpose underlying such appointments.

2.5.5. The quota debate

The issue of the "quota-system" or the use of quotas in furthering affirmative action targets is strongly related to the reverse racism, merit, tokenism, and (drop in) standard debates and emerges as another highly sensitive topic whenever attitudes towards affirmative action programmes are discussed and explored.

The underlying rationale for this opposition, it is argued, lies in the fact that many employees find it hard to accept that previously disadvantaged persons “must” be employed in certain positions just in order to meet certain targets, regardless of their qualifications or potential. Once again, this animates arguments for and against affirmative action programmes¹⁴, with its protagonists arguing that without quotas, there will be a slowing down in the hiring of members of the Designated and other minorities (Lynch, 1989) and therefore less diversity in the workplace. Its detractors, on the other hand, argue that the appointment of people simply to meet affirmative action targets will lower standards, de-motivate members of the Non-designated groups, and worsen the existing racial tensions in the country.

Here it may also be said that a person’s perception (i.e. positive or negative) of quota systems, and consequently his or her attitude towards affirmative action in general, will be greatly influenced by whether or not his or her career or professional life have been affected by quotas and his or her beliefs about how effective affirmative action programmes would be without quotas. A further influence on a person’s perception of quota systems could also be his or her beliefs about how effectively he or she could compete for the available work and positions in the South African labour market. Once again, therefore, members of both the Designated and Non-designated groups could have either “positive” or “negative” attitudes about quota systems depending on their own subjective experiences.

¹⁴ According to Louw (2006, p. 352) “a very visible battleground for the proponents and detractors of affirmative action in South Africa has been our professional sports teams” and it is argued that in line with Government’s transformation agenda in sport, “sporadically prescribed quotas of players from different racial groups in representative teams” has fueled the myth that quotas are also required in other private and public organisations. A further reason for confusion surrounding the use of quotas could be that (for ordinary citizens) the legislation on quotas is unclear, as “in reading the objective of chapter III of the EEA, there may not be much difference between (what is understood to be) numerical goals and quotas” (Louw, 2006, p. 336).

2.6. Summary

In consolidating the discussion, the section above represented several higher-level debates that could influence whether or not an individual has a positive or negative perception of the implementation of affirmative action in organisations. Individual perceptions on these debates are based on subjective experiences that, often the individual themselves or someone in their reference group has had with affirmative action programmes and does not necessarily reflect the intention of the country's actual affirmative action legislation. For example, the debate of quotas in theory is actually not relevant in the South African context since the Employment Equity Act does not impose quotas on companies, but rather suggests a consultation process between the employer and employees from which specific numerical targets are derived. Hence, it is possible that South African employees that have a positive or a negative perception of quotas have formed this opinion due to a particular situation where affirmative action was implemented incorrectly, or because they have a lack of understanding regarding the intent of the Employment Equity Act.

In the United States of America, Crosby and Cordova (1996) have noted that a clearer definition and description of affirmative action policies is important in general because of the fact that a lack of public education in the United States has resulted in the average citizen being rather poorly informed about how affirmative action is intended to operate (Golden, Hinkle, & Crosby, 2001; Kravitz et al., 2000; Kravitz & Platania, 1993; Steeh & Krysan, 1996). For example, Winkelman and Crosby (1994, p.314) point out that “many citizens admit that they are relatively uninformed about what the policy means and how it operates”. In South Africa, Human (1999, p. 16) notes that, “...there is a great deal of speculation about affirmative action and this general confusion in the country has been created, in part, by a whole lot of people talking about affirmative action without finding out first what it is actually about”.

In addition, Human (1993, p. 15) also states that it is, “...interesting to see how many people rely on newspapers for their understanding of affirmative action” and that many organisations “unintentionally” also have a lack of understanding regarding affirmative

action, because they are “disinterested or lazy”, or they have “possibly been given the wrong advice” (Human, 1993, p.15). This study will therefore also investigate the link between knowledge of the Employment Equity Act and attitudes towards affirmative action programmes in South Africa. It is argued that it is probable that those individuals that have a superior understanding of the Employment Equity Act will find affirmative action programmes more acceptable and non-threatening. Similarly, it is posited that it will then also probably be those individuals that have a distorted understanding of the Employment Equity Act that will most likely approach affirmative action programmes with caution and contempt.

Additionally, it was emphasised in this section that when talking about extreme cases, employees’ stance on the five debates of reverse discrimination, merit, (drop in) standards, tokenism, and quotas could either be “strongly for” or “strongly opposed to,” which, in turn significantly influences their perceptions of affirmative action. In reality however, any employees’ stance on these above-mentioned debates most likely falls on a continuum ranging from “strongly for” and “strongly opposed to” as the variables that influence their absolute positions on these continuums (i.e. subjective experiences, level of optimism and education, qualifications, personal financial security, etc.) differs considerably and cannot be accurately predicted.

2.7. Perceptions of (in) equity in the workplace: equity theory

Several theories that propose that employees seek a just or equitable return for what they have contributed to the job have been independently advanced (Adams, 1963, 1965; Homans, 1961; Patchen, 1961; Sayles, 1958) over the years. A common feature of all of these theories is the assumption that compensation, either below or above that which is perceived by the employee to be equitable, results in tension, which in turn, cause the employee to restore consonance by a variety of behavioural or cognitive measures (Vroom & Deci, 1970). However, for the purposes of this research, the focus will be on the most rigorous and well-researched theory of equity, namely that of Adams (1963, 1965).

Adams' definition of inequity stated that:

“Inequity exist for a person¹⁵ whenever he perceives that the ratio of his outcomes to inputs and the ratio of other's outcomes and inputs are unequal, either a) when he and other are in a direct exchange or b) when both are in an exchange relationship with a third party and person compares himself to other” (1965, p. 22).

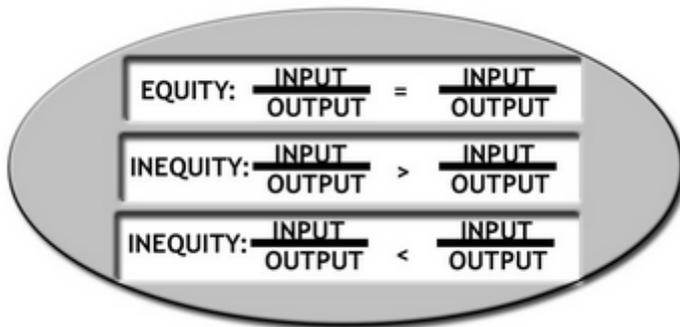


Figure 2.1. The equity theory of Adams

(Lussier & Achua, 2004, p. 134)

2.7.1. A brief overview of how equity theory works

Adam's equity theory has been referred to as a process motivation theory and focuses on understanding how people choose behaviour to fulfill their needs (Lussier & Achua, 2004). Thus, through the equity theory process, people compare their inputs and outputs (ratios) to that of relevant others. A relevant other could be a co-worker or a group of employees from the same or different organisation, or even from a hypothetical situation (Lussier & Achua, 2004).

Inputs, within this context refers to everything the employee brings to the job such as experience, seniority, status, intelligence (Lussier & Achua, 2004) age, skill, or amount of effort extended on the job (Adams, 1965). Outputs, on the other hand, refer to anything that the employee perceives as constituting the fruits of his/her labour and could refer to

¹⁵ “Person” refers to anyone for whom equity or inequity exists. “Other” is any individual or group used by the “Person” as a referent in social comparisons of what he/she contributes to and what he/she receives from an exchange.

praise, recognition, pay, benefits, promotion, increased status, supervisor's approval, etc. (Lussier & Achua, 2004).

This comparison with a relevant other then will lead to three possible conclusions, namely (a) the employee is under-rewarded, (b) the employee is equitably rewarded, or (c) the employee is over-rewarded. The presence of inequity (i.e. when an employee is over- or under-rewarded) creates tension within the person in an amount proportional to the magnitude of the inequity. This tension creates a drive to reduce feelings of inequity, the strength of the drive being proportional to the tension created (Adams, 1965).

Although a certain amount of over-reward may be written off as "good luck," and similar deviations in the direction of under-reward will be not so easily tolerated (Adams, 1965; Homans, 1961), discrepancies produced by over-reward are often associated with feelings of guilt (Vroom & Deci, 1970). In other words, contrary to popular beliefs, people can only rationalise their good fortunes up until a certain threshold (Lussier & Achua, 2004) after which they also will be motivated to take actions that will return them to a state of equity. On the other hand, discrepancies produced by under-reward are associated with feelings of anger and unfairness (Vroom & Deci, 1970), resulting in tension which is even stronger, especially when the "other person's" outcomes are perceived as higher and that person's inputs are simultaneously perceived to be lower (Adams, 1963). Thus, the greatest state of inequity exists when both outcomes and inputs are discrepant (Adams, 1963).

Adams (1963, 1965) suggests several possibilities for achieving or regaining an equitable state when inequity is perceived in the workplace. Firstly, an employee may increase or decrease his/her inputs (e.g. by increasing or decreasing the quality or quantity of his/her work); secondly, he/she may increase or decrease his/her outcomes (by asking for a raise or by giving part of his/her pay to charity); thirdly he/she may change his/her comparison group or cognitively alter its inputs or outputs, or force the situation out of his or mind; fourthly he/she may leave the situation (by quitting, transferring, or being absent); or finally he/she may cognitively distort his/her own inputs and outcomes.

2.7.2. Perceptions of inequity and dysfunctional reactions (consequences)

In the previous section it was argued that individuals will be motivated to return to a state of equity once it is evident that they are being inequitably treated in the work environment as compared to a relevant other. If the behaviors that individuals display at this point (i.e. the way they try to increase or decrease or cognitively distort their inputs and outcomes) is done ethically (i.e. an employee works harder in order to increase input and therefore also output taken from the job), then the debate concerning how employees react to perceived inequity in the workplace becomes somewhat less important.

However, if it is found that employees behave unethically and take unethical actions in order to return to a state of equity, then the reasons for why they do so and the way in which this unethical behaviour manifests itself in the workplace becomes important, especially for human resources practitioners. Although dysfunctional reactions to perceived inequity were secondary on Adam's (1963, 1965) agenda when he proposed his equity theory, recent research studies have produced some interesting findings regarding the different identified dysfunctional responses to perceptions of inequity in the workplace (Greenberg, 1990, 1993; Hirschman, 1970; Pinder, 1998; Near, Dworkin & Miceli, 1993).

Greenberg (1990, 1993), for example, has demonstrated in both laboratory and field settings that one reaction that employees may have to being treated inequitably is to steal from their employers. This response is to be expected as the theft of property, money, ideas, or information from an employer can be ascribed to the fact that employees try to increase the outcomes they take away from the employment exchange in achieving a more equitable state for themselves (Greenberg & Scott, 1996).

Hirschman (1970) provided a classical typology that offers a useful model for understanding employee reactions to unfavourable treatment by employers. He proposed the following defiance and protest typology – e.g. three reactions to perceived inequity:

- *Exit*: A willingness or motivation for withdrawing from the company;
- *Voice*: Speaking up, protesting, and “rocking the boat”; and

- *Loyalty*: Accepting inequity and remaining more or less loyal to the company, despite the circumstances.

Here, the concept of “*Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*” corresponds to more recent work done on the classification of White male employees’ responses to reverse discrimination (Lynch, 1989). Hirschman’s (1970) category of *Exit* to perceptions of inequity corresponds to Lynch’s (1989) *Acquiescence/Departure* categorisation of White male employees’ response to affirmative action, which states that as one response to reverse discrimination, White male employees often withdraw from a situation of reverse discrimination as soon as possible after “injury”. Put differently, “exit is equivalent to voluntary separation or turnover from the job. Members may either leave the job and the firm or seek a transfer within the same organisation as a means of leaving the dissatisfying job” (Farrell, 1983, p.597).

Similarly, Hirschman’s (1970) *Voice* response mechanism are also supported by Lynch’s (1989) *Defiance/Protest* categorisation of White males employees’ response to reverse discrimination in the work setting which concerns White male employees taking steps to publicly protect their fates and to seek redress within the context of reverse discrimination in the work environment. “Voice usually involves appeals to higher authorities either inside or outside of the managerial hierarchy, but it also may involve other actions and protests” (Farrell, 1983, p.598).

Finally, Hirschman’s (1970) *Loyalty* response mechanism to perceived inequity is also supported by Lynch’s (1989) *Acquiescence* categorisation of White male employees’ response to reverse discrimination in the work setting. This involves White male employees not speaking out against it, believing that present setbacks are temporary, and expressing optimism that they would get their chance eventually. White males that respond in this way usually also felt that the goals of affirmative action were, “...worthy and were willing to endure the sacrifice” (Lynch, 1989, p.57).

Hirschman (1970) postulated that the explanatory variable that would actually predict whether voice or exit behavior will be observed is the individual's loyalty to the firm. To this regard he reasoned that the low end of the loyalty spectrum would be the exit point, while the high end would be the voice point (see figure below).

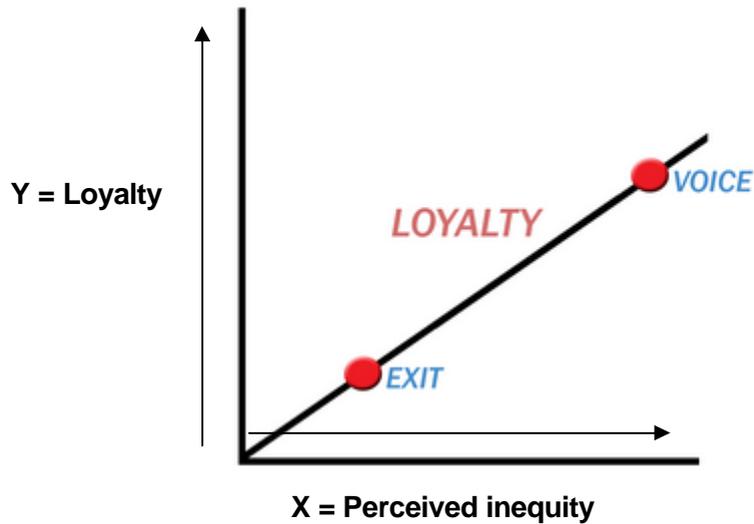


Figure 2.2. The interaction between loyalty, voice and exit response mechanisms.

(Own graphic adapted from Hirschman's theory, 1970)

However, consequent studies on the relationships between loyalty and its influence on exit and voice has provided mixed results and has therefore called into question the conceptual foundations of the exit-voice-loyalty framework (Boroff & Lewin, 1997). More specifically, Boroff and Lewin (1997) propose that the relationships between loyalty and the individual's choice between exhibiting exit and voice response behaviour in particular was proven to be flawed mostly due to Hirschman's limited definition of the loyalty construct (Boroff & Lewin, 1997). It would therefore not appear to make sense to study the interaction affect that loyalty has with voice and exit, but to rather consider the three different response mechanisms as separate constructs.

In expanding on Hirschman's (1970) typology, another response mechanism that has also recently enjoyed attention as another consequence of perceived injustice in the workplace

is employee silence (Pinder, 1998). Often seen as the flipside of the voice response mechanism, *employee silence* involves employees remaining silent in the workplace, neither protesting nor attempting to make their views heard (Pinder, 1998). Interestingly however, the response mechanism of *employee silence* also displays convergence with another typical White male employee response to reverse discrimination in the work environment, namely *circumvention* (Lynch, 1989). White male employees that demonstrated this response to reverse discrimination in Lynch's (1998) research preferred manipulation and perseverance rather than challenge and open confrontation. Additionally, these individuals did not have especially strong views on affirmative action but simply attempted to "beat the system" (Lynch, 1989, p.67).

Employee silence is often interpreted as support for, or an endorsement of, the status quo (Pinder, 1998). However, nothing could be further from the truth. It must be remembered that theft is usually also accompanied by silence (Pinder, 1998), making it dangerous to think that employees that withdraw, but stay on in the organisation, are fully accepting of the status quo and that they are satisfied with the work situation. Thus, at first glance this type of response mechanism seems harmless and non-consequential. However, employees that respond in this way are often some of the most dangerous employees to have in an organisation as they refrain from adding any significant value to the organisation through their jobs. Even those who do not steal themselves, but are aware of theft and other forms of subterfuge (such as espionage, sabotage, mal-alignment of the organisation's image, etc.) are also less likely to speak up and "blow the whistle" on others that are transgressing protocol and the law (Near et al., 1993).

2.7.3. Equity theory and dysfunctional reactions (consequences) to perceived inequity as a result of affirmative action perceptions in the workplace

In order to establish a frame of reference for the research objectives of this study, it will be assumed¹⁶ that affirmative action in the workplace has the effect of White employees

¹⁶ This assumption is based on the findings of Hirschman, (1970) Lynch, (1989) Farrell (1983) and Pinder (1998) who conducted research on White male responses towards reverse discrimination in the United States of America.

(the previously advantaged group) perceiving their input-outcome ratios as inequitable when compared to the input-outcome ratios of Black employees or employees that are members of another previously disadvantaged group. This perceived inequity from the side of White employees could be depicted as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 \text{WHITES} & & \text{BLACKS} \\
 \frac{\text{INPUT}}{\text{OUTPUT}} & < & \frac{\text{INPUT}}{\text{OUTPUT}} \\
 \text{INEQUITY}
 \end{array}$$

Figure 2.3 Inequity as perceived by White employees

(Lussier & Achua, 2004, p. 134)

Although this above-mentioned state of inequity may not hold true in every situation (i.e. some Black employees for example may be more talented, qualified, or skilled than some White employees) it is assumed for the purposes of this research, that in general, and as a result of apartheid, that White employees will currently bring more to the job (e.g. experience, skills, knowledge, etc.). It should be noted that this could be an indication that not enough development and empowerment have possibly been done with regards to the previously disadvantaged communities. Additionally, this could be attributed to the effectiveness with which apartheid has been implemented in this country in the past. This is why in addition to employment equity measures it “would be a pity (to not) also address the fundamental causes underlying current inequalities in terms of skills and experience and the difference in average criterion performance¹⁷” (Theron, 2007, p.114) as part of a broader *affirmative development*¹⁸ strategy for the country as a whole (Schmidt, & Hunter, 1981).

However, if the assumption is made that the average Black employee in South Africa currently brings more knowledge, skills, experience, etc. to the job (input) than the

¹⁷ Criterion performance here refers to an employee’s actual work performance.

¹⁸ Affirmative development refers to an approach where members of the Designated groups are not only appointed in positions that they were barred from in the past but are also provided with the required training and development in order to assist them in meeting or even exceed job standards.

average White employee, then the above-mentioned ratio will also hold true as affirmative action increases the Black employees' outcome ratios in comparison to that of White employees.

Thus, regardless of whether or not members of the Designated groups bring more or less skills, talents, and experience to the job than members of the Non-designated group, the outcomes of members of the Designated groups seem to be "protected" in the sense that members of the Designated groups will be favored by law in situations where they have a (potentially) equal input set to that of members of the Non-designated group. This type of scenario could therefore lead to perceptions of inequity from members of the Non-designated group when comparing themselves to members of the Designated groups.

The question that now remains, and that will be investigated in this study, is how members of the Non-designated group respond to this perceived inequity? Do they demonstrate ethical behaviour in their efforts to return themselves to a state of equity or are they de-motivated by the pervasiveness of affirmative action legislation and make themselves guilty of the type of covert resistance or sabotage (such as stealing company property or resigning from a job) that were discussed earlier?

2.8. Relational demography theory

Another useful theory to consider when studying the underlying affects of affirmative action on (minority) groups¹⁹ in the work place is that of relational demography (Riordian, 2000; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). It focuses on an understanding of the nature, dynamics and outcomes associated with diversity, specifically from the perspective of the minority group member. It also sheds light on the dynamics of

¹⁹ In this study, the Designated groups will be treated as the minority group.

interaction between “tokens and dominants²⁰” as was initially proposed in Kanter’s earlier theory of proportional representation²¹ (Kanter, 1977).

The premise behind the theory is that individuals compare their own demographic characteristics with the demographic composition of their social unit to determine if they are “similar” or “dissimilar” (Riordian, 2000). In turn, the level of demographic (dis)similarity perceived here is then thought to affect an individual’s work-related attitudes and behaviors. More importantly, research in this area has indicated that being different from others can negatively affect an individual’s attitudes and behaviors (Riordian, 2000) in the work place.

For example, in a study on the effects of dissimilarity on work behavior, it was found that within top management teams, managers who differed in age from others were more likely to leave the organisation (Wagner, Pfeffer & O’Reilly, 1984). Similarly, in another study it was found that women who found themselves to be dissimilar - because they believed others thought their selection to a higher status position was based on gender rather than merit - anticipated that others held negative impressions of them and behaved in more timid, uncertain and limited ways in their leadership roles (Heilman & Alcott, 2001).

²⁰ Tokens refer to individuals that are accepted into a social system in order to increase minority representation. Dominants refer to those individuals that are members of the majority group in the social system.

²¹ Proportional representation theory postulates that the negative effects of discrimination related to being a minority group member will increase as the ratio of minority versus majority group members in a social setting (such as an organisation) increases.

2.8.1 A brief overview of how relational demography theory works

At this point it is important to briefly discuss the relational demography theory (see figure 2.4)

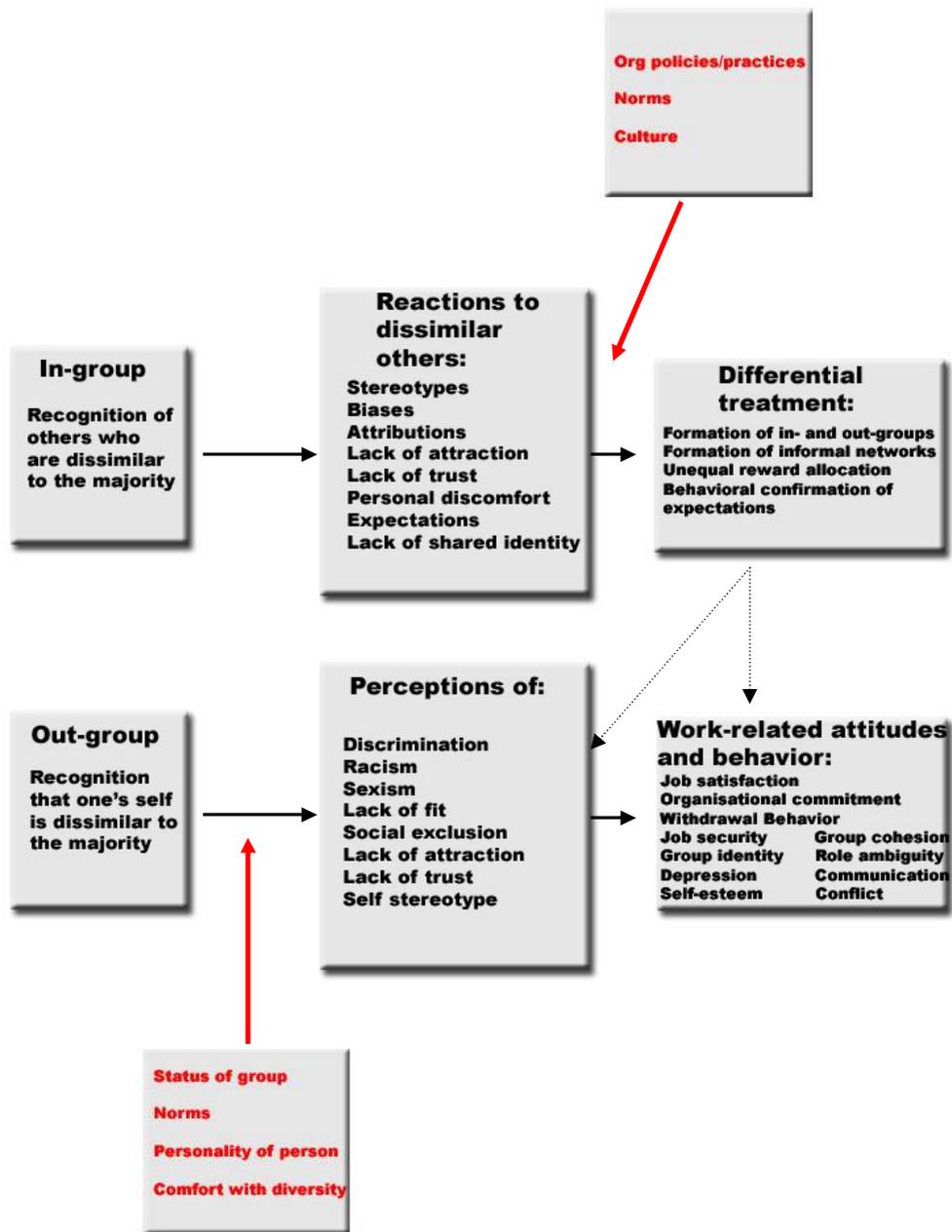


Figure 2.4: A model of relational demography

(Adapted from Dipboye & Cotella, 2005, p. 213).

As is evident from the model, the following important elements about the theory deserve attention. Part one of the relational demography theory involves that individuals tend to compare themselves with others in their social units in order to make a decision regarding their similarity to others. If they come to the realisation that they are quite similar to others, then they place themselves in the “in-group” or the “majority perspective” of the relevant organisation. If the realisation is that they are quite different to other employees in the organisation, then they place themselves in the “out-group” or the “minority perspective” of the organisation. Here the concept of personal perceptions become important as the decision to place yourself in the in- or out-group relies on your perceived (dis)similarity with others – which is dependant not only on external and more obvious characteristics - (such as race or gender) but also on more complex and latent differences (e.g. special treatment compared to others, like nepotism or affirmative action). This part of the relational demography theory is primarily based on, and is an extension of the earlier tokenism hypothesis²², which focuses on how minority group members make decisions regarding whether they are part of the “in” - or “out” group of a social unit (Dipboye, & Cotella, 2005.)

When the individual have categorised him- or herself as either belonging to the in-or out-group, part two follows in which natural processes occur at a psychological level depending on the classification made in part one.

If a person places him- or herself in an in-group, certain reactions to *dissimilar others* occur. These include 1) stereotypes are formed or entrenched, 2) biases are formed or entrenched, 3) lack of attraction (dislike) follows to dissimilar others, 4) lack of shared identity follows with dissimilar others, 5) lack of trust with dissimilar others inevitably follows, and 6) personal discomfort arises when having to interact with members of the out-group. On a practical level, self-imposed in-group categorisation may manifest itself in the differential treatment of dissimilar others where clear in- and out-groups are formed in the social unit. Examples of this include that informal networks materialise

²² The tokenism hypothesis is particularly useful for the purposes of this study, as it deals with how people tend to react negatively and how they classify themselves as being part of the “out-group” whenever they receive preferential- or special treatment in a work setting.

depending on group membership, unequal reward allocations, and behavioral confirmations of expectations are made. The exact level of differential treatment is moderated by the organisation's policies, norms and culture.

If a person places him- or herself in an out-group, certain negative perceptions are formed internally which includes discrimination, lack of fit, social exclusion, unfair treatment, and lack of trust. The intensity of these perceptions are moderated by a number of factors including status of the out-group, norms, the individual's unique personality and the individual's personal level of comfort with diversity. Also, these negative perceptions are inevitably exacerbated when they are confirmed by way of differential treatment (by the in-group), and have been shown to influence work-related behaviors such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, job security, withdrawal behaviour, depression, self-esteem, role ambiguity, communication, conflict, and group cohesiveness (Dipboye & Colella, 2005).

2.8.2 Relational demography theory and its implications for affirmative action

During the development of relational demography theory, the tokenism hypothesis was proposed to understand how people classify themselves in either the in-or out-groups of a social unit. The tokenism hypothesis sheds light on the role of those who are such a small minority in groups that they are seen as symbols, rather than as individuals (Young & James, 2001). According to the theory, "token individuals" are more likely to suffer from poor performance. This may be due to their increased visibility (and the accompanying pressure to perform) as well as that work group members create boundaries based on an exaggeration of the differences between themselves and the token individuals (Young & James, 2001; Dipboye, & Colella, 2005). The fact that some individuals enjoy preferential treatment as "tokens" or "affirmative action candidates" should have a profound affect on whether or not they categorise themselves as "similar" or "dissimilar" in relation to other employees in the organisation. This, in turn, will influence whether they are eventually accepted into in- or out-groups and will have

implications for how such individuals (“tokens” or “affirmative action candidates”) react and behave in the work place.

For example, in one study the experiences of male flight attendants were investigated. They represented the “token” minority in a historically female-orientated job role. Young and James (2001) report that their token status led to an increase in role ambiguity and a decrease in self-esteem and perceived job fit. Similarly, in another study it was found that Black leaders in the United States, who found themselves in work situations where they were outnumbered by White leaders, exhibited higher levels of depression and anxiety, as compared to those in more balanced situations (Jackson et al., 1995). Support for this argument is also found in research that has shown that an association with an affirmative action effort stigmatises the intended beneficiaries, who are assumed to be incompetent (Heilman et al., 1992). For example, Heilman et al. (p. 603) report that in their study, both men and women and both students and working people drew such inferences, which were also evidenced whether the target beneficiary was a woman or a member of a minority group or whether the affirmative action label was explicitly communicated or only assumed”.

According to Jackson et al. (1995, p. 545) “tokens are repeatedly reminded of their differences (with the majority group) through jokes, interruptions, exclusion from informal activities, and “loyalty” tests. As responses, tokens can either remain socially isolated or present themselves as exceptions to their category in order to be accepted insiders”. Indeed, it is possible and it has been shown that under certain conditions, members of disadvantaged groups may be immune to the stigma attached to being considered an affirmative action recipient. However, in other research studies conducted in the United States of America, several prominent public intellectuals, all men of colour, have criticised the negative effects that affirmative action has on self-esteem (Carter, 1991; Rodriguez, 1982; Steele, 1990). As one example, a student who is now a professor at Yale University, has written of the assault to pride that comes from being admitted to law school as the best Black applicant rather than as the best applicant (Carter, 1991).

The fact is that the tokenism hypothesis implies that affirmative action programmes do emphasise the Designated groups' feelings of being "dissimilar" to the rest of the work force in a significant way because of the accompanying visibility and stereotypes involved with being a "token" or "affirmative action" appointment. Thus, with all other variables and moderators being assumed equal, it is argued here that it will probably be the affirmative action candidate's (i.e. person from the Designated group) perception of affirmative action itself (e.g. whether it is right, wrong, positive, or negative) that will have a defining impact on whether they will be able to rationalise or justify themselves as "similar" or "dissimilar" to other employees according to relational demography theory.

Thus, further questions that will be investigated in this study are how members from the Designated groups perceive affirmative action and whether the consequent work behavior of members of the Designated groups are impacted negatively as is outlined in relational demography theory (e.g. lower levels of organisational commitment, higher levels of role ambiguity, etc.)

2.8.3. Dysfunctional consequences for "out-group" members

As discussed in the previous section, minority group members in an organisational setting often categorise themselves in "out-groups" which effects the way they think about themselves as well as how the in-groups of the same organisation react and behave towards them. These dynamics entrenches lasting divisions between majority and minority groups and often has considerable negative consequences for members of the out-groups. The section that follows will explore these different consequences in an attempt to provide working definitions for these within the context of this study. However, not all of the negative consequences as is described in the relational demography theory will be explored here. Only a selected few of these will be considered. They include those for which a significant amount of conceptual clarity exist in the research literature, sound measures that display good psychometric properties have already been developed, and those that in theory are known to have the most significant impact on organisational settings.

2.8.3.1 Job satisfaction

Over the years job satisfaction has been defined as the, "...positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job" (Locke, 1976, p. 1003) or quite simply as, "the degree to which people like their jobs" (Spector, 1997, p. iiv). The study of the causes and consequences of this important employee attitude is one of the major domains of industrial psychology. In fact, it is the most frequently studied variable in organisational behavior research (Spector, 1997). This is because job satisfaction has been proven to have a negative relationship with employee absenteeism and turnover, to be predictive of job performance in certain organisational settings (Churchill, Ford, & Walker, 1974), as well as providing a good indication of organisational functioning in general (Spector, 1997).

Past measures of job satisfaction like those used in the National Longitudinal Survey, (NLS) the Michigan Work Quality Survey and the Michigan Panel Survey of Income Dynamics focused on explaining job satisfaction by asking respondents to what degree they "like" their jobs, to what degree they find their jobs "enjoyable", and to what degree they find their jobs "satisfying" (Freeman, 1978). However, the realisation that an employee's level of job satisfaction can also be expressed as a function of a range of specific satisfactions and dissatisfactions that he/she experiences with respect to various dimensions of work (Kalleberg, 1977) prompted other researchers to construct more in-depth measures of job satisfaction. More specifically, one such measure – the Warr-Cook-Wall Job Satisfaction questionnaire investigated the following components of job satisfaction, which was one of the first attempts to include intrinsic and extrinsic factors in an empirical validation of the construct (Cooper, Rout, & Faragher, 1989). These factors included amount of responsibility, freedom and variety on the job, physical working conditions, rate of pay and recognition, co-workers, opportunity to use one's abilities, and hours of work.

It appears that when discussing job satisfaction, therefore, it would be sensible to rather view the concept as a composite construct that is dependant on how one feels about different aspects of the job. Thus, the more recent definition provided by Spector (1997,

p. 4) seems to be one of the most applicable, namely that “job satisfaction is an attitudinal variable considered as a global feeling about the job or as a related constellation of attitudes about various aspects or facets of the job”. Any consequent measurement of the construct therefore needs to take into account the multi-faceted nature of the construct (see appendix 5). Appendix 5 presents the job satisfaction measure (Churchill, Ford, & Walker, 1976) that were used in this study, which takes into account several facets of job satisfaction such as satisfaction with pay, benefits, opportunities to acquire higher skills, etc.

For affirmative action appointments (or “tokens”) job satisfaction becomes very important as their possible “out-group” status could significantly impact how organisational dynamics apply to them. As a result, their “out-group” status could negatively affect their levels of job satisfaction. This notion is supported by the research literature which indicates that the problems that affirmative action candidates experience in the work environment are often underestimated (Qunta, 1995). To this regard, some researchers found that “token” status can lead to lower job satisfaction (Young & James, 2001) and that affirmative action appointments often go hand-in-hand with lack of professional satisfaction. Additionally, it has also been suggested that a general state of “unhappiness” often prevails under affirmative action appointments due to the levels of stress they are subjected to, daily humiliation, and the pain and anger they feel as a result of this (Qunta, 1995 p.3). Indeed, there are consistent findings in literature that report that minorities and “tokens” specifically are less satisfied with their jobs (Golembiewski, 2001).

2.8.3.2 Organisational commitment

Research on organisational commitment has attracted much attention among academics in the past decades (Rashid, Sambasivary, & Johari, 2003) and has classically been defined as, “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with, and involvement in, a particular organisation” (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, Mowday, 1974, p. 46). Buchanan (1974, p.537) described organisational commitment as a, “willingness of social actors to give their energy and loyalty (effective attachment) to an organisation apart

from the purely instrumental worth of the relationship”, whilst a more recent definition of this concept states that “a committed employee is the one who stays with the organisation through thick and thin, attends work regularly, puts in a full day, (and maybe more) protects company assets, and shares company goals” (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 43). In summary then, the construct of organisational commitment seems to be characterised by a strong belief in, acceptance and defense of an organisation’s goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation (e.g. attendance, work input, and “going the extra mile”), and a strong desire to protect and to maintain membership in the organisation.

On a more general level, organisational commitment holds the promise of exceptional financial returns (Chambers, 1998; Huselid, 1995) and engaged employees tend to generate high performance business outcomes as measured by increased sales, improved productivity, profitability, and enhanced employee retention (Rogers, 2001; Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Hite, 1995).

The measurement of organisational commitment has also enjoyed considerable attention over the years, most notably by Porter (1974) who developed an instrument to measure organisational commitment (the 15-item organisational commitment questionnaire). The questionnaire includes the dimensions of *desire to remain*, *intent to remain*, *work performance*, *promotion readiness* and *turnover* (Angle & Perry, 1981). Angle and Perry (1981) added to Porters’ work by developing two subscales for their questionnaire, namely that of *values commitment* (measuring identification with and “living” company goals, vision and values) and *commitment to stay* (measuring intent and willingness to remain in the organisation). This questionnaire (Angle & Perry, 1981) was used in this study and also encompasses all of the original dimensions as proposed by Porter (1974).

Research on organisational commitment appears to confirm latent and negative consequences that affirmative action programmes may have on its intended beneficiaries. It appears that “tokens” are more likely to have decreased levels of job involvement (Foley & Kidder, 2002), higher turnover intentions (Shaffer 2000) and that “token”

status employees have significantly lower levels of organisational commitment than their in-group counterparts (Dipboye & Collela, 2005). In addition, further studies on discrimination in the workplace proved that race- and gender dissimilarity is negatively related to organisational commitment levels (Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992) even without the added stigma attached of being an affirmative action appointment.

2.8.3.3 Role ambiguity

The notion of role ambiguity first emerged along with the concept of role conflict when research started on role theory, a theme that has been consistent in the general organisational behavior literature since the 1970's (Schultz & Aulds, 2003). The research on role theory centers around, "the activities expected of a person (the job incumbent) in a particular position" (Shultz & Aulds, 2006, p. 186). More specifically, it entails (1) how the role is influenced by all the other roles or positions (the role set), (2) how proscriptions and prescriptions influence the role (role expectations) and (3) how members of the role set attempt to induce the role incumbent to bring about the role set's expectations (role pressures) (Shultz & Aulds, 2006). Researchers have argued that it is these pressures that give rise to role stress in the form of role ambiguity and role conflict, of which role ambiguity is generally understood to be the more important variable in predicting organisational outcomes (Tubre & Collins, 2000).

Role ambiguity is thought to hinder the opportunity to improve job performance, it leads (indirectly) to turnover (Singh, 1993) and is usually accompanied with a decrease in job satisfaction (Singh, 1993). Role ambiguity is also argued to place limitations on employee cognitions of empowerment (Spreitzer, 1996) and has been found to influence job-related outcomes, such as job stress (Netemeyer, Brashear-Alejandro & Boles, 2004) job burnout (Bhanugopan, & Fish, 2006) and tension (Shulz, & Aulds, 2003).

Over the years, role ambiguity has been defined as an occurrence that involves "an individual being "unsure about others' expectations of him- or herself "(Spreitzer, 1996, p.486) or as "a vagueness or lack of clarity in some aspect of a relationship such as power distribution, hierarchy, nature of the tasks or duties, or consequences of an individual's

actions” (Carron, & Hausenblas, 1998, p. 111). A more recent definition of the construct is presented by Tidd, McIntyre and Friedman (2001, p. 368) who describes it as when “an individual lacks adequate information both about what his or her tasks are as well as how to accomplish them”.

From the above it is clear that there exist relative agreement among researchers that the construct of role ambiguity is about the extent to which information or clues are available in order to guide the appropriate behavior in a work role and in doing so, performing the associated duties, tasks and responsibilities at an appropriate and satisfactory level. The widely used measure (Bamber, Snowball, & Tubbs, 1989; Tidd et al., 2001; Schultz & Aulds, 2003) namely the role ambiguity scale, that was developed by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman²³ (1970) therefore seems to be appropriate for use in this study (Appendix 3 contains a copy of the role ambiguity scale that were used in this study). This is because the items contained in the measure of role ambiguity were designed to “reflect uncertainties about duties, authority, allocation of time, and relationships with others; the clarity on existence of guides, directives policies; and the ability to predict sanctions as outcomes of behavior” (Rizzo et al., 1970, p.156).

An overview of the general experiences of affirmative action appointments in South Africa, tends to support the notion that bearing the affirmative action label could indirectly affect the way the affirmative action position is structured in terms of tasks, duties, responsibilities and levels of authority. For example, it has been reported that, “some of the tasks that affirmative action appointments in the corporate world are expected to do in the new South-Africa has nothing to do with their jobs” (Qunta, 1995, p. 65), like “being co-opted into delegations to see government people or to address the staff on employment equity” (Qunta, 1995, p. 59). Additionally, even in situations where Black individuals do get senior positions, “they do not necessarily get the authority that normally accompanies such positions” (Qunta, 1995, p. 22) or that is given to White employees that are in the same or similar positions.

²³ The Rizzo, House & Lirtzman role ambiguity scale (1970)

Moreover, according to Qunta (1995, p. 63) affirmative action candidates, and especially “Black employees often complain that they get to do everything except what they are employed to do”. This is because such candidates report that “they are often appointed in positions that they are overqualified for” (Qunta, 1995, p. 60) and also, in some cases, they repeatedly ask for job descriptions that they never receive (Qunta, 1995).

2.8.3.4 Group cohesiveness

According to Bollen and Hoyle (1990, p. 479) “the concept of group cohesiveness has occupied a key position in macro-sociology as well as social psychology”. This is because the centrality of cohesion as a mediator of group formation, maintenance and productivity has led some social scientists to deem it as one of, if not the most, important of all small group variables (Golembiewski, 2001).

Group cohesiveness has been shown to result in more positive, personal and favourable communication interactions among work groups (Hogg, 1992) and “feelings of inclusion in one’s work group may yield benefits of greater organisational understanding” (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). “This greater organisational understanding can have a broad range of positive impacts on the functioning of the organisation from stability to the bottom line” (Resheke, 2001; p. 18). In addition, group cohesion has been proven to facilitate increased task participation and - performance (Evans & Dion, 1991).

However, despite its wide-spread popularity and significance, a cursory review of the literature on group cohesiveness reveals substantial disagreement about the precise nature of the construct (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990). A review of the following definitions that have been used to define the construct over the years should clarify the level of disagreement that is mentioned above. For example, group cohesion has been defined as “the extent to which group members are attracted to a group, strongly desire to remain in the group and mutually influence one another”(Organ & Hammer, 1950, p.14). Carron (1982, p.126) defines group cohesion as “a tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives” whilst Shaw (1981, p. 9) states that “in cohesive groups, members exhibit high levels of interaction and agreement with other members”.

Group cohesion can also be described as “a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs” (Carron & Brawley; p. 89) as well as “group members’ attraction to the group” (Hogg, 1992, p. 30)

From these definitions it is clear that (psychological) attraction to a group, the desire to remain part of a group, mutual influence, interaction and agreement, as well as the pursuit of the same goals have been used as some of the main anchors for operationalising the construct over the years.

A recent study on group cohesiveness resulted in a more generalisable view and measure of group cohesion. This study defined the construct as, “encompassing an individual’s sense of belonging to a particular group and his or her feelings of morale associated with membership in the group” (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990, p.482). The measure that was developed and validated in this study (the PCS or *Perceived Cohesion Scale*), focused on the measurement of two important underlying elements of group cohesion, namely *a sense of belonging* and *feelings of morale* (see appendix 4).

Despite the measure’s practical utility and the fact that it represents a novel view on the construct of group cohesion, it also shares certain similarities with the beliefs of other prominent researchers in the field. For example, the sense of belonging scale on the PCS has support in the work of Frank (as cited in Bollen & Hoyle, 1990, p. 54) who defined group cohesion as “the members’ sense of belonging to a group” and also that of Liebermann, Yalom, and Miles (as cited in Bollen & Hoyle, 1990, p. 337) who operationalised group cohesion as “a group property with individual manifestations of feelings of belongingness”. Additionally, the morale subscale of the PCS also draws on the views that group cohesion can be equated to a sense of morale (Zander, 1979 as cited in Bollen & Hoyle, 1990, p.338) and that the term group cohesion is generally used interchangeably with the term morale (Hare, 1976 as cited in the Bollen & Hoyle, 1990, p.338).

A review of the research reveals that affirmative action programmes could negatively influence members of the Designated groups in terms of their individual sense of belonging and levels of morale. For example, it has been reported that, “members of the Designated groups are brought into organisations under the banner of affirmative action, but Black people and some White women still feel marginalised and alienated” (Human, 1999, p.9). Additionally, a survey that was done in the United States of America amongst affirmative action appointments revealed “staggering levels of discontent” due to inferior climates of trust that prevailed in their work groups (Qunta, 1995, p. 33). The same appears to be true for affirmative action candidates in South-Africa as members of the Designated groups often report that they “do not feel at home in the environments into which they are thrust” (Human, 1993, p. 92).

Finally, it has been noted by Kennedy (1986, p. 1330) that affirmative action programmes could “hurt” and also “sap the internal morale of Blacks”. Steinhardt (2005) for example, has shown that affirmative action policies could adversely affect the morale of its beneficiaries. This is because, “in the shadow of affirmative action, it is difficult for minorities to know if their achievements and status are a result of hard work and merit or if they were aided by policies that favored them” (Steinhard, 2005, p. 20).

2.8.3.5 Conflict

“Conflict has been defined in the literature as the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals” (Folger, Poole, & Stutman 1997; p. 3) or as “communicative interactions among people who are interdependent and who perceive that their interests or incompatible, inconsistent, or in tension” (Conrad, 1990, p. 6).

Past definitions were mainly focused on the broader (sociological) meaning of the construct of conflict which nevertheless provided some meaningful insight into its origins and antecedents. According to Human (1993, p. 5) “... (the study of conflict) is primarily concerned with the interaction between collectives, this should not preclude an understanding that conflict can also occur at interpersonal or intra-individual levels”. As

such, the last decade has seen a resurgence of research activity on this topic and much of the more recent research on conflict has been driven by the theoretical and empirical distinctions made between *task* conflict and *relationship* conflict in smaller work groups (Tidd, 2001) which is more appropriate for use in this research study. Appendix 6 presents the two scales developed by Tidd (2001) and that were used in this study to measure conflict.

Task or cognitive conflict has been defined as, “disagreements about the content of tasks being performed, including differences in viewpoints, ideas and opinions” (Jehn, 1995, p. 258) in workgroups. Whilst it has been reported that the existence of task conflict does not always lead to negative consequences (Shah & Jehn, 1993), many research studies have shown that the existence of task conflict has the potential to negatively impact job satisfaction (DeChurch & Marks, 2001) and turnover intentions (Jehn, Chadwick, & Thatcher, 1997).

However, the main point of criticism against the existence of task conflict is the persistent link that it has with relationship conflict (Tidd, McIntyre, & Friedman, 2001). In other words, it appears that task conflict is more or less always present when relationship conflict exists (and not the other way around) which leads some researchers to believe that task conflict usually comes first, and that it triggers or changes into relationship conflict if left unchecked (Tidd, 2001).

Relationship or affective conflict, can be defined as, “interpersonal incompatibilities which typically includes tension, animosity, and annoyance” (Jehn, 1995, p. 258) and it appears to be the more dangerous of the two forms of work group conflict (Tidd et al., 2001). This is because relationship conflict is often linked to decreased performance (Amason, 1996), higher absenteeism (Shah & Jehn, 1993), turnover intent (Duffy, Shaw, & Stark, 2000) and decreased job satisfaction (Jehn, 1994).

Research on the link between affirmative action and racial conflict in the work environment is extensive and supports the argument that conflict might be one negative

consequence of in-group/out-group discrimination in the workplace. This is because the social contact between members of the Designated and Non-designated groups remains strained (Human, 1993). Additionally, affirmative action is inherently conflictual as it has been shown to be sex and race divisive (Newman, 1997) and also to exacerbate the “us and them stereotyping” (Human, 1993, p. 11) that categorises employees into different groups in an organisation. Newman (1997) reports that efforts meant to improve the plight of the disadvantaged groups have, in addition to promoting this end, fostered considerable racial animosity. As Newman (1997, p. 298) states “affirmative action is prone to generate racial conflict” and it thrusts members of the Designated and Non-designated groups into an “uneasy alliance” (Newman, 1997, p. 297). Therefore, although affirmative action has clearly accelerated the advancement of some groups, it has failed to uplift others, with the resultant conflicts not only between Whites and Blacks but among many of the Designated groups themselves (Newman, 1997).

For the purposes of this study, it is proposed that levels of organisational commitment, job satisfaction, role ambiguity, conflict and group cohesiveness may be affected by an individual’s perceptions towards affirmative action. To this regard it is expected that out-group status could be associated with lower levels of organisational commitment, job satisfaction and group cohesion as well as higher levels of conflict and role ambiguity. This phenomenon could be explained by considering how an affirmative action- or Designated group status could influence an individual’s behavior within the context of relational demography theory. “Strong” members of the Designated groups are those that have a positive attitude towards affirmative action and therefore do not have negative connotations with these types of programmes. Consequently, they have a better chance of categorising themselves in the in-groups and to avoid the natural discrimination that takes place in organisational settings against out-group members. When this type of discrimination is avoided, negative consequences such, as for example, a decrease in levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction can be avoided.

On the other hand, it is plausible that at least a part of the study population (of the Designated groups) may be categorised as “weak”. These are individuals that have a

negative or unrealistic attitude of affirmative action programmes and resultantly have “negative” connotations with these programmes. These individuals have a bigger chance of categorising themselves as part of the out-group, and consequently an increased probability of suffering from discrimination in the workplace which could lead to the negative consequences (such as decreased job satisfaction or low role ambiguity) as discussed earlier.

Hence, the question that will be investigated in this study, is how members of the Designated groups will respond to being members of the “out-group” – i.e. do they demonstrate “strong” behavior and rise above the labels and stigmas in order to take their rightful place in South-African organisations? Or can it be that they exhibit “weak” behavior and accept the negative labels and stereotypes that eventually lead to dysfunctional consequences such as decreased job satisfaction, decreased organisational commitment, etc.?

2.9. Summary

This chapter outlined all of the theoretical concepts that are pertinent to this study. It started off with an in-depth explanation of affirmative action by exploring some of the more popular definitions of affirmative action and providing a summary of the main characteristics associated with affirmative action programmes. Next, South Africa’s Employment Equity Act was investigated by looking at all of the responsibilities that it places on the state and the employer respectively. This section outlined how both parties are expected to propel affirmative action forward and it also summarised how much progress has been made with regards to affirmative action in South Africa to date.

Attitudes towards affirmative action were described as being a blend of an individual’s stance on five inter-related affirmative action-related debates. These were identified as attitudes towards reverse discrimination, -merit, -drop in standards, -tokenism, and – quotas. The chapter described equity theory and touched on how perceptions of inequity in the workplace could lead to certain negative reactions/behaviours from members of the Non-designated group, such as increased stealing and exit behaviour. Finally, the chapter

also described relational demography theory and explained how being categorised as part of an “out-group” in an organisation could lead to negative reactions/behaviours from members of the Designated groups, such as a decrease in job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In chapter two affirmative action and dysfunctional responses to perceived inequity and/or out-group status was presented. The first part of this chapter will focus on the rationale, aims and objectives of this study. The second part will outline the research methodology, sample and the data collection method used. Finally, the measurement instruments that were used to measure the different constructs will also be discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

3.2. Rationale and aim of this research

Past research studies have established the link between perceptions of inequity, attitudes towards affirmative action and dysfunctional work behaviours, as well as the link between being a member of the “out-group,” (e.g. a token) attitudes towards affirmative action and dysfunctional work behaviours (Greenberg, 1993; Greenberg & Scot, 1996; Hirschman, 1970; Steele, 1990; Young & James, 2001).

The classic typology for White male responses to discrimination in the workplace provided by Hirschman (1970) proposes that an individual’s personal response to perceived inequity in the workplace would firstly be dependant on his or her feeling of loyalty towards an organisation. Consequently, given a perception of inequity, an “un-loyal” employee would be more likely to leave (or exit) the organisation whilst a “loyal” employee would be more likely to stay on in the organisation while at the same time trying to publicly make use of grievances processes to “rock-the-boat” (also known as voice response mechanism). However, as the relationships between loyalty and the individual’s choice between exhibiting exit and voice response behaviour in particular was proven to be flawed (Boroff & Lewin, 1997), it would not appear to make sense in studying the interaction affect that loyalty has with voice and exit, but to rather study the three (Exit, Voice, and Loyalty) different response mechanisms as separate constructs.

Should this approach of defiance and protest not work, Hirschman (1970) suggested that an individual that experiences discrimination in the workplace would change his or her tactic to that of “silence”, a purposeful effort to remain silent about any wrongdoings, transgressions, misconduct or unlawful activities that might be taking place in the organisations. Other research even suggests that individuals may start to steal given perceptions of inequity in the workplace (Greenberg & Scott, 1996). Thus, perceived discrimination in the workplace could lead to exit, voice and (decreased) loyalty in White males, which could eventually turn into silence and stealing behaviour.

Members of the out-group, on the other hand, were found to be more prone to feelings of low self-esteem, (Carter, 1991; Rodriguez, 1982; Steele, 1990) to have lower job satisfaction (Young, 2001) and to have lower levels of job involvement (Foley & Kidder, 2002) to name just a few negative aspects associated with being branded as a “token” employee.

To date, no research has been done in South Africa on the affects that affirmative action could have on the (dysfunctional) responses of employees in the workplace. This is a concern because “if South Africa wishes to make a success of affirmative action, organisations need to understand how perceptions of affirmative action influence employees’ attitudes and behaviour and consequently affect the success of the organisation” (Vermeulen & Coetze, 2006; p.57). This study is one attempt at furthering such an understanding.

3.3. Research aim, problems and hypotheses

The purpose of the study is to firstly investigate whether attitudes towards affirmative action in members of the Non-designated group is significantly related to exit, voice, loyalty, silence and stealing behaviour. Secondly, the study aims to investigate whether attitudes towards affirmative action in the Designated group is significantly associated with decreased organisational commitment, job satisfaction and group cohesion, as well as an increase in role ambiguity and conflict.

Finally, the study also aims to establish whether knowledge of affirmative action is significantly related to attitudes towards affirmative action as measured by an individual's stance on the five affirmative action-related debates (e.g. attitude towards -merit, -quotas, -drop in standards, -reverse discrimination, and tokenism).

The following research problems and substantive research hypothesis can be formulated for the purposes of this study:

1. Knowledge of affirmative action or employment equity legislation in South Africa is significantly related to attitudes towards affirmative action.
2. A significant negative relationship will exist between loyalty and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Non-designated group).
3. A significant relationship will exist between stealing and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Non-designated group).
4. A significant relationship will exist between exit and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Non-designated group).
5. A significant relationship will exist between voice and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Non-designated group).
6. A significant relationship will exist between silence and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Non-designated group).
7. A significant relationship will exist between job satisfaction and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Designated groups).
8. A significant relationship will exist between organisational commitment and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Designated groups).
9. A significant relationship will exist between role ambiguity and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Designated groups).
10. A significant relationship will exist between group cohesion and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Designated groups).
11. A significant relationship will exist between conflict and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Designated groups).

12. Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, - tokenism, - reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict loyalty behaviour in the Non-designated group.
13. Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, - tokenism, - reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict exit behaviour in the Non-designated group.
14. Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, - tokenism, - reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict stealing behaviour in the Non-designated group.
15. Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, - tokenism, - reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict silence behaviour in the Non-designated group.
16. Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, - tokenism, - reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict voice behaviour in the Non-designated group.
17. Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, - tokenism, - reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict job satisfaction in the Designated groups.
18. Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, - tokenism, - reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict organisational commitment in the Designated groups.
19. Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, - tokenism, - reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict role ambiguity in the Designated groups.
20. Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, - tokenism, - reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict group cohesion in the Designated groups.
21. Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, - tokenism, - reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict conflict in the Designated groups.

3.4. Research models

The research models presented below indicate the proposed relationship between the aforementioned constructs. It is proposed that for both the Designated and the Non-designated groups, knowledge of affirmative action (as measured by the knowledge test) will significantly be related to an individual's attitude towards affirmative action. Attitude towards affirmative action (total score) will be measured as an individual's stance on the five affirmative-action related debates. These include attitude towards reverse discrimination, - merit, - tokenism, - quotas, and – drop in standards. As indicated on figures 3.1 and 3.2, an individual's stance on all of these different debates will be measured using different scales that will be included in the same questionnaire (the study questionnaire). For the Designated groups specifically (and for those who perceive themselves as part of the out-group), it was proposed that attitudes towards affirmative action (a composite score derived from the individual's stance on the different affirmative action-related debates) will significantly be related to levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, group cohesion, conflict and role ambiguity (as measured by several scales that were built into the study questionnaire). For the Non-designated group, given that they experience perceptions of inequity in the work environment, it was proposed that attitudes towards affirmative action (a composite score derived from the individual's stance on the different affirmative action-related debates) will significantly be related to exit-, silence, voice-, stealing and loyalty response mechanisms. These reactions were measured by several scales that were also built into the study questionnaire.

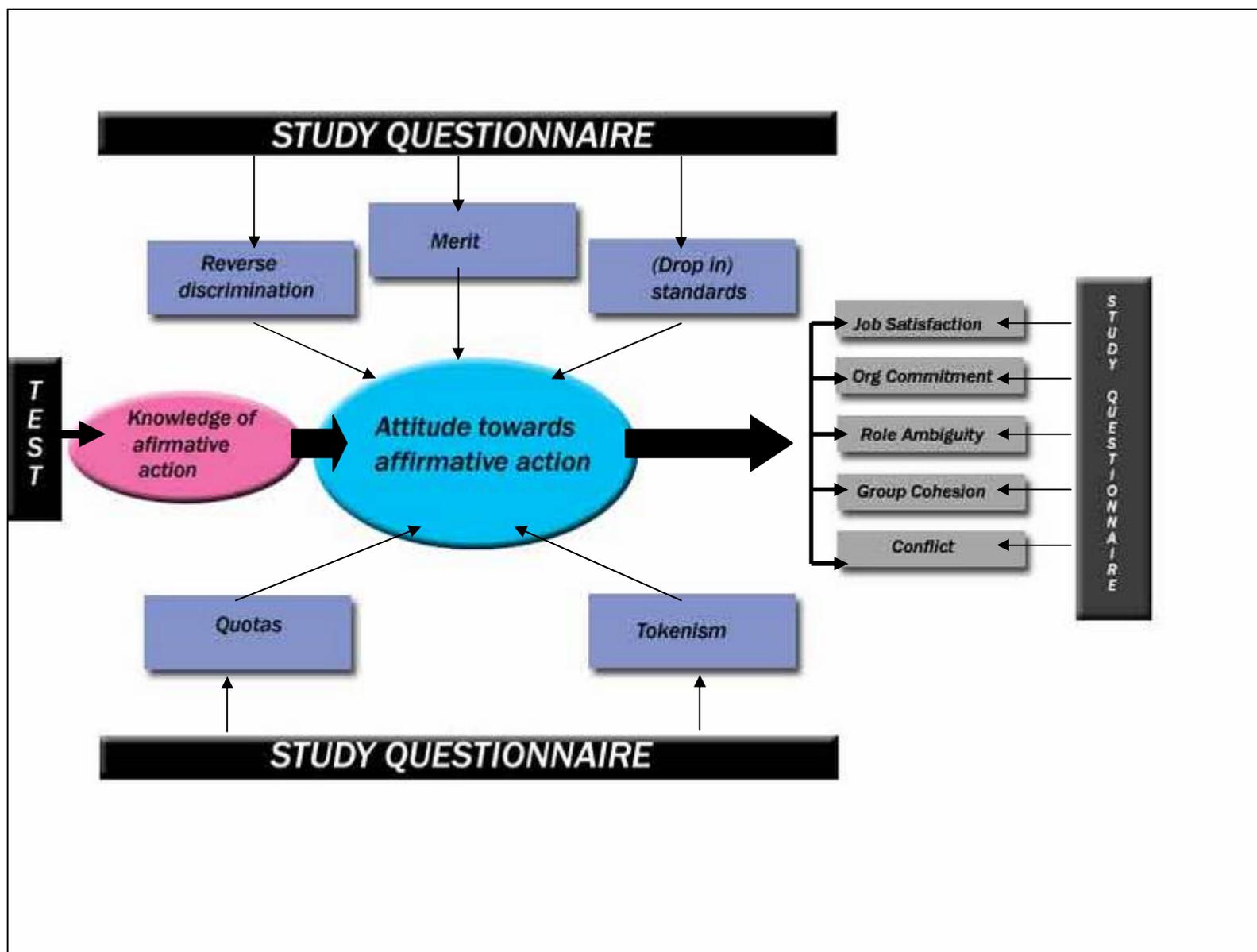


Figure 3.1. Research model for the Designated groups

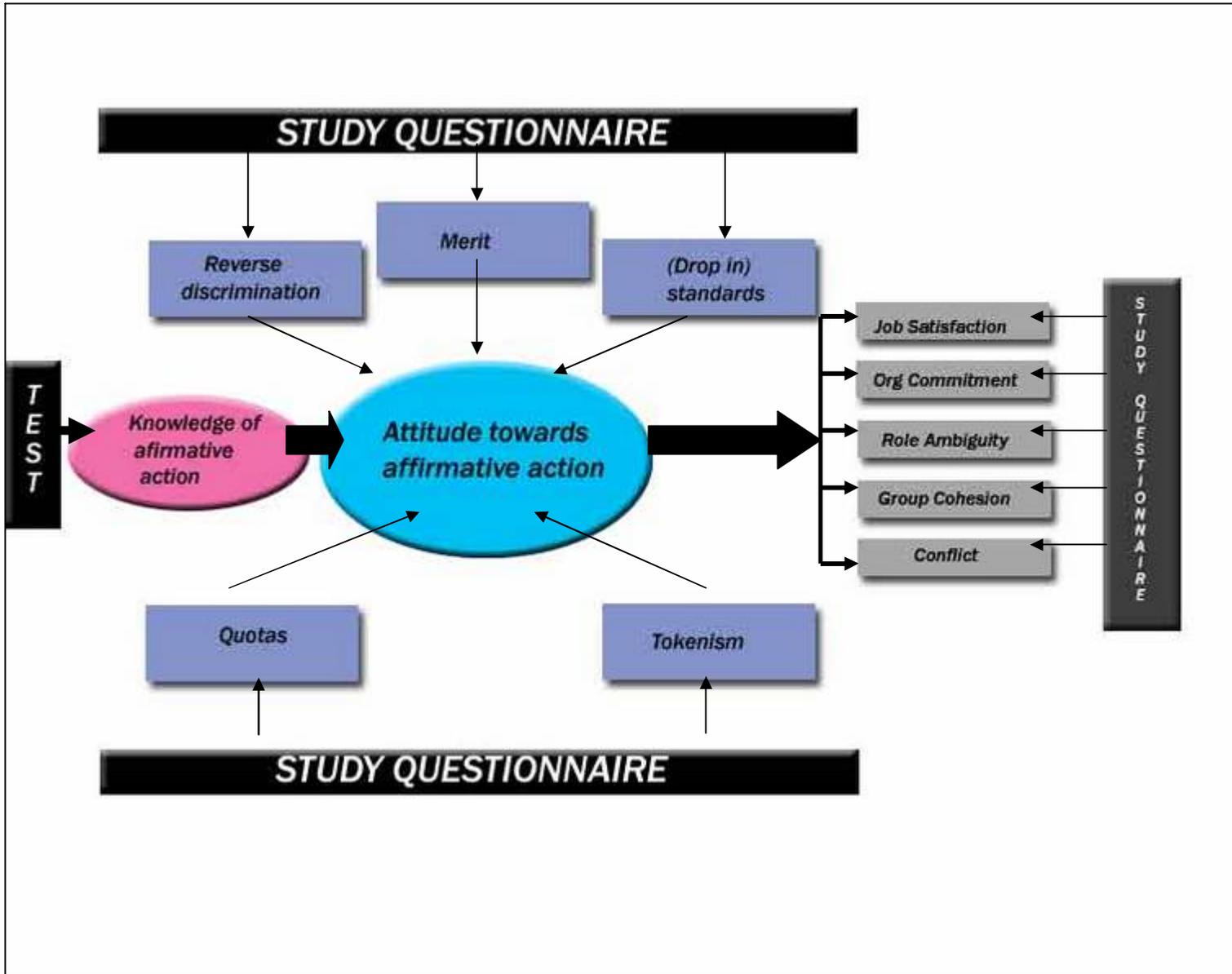


Figure 3.2. Research model for the Non-designated group

3.5. Research design and procedure

3.5.1. Research Design

A non-experimental (ex-post facto) research design (see figure below) was used to explore the relationships between knowledge of, and attitudes towards affirmative action, as well as between attitudes towards affirmative action and the different types of (dysfunctional) behaviours (depending on group membership, i.e. Designated or Non-designated). This type of design was chosen as relationships were investigated that was based on a model constructed by the researcher, without direct manipulation of the variables in question. Both correlational and univariate statistical techniques were used to gain deeper insight into the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables.

n 1	[X11]	[X12]	[X13]	[X14]	[X15]	Y11	Y12
n 2	[X21]	[X22]	[X23]	[X24]	[X25]	Y21	Y22
n 3	[X31]	[X32]	[X33]	[X34]	[X35]	Y31	Y32
...
n n	[Xn1]	[Xn2]	[Xn3]	[Xn4]	[Xn5]	Yn1	Yn2

Figure 3.3 Ex-post facto research design.

3.5.2. Sampling

A non-probability sampling method, i.e. availability sampling (Babbie, 1998) was used in this study. Babbie (1998, p. 194-195) points out that although it is “necessary to exercise caution” when generalising from this type of data, that it can still be used as a “source of useful insights” in the absence of a more representative sample or the utilisation of probability sampling methods.

3.5.3. Participants

The participants in this study ($n = 100$) consisted of employees of different age-, ethnic- and gender groups in the Western Cape with varying levels of education, socio-economic

status and job level. All of the participants were listed on the databases of several prominent recruitment agencies in the Western Cape. This meant that all respondents either was (in the recent past) or currently is looking for employment in different industries.

3.5.4. Data collection

Initially, the researcher approached several prominent organisations in the Western Cape to try and involve them in the study. However, no organisation was prepared to officially participate, due to the sensitive nature of the study. This quickly became obvious after initial meetings, phone calls and superficial communications about the questionnaire that was to be used. Whilst discouraging, this type of response was understandable as some organisational cultures were simply not susceptible to this type of study. Other companies were worried that this type of study could influence their BEE standings or visibility in terms of Employment Equity reporting. In addition, other more progressive organisations claimed to suffer from survey fatigue and also chose not to be involved in the study.

As a result it was decided to approach all the main recruitment agents in the Western Cape and ask them and their clients (i.e. employees on their records, both employed and non-employed) for their participation in the study. The recruitment agents were geographically dispersed over the Western Cape and represented all kinds of clients in the province. Consequently they were properly briefed on the objectives of the research and were asked to approach their clients and to ask for their voluntary participation.

The data collection process was spread out over 4 weeks. Agents were briefed during a “training day”, given copies of the questionnaire (see appendix 7) and also instructed on ethical considerations relating to the completion and administration of the questionnaires²⁴.

²⁴ Amongst other things, the following points of importance were highlighted:

- 1) Participation is voluntary
- 2) Responses will be treated and stored with utmost confidentiality

Questionnaires were e-mailed to interested participants that were not readily accessible, whilst hard-copies were circulated to those that were. Responses was either faxed back to the researcher or returned in person during scheduled pick-up times at the respective recruitment agents' premises. Results were captured into an electronic format.

3.5.5. Measurement instruments

In addition to utilising several measures that were developed by researchers in the past, various measures were also constructed for the purposes of this study²⁵. These will be discussed in more detail in the section that follows.

3.5.5.1. Knowledge of affirmative action legislation in South Africa

To test the respondent's knowledge of the affirmative action legislation, four statements (with varying accuracy) regarding the Employment Equity Act was developed (e.g. "The Employment Equity Act requires employers to appoint people that are not suitably qualified for a job").

Participants were asked to respond to the statements by using a 5-point Likert scale anchored by 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Respondents scored a point on the knowledge test if they responded correctly to truthful statements by marking 4=agree and 5=strongly agree, as well as responding correctly to false statements by marking 1=strongly disagree and 2=disagree. An "unsure" response always resulted in not scoring a point for that specific question. The descriptive statistics and Cronbach Alpha obtained from the sample in this research for the knowledge test questionnaire are set out in the table below.

²⁵ The reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alpha) of all instruments were calculated, but it was not possible to report on the validity of the instruments (e.g. Exploratory- or Confirmatory Factor Analyses) because the sample was too small.

Table 3.1.

The current study's mean, standard deviation and reliability statistics for the knowledge test items.

GROUP DIMENSION	Mean	Standard Deviation	N of items	Cronbach Alpha
KNOWLEDGE TEST	2.2600	1.04078	4	.405

N = 100.

The reliability of the knowledge test is therefore not ideal and below the acceptable norm. However, it must be said that in general, reliability should never be less than 0.50, unless a very short questionnaire is used which is the case in this instance. As discussed later, the reliability of the knowledge test is therefore a limitation of the study and the results will be interpreted against this background. Additionally, because of the fact that only 4 items were used in the knowledge test it was not possible to remove some of the items in order to increase the reliability of the test as a whole.

3.5.5.2. Dysfunctional consequences –The Non-designated group

Different scales were developed to measure dysfunctional consequences in the Non-designated group. These instrument intended to measure the likelihood of responding in a certain way (e.g. loyalty, exit, etc.) when faced with affirmative action in the work environment. The developed scales consisted of items measuring each on of the following dimensions²⁶:

- **Loyalty** – i.e. whether or not the person will remain positive and loyal to the company he/she is working for (e.g. “I feel very loyal towards this company”);
- **Exit** – i.e. whether or not a person is planning on leaving the company he/she is working for (e.g. “I feel compelled to update my CV because I feel that I should be sending it out in search of new employment”)

²⁶ The subscale totals cannot be added together; as the constructs are thought to operate in different directions (e.g. loyalty behaviour was expected to decrease, whilst stealing behaviour was expected to increase).

- **Voice** – i.e. whether or not a person is likely to use formal or informal mediums in making his/her voice heard in the company he/she is working for (e.g. “When I see an affirmative action candidate being appointed or promoted ahead of me or another deserving member of the Non-designated group, I would definitely confront management about this”);
- **Stealing** – i.e. whether or not a person is prone to steal money, information or the intellectual property of the company he/she is working for (e.g. “I would make personal phone calls from the office phone that has nothing to do with work”); and
- **Silence** – i.e. whether or not a person is prone to keep silent about unethical behaviour taking place in the company he/she is working for (e.g. “When I know about employees that are purposefully sabotaging our company or certain operations the company is running, I would report this to the appropriate people in the company”).

Respondents was prompted to respond to scale items on a continuum ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). The descriptive statistics and Cronbach Alphas obtained from the sample (Non-designated group) are set out in the table below.

Table 3.2.

The current study’s means, standard deviations and reliability statistics for the Non-designated group dimensions.

GROUP DIMENSION	Mean	Standard Deviation	N of items	Cronbach Alpha
LOYALTY	17.6	2.89	5	.68
EXIT	15.2	4.67	6	.81
VOICE	13.4	3.45	5	.71
STEALING	11.3	2.62	5	.49
SILENCE	11.5	2.92	5	.74

N = 45

As is evident, the stealing scale did not obtain the (standard) .70 cut-off (loyalty leaned towards .70). This is a limitation of this study. However, in the field of criminal psychology in general “there exist much scepticism as to whether people are willing to report fully on their offences – they (lie, cheat, and) steal in real life, why not in response to self-report questionnaires?” (Feldman, 1993, p. 44). Thus, the reliability of self-report questionnaires in the measurement of deviant behaviour (such as stealing) seems problematic in general. One way of improving self-report reliability on stealing scales in a future study would therefore be to consider test-re-test reliability in conjunction with internal consistency reliability.

3.5.5.3 Attitudes towards affirmative action

In order to measure attitudes towards affirmative action, another series of statements were developed intended to measure a respondent’s stance on the five affirmative action debates (i.e. reverse discrimination, merit, (drop in) standards, tokenism, and quotas). Once again, participants responded to scale questions on a continuum ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). The descriptive statistics and Cronbach Alphas obtained from the sample in this research for the attitudes towards affirmative action (total score) and the individual scale scores are set out in the table below.

Table 3.3.

The current study's means, standard deviations and reliability statistics for the attitudes towards affirmative action variables (Attitude towards Merit, Quotas, Reverse Discrimination, Tokenism and Drop in Standards).

GROUP DIMENSION	Mean	Standard Deviation	N of items	Cronbach Alpha
AA total	79	12.59	5	.84
AM	16.7	3.49	5	.71
AQ	15.7	2.67	4	.58
AR	16.4	3.47	5	.76
AT	13.3	2.3	4	.63
AD	16.9	3.62	5	.75

N = 100; AM = Attitude towards Merit; AQ = Attitude towards Quotas; AR = Attitude towards Reverse Discrimination; AT = Attitude towards Tokenism; AD = Attitude towards Drop in Standards, AA total = Affirmative Action Total Score.

The results revealed (table 3.3) that the initial Cronbach Alpha for the Quota scale was .38. Consequently it was decided to omit the results from question number 107 (Section C) before conducting further analyses on the data in order to increase the reliability coefficient to .58. Question 107 was found to not contribute to the internal consistency of the Quota scale as it probed a fundamentally different issue than the other four questions contained in the study questionnaire. The other four questions (measuring attitude towards quotas) tend to describe how the government or an organisation implements quotas as part of affirmative action measures or they discuss the consequences of quota systems as if quotas are inherently part of affirmative action programmes. Thus, the respondent is presented with questions in which the assumption is already stated that quotas are synonymous with affirmative action programmes in general. However, question 107 (e.g. "Affirmative action programmes can be effective without quota systems") makes a clear distinction between the concepts of affirmative action and quotas and it is therefore argued that it did not elicit the same types of responses (and from there the lower internal consistency) than the other questions contained in the quota scale.

Finally, as is evident from table 3.3, the fact that the attitude towards quotas- as well as the attitude towards tokenism scales also did not reach the .7 cut-off (Nannaly & Bernstein, 1994) represents a further limitation of this study.

3.5.5.4. Dysfunctional consequences - the Designated groups

In order to measure different aspects of work behaviour of the Designated groups the following existing instruments were utilised:

- **Organisational Commitment** – To measure organisational commitment, the organisational commitment questionnaire, (OCQ) which has demonstrated good psychometric properties and has been used with a wide variety of job categories (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) was used. The OCQ is reported to have a Cronbach Alpha of .90 (Angle & Perry, 1981).
- **Role Ambiguity** – Role ambiguity was measured by making use of the role ambiguity scale that was developed by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970). The internal consistency of the role ambiguity scale has ranged from .6 to .9 in different studies (Embich, 2001, Moore, 2000) and its test-retest reliability over a four-month period was reported as .65 and .71 by Miles (1976).
- **Job Satisfaction** – Job Satisfaction was measured with the 26 item-scale adapted from Churchill et al. (1976). This measure has been used by several researchers and has been found to have acceptable validity and reliability (Singh, 1993). More specifically, in an extensive validation of the scale, Churchill et al. (1974) reported a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .96.
- **Group Cohesiveness** – Group cohesiveness was measured with the Perceived Cohesion Scale (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990) which has been found to display satisfactory psychometric properties (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990).

- **Conflict** –The 4-item scales of Jehn (1995) was used to assess task- and relationship conflict. The scales have widely been reported as having appropriate psychometric properties (Jehn, 1995; Tidd, et al., 2001). For example, Jehn and Mannix (2001) reported a Cronbach Alpha of .94 for both these scales²⁷.

The descriptive statistics and Cronbach Alphas obtained from the sample in this research for the Designated group variables are set out in the table below.

Table 3.4.

The current study's means, standard deviations and reliability statistics for the Designated group (organisational commitment, role ambiguity, job satisfaction, group cohesion and conflict).

GROUP DIMENSION	Mean	Standard Deviation	N of items	Cronbach Alpha
OC	44.4	6.96	13	.83
RA	23.3	3.2	6	.73
JS	94	14.53	26	.91
GC	22.2	3.98	6	.81
C	18.6	5.15	8	.79

N = 55; OC = Organisational commitment; RA = Role ambiguity; JS = Job satisfaction; GC = Group cohesion; Conflict = Conflict

For each of these subscales respondents were also asked to respond to scale questions on a continuum ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). All items were collapsed into one questionnaire for ease of administration and completion. However, all questions were mixed up in one big questionnaire. Some of the scales that were used also included inverse questions in order to try and counter acquiescence in responses.

²⁷ Both these scales measure the underlying construct of conflict and were combined into one scale for the purposes of this study. The wording on the scales were slightly altered for the purposes of this study.

3.6. Statistical analysis and computer package

The recovered data was analysed with the statistical tools Statistica and SPSS to perform a range of analyses in testing the proposed hypotheses. Specifically, Pearson Product Moment correlations were calculated and Multiple Regression analyses were conducted to test the relationships between knowledge of affirmative action, attitude towards affirmative action, and dysfunctional consequences in both the Designated and Non-designated groups. Additionally, an independent-samples t-test was conducted in order to establish if there was any significant difference with regards to attitudes towards affirmative action in the Designated and Non-designated groups.

3.7. Summary

In summary then, an availability sampling method was used to survey 100 Western Cape survey respondents' knowledge of affirmative action, attitudes towards affirmative action, and proneness to engage in certain (dysfunctional) forms of work behaviour. To measure knowledge of affirmative action, attitudes towards affirmative action and certain forms of dysfunctional consequences for the Designated groups, several new scales were developed. The reliability of these scales was found to be up to standard in general, with the notable exception of the stealing and quota scales. To measure dysfunctional consequences in the Non-designated group, the study utilised several scales that have been used with much fruition in the past and for which acceptable reliability coefficients was reported for this study as well.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the results of the study and whether it supports the various research hypotheses as stated in the previous chapter. Various statistical techniques were used to determine the relationships between the constructs.

The impact of selected socio-demographic variables on the constructs was also investigated²⁸.

4.2. Sample

Questionnaires were distributed to 180 employees that were represented by eight of the leading recruitment agencies in the Western Cape. One hundred usable questionnaires were returned (a response rate of 56%). The descriptive statistics indicated a mean age ($n=100$) of 31.8 years, with the boundaries at 63 years (maximum) and 19 years (minimum). The race distribution, reported in table 4.1. was 84% White, 5% Black, 2% Indian, and 9% coloured, even though both the Designated (55%) and Non-designated groups (45%) were relatively equally represented in the sample, (see table 4.3) although the majority of participants from the Designated groups were White females.

According to table 4.3 the largest proportion of the population were male (55%), Afrikaans speaking (63%), in possession of an honours degree (33%), and currently employed on a non-managerial level (39%). The largest proportion of the sample were also from the medium level income group (e.g. currently earning between R80 000 and R139 000 per year). Finally, the largest proportion of the sample reported their primary political affiliation as being the Democratic Alliance (74%). The summary of the descriptive statistics for the sample group is presented in tables 4.1- 4.3 below.

²⁸ Analyses were done on how age could have an influence on attitudes towards affirmative action for example, but no significant results were found.

Table 4.1.

Descriptive statistics: racial composition (n=100).

ITEM	Category	n	Percentage
Race composition	White Male	45	45
	White Female	39	39
	Black Male	3	3
	Black Female	2	2
	Indian Male	2	2
	Indian Female	0	0
	Coloured Male	6	6
	Coloured Female	3	3

Table 4.2.

Descriptive statistics: primary political affiliation (n=100).

ITEM	Category	n	Percentage
Primary party	DA	74	74
	ANC	11	11
	Other	6	6
	NNP	6	6
	IFP	2	2
	PAC	2	2

Table 4.3.*Summary of sample characteristics.*

ITEM	Category	n	Percentage
Gender	Male	55	55
	Female	45	45
Group	Designated	55	55
	Non-designated	45	45
Language	Afrikaans	63	63
	English	33	33
	Xhosa	2	2
	Zulu	2	2
Level of education	Grade 12/Std 10	11	11
	Post-matric certificate/diploma	12	12
	National diploma	10	10
	Bachelors degree	23	23
	Honours degree	33	33
	Masters degree	8	8
	Doctorate degree	3	3
Job level	Non managerial	39	39
	Lower level mngt.	13	13
	Middle mngt.	29	29
	Upper level mngt.	10	10
	Top level mngt.	9	9
Socio-economic status	Low (<R40 000)	3	3
	Medium-low	11	11
	Medium (R80 000 – R 139 000)	30	30
	Medium-high	25	25
	High	22	22
	Very high (R 400 000 +)	9	9

4.3. Descriptive statistics: knowledge of affirmative action, reported self-knowledge, attitudes towards affirmative action and dysfunctional consequences

In addition to the knowledge questions, respondents also rated themselves on a scale of 1 (no knowledge) to 10 (expert on affirmative action) on the following statement: “I am knowledgeable about the Employment Equity Act”. The descriptive statistics for reported self-knowledge of affirmative action are reported in the table 4.4. below.

Table 4.4.

Descriptive statistics: reported self-knowledge of affirmative action.

DIMENSION	Mean	Standard deviation	N of items
SELF-KNOWLEDGE	5.46	2.00	1

N = 100.

The results also revealed that most respondents cited “training” as their main source of information for learning about affirmative action, followed by “friends” and then “publications”.

To assess actual knowledge of affirmative action in the sample group, individual raw scores were calculated by adding the values of the correctly answered items (1 for a correct answer and 0 for an incorrect answer). Table 3.1 contains the mean and standard deviation of the knowledge test for the entire sample.

The mean scores and standard deviations for the attitudes towards different affirmative action debates were also calculated and are presented in Table 3.3. Finally, the means and standard deviations were also calculated for the different hypothesised categories of dysfunctional consequences for both the Designated and Non-Designated groups. The average mean scores (on a scale of 1-5) obtained from the sample group for White males (Non-designated group) are: loyalty, (3.5) exit, (2.6) voice, (2.7) stealing (2.2) and silence (2.3). The average means (on a scale of 1-5) calculated for members of the

Designated group are: organisational commitment, (3.4) role ambiguity, (3.8) job satisfaction, (3.6) group cohesion (3.8) and conflict (2.3).

In summary, from the descriptive statistics it is clear that the average respondent was White, Afrikaans speaking and a supporter of the Democratic Alliance. The average respondent was relatively educated and at the start of their careers (given the non-managerial level and medium income group). Despite the majority of the sample being White, both the Designated and Non-designated groups were almost equally represented. That was because a large proportion of the sample population were White women who are also classified as members of the Designated groups. Both groups indicated that they used training as the main source for learning more about affirmative action.

4.4. Group membership and affirmative action: results

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to explore the impact of group membership on attitude towards affirmative action. Group membership was expected to have a significant impact on attitudes towards affirmative action as some previous research about the beneficiaries of affirmative action (Crosby, Ferdman, & Wingate, 2001) have found that the minority-, targeted- or Designated groups have more positive attitudes towards affirmative action in general. Logically this also makes sense as you would expect the beneficiaries of such policies to have a more positive attitude towards affirmative action as opposed to White males.

There was a significant difference in scores for members of the Designated groups ($\underline{M} = 76.14$, $\underline{SD} = 13.7$), and members of the Non-designated groups [$\underline{M} = 82.7$, $\underline{SD} = 10.17$; $t(97.162) = -2.740$, $p = .007$]. The magnitude of the differences in the means was moderate to large, (eta squared = .07) (Cohen, 1988) indicating that 7% of the variance in attitudes towards affirmative action can be attributed to group membership (i.e. Designated or Non-designated group) in this study. Thus it was found that the Non-designated group had a more stronger (e.g. negative or sensitive) attitude towards affirmative action than members of the Designated groups which supports the initial expectation.

This finding is also consistent with data from a study done in the United States by Truax, Wood, Wright, Cordova, and Crosby (1998) who compared the attitudes towards affirmative action²⁹ between minorities and Whites (a sample of 351 undergraduate women and men) at Smith College and Yale University. The study found that the attitudes of minorities (the beneficiaries) to be more positive than White students.

4.5. Correlational results

The purpose of this study was to determine whether relationships exist between the knowledge towards affirmative action (as measured by the knowledge test developed for the study), attitudes towards affirmative action (as measured by the 5 scales that were developed for this study) and dysfunctional reactions in the work environment (as measured by 5 scales that were developed for this study as well as the OCP, (Angle & Perry, 1981) a Role Ambiguity scale, (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1977, a Job Satisfaction scale (Churchill, Ford, & Walker, 1976), the Perceived Cohesion scale, (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990) and the 4-item Conflict scales (Jehn, 1995).

4.5.1. Relationship between knowledge of affirmative action and attitudes towards affirmative action

In terms of the relationship between knowledge of affirmative action and attitudes towards affirmative action, it was proposed that:

Hypothesis 1: Knowledge of affirmative action (i.e. employment equity legislation in South Africa) is significantly related to attitudes towards affirmative action.³⁰

The relationship between the various dimensions of attitudes towards affirmative action (as well as the total affirmative action score) and knowledge of affirmative action were investigated through the calculation of Pearson Product Moment correlations. The results are presented in table 4.6. The convention proposed by Guilford (cited in Tredoux &

²⁹ They used their own affirmative action survey instrument that utilised an attitudinal scale in which 0 indicated no support for affirmative action and 11 indicated strong support (Truax et al. (1998).

³⁰ The expectation was that the more knowledgeable respondents are about the Employment Equity Act, the less sensitive they will be in terms of their attitudes towards affirmative action.

Durrheim, 2002, p. 184) and depicted in table 4.5 was used to interpret all of the sample correlation coefficients.

Table 4.5.

Guilford's interpretation of the magnitude of significant r.

Absolute value of r	Interpretation
<0,19	Slight; almost no relationship
0,20 – 0,39	Low correlation; definite but small relationship
0,40 – 0,69	Moderate correlation; substantial relationship
0,70 – 0,89	High correlation; strong relationship
0,90 – 1,00	Very high correlation; very dependable relationship

(Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002, p. 184)

Overall, it appears that hypothesis 1 was indeed supported³¹ as the correlation between knowledge of affirmative action (total score) and attitude towards affirmative action was significant (but small) ($r = -.253, n = 100, p < 0.05$). More specifically, it appears as if knowledge of affirmative action has specific (and inverse) relationships with attitude towards reverse discrimination, ($r = -.274, n = 100, p = .006$) attitude towards tokenism, ($r = -.206, n = 100, p = .039$) and attitude towards merit ($r = -.196, n = 100, p = .05$).

These results imply that those respondents who actually knew more about the Employment Equity Act (1998) have a more positive attitude towards affirmative action

³¹ No correlation was found between reported self-knowledge- and actual knowledge of affirmative action ($r = .082, n = 100, p > 0.05$).

in general³². Additionally, the results imply that respondents who knew more about the Employment Equity Act (1998) systematically had a less sensitive attitude towards affirmative action specifically to attitudes towards merit, - reverse discrimination and – tokenism. The correlational results between knowledge of affirmative action and attitudes towards affirmative action are summarised in table 4.6. below.

Table 4.6.

Pearson Product Moment correlations between knowledge of affirmative action and attitude towards affirmative action .

Construct:	AM	AT	AD	AR	AQ
AA knowledge	-.196*	-.206*	-.142	-.274 *	.185

N = 100; AM = Attitude towards Merit; AQ = Attitude towards Quotas; AR = Attitude towards Reverse Discrimination; AT = Attitude towards Tokenism; AD = Attitude towards Drop in Standards. ** $p \leq 0.10$;
* $p \leq 0.05$

4.5.2. Affirmative action and dysfunctional consequences for the Non-designated group

In terms of the relationship between attitudes towards affirmative action and different forms of dysfunctional consequences for the Non-designated group, it was proposed that:

Hypothesis 2: A significant relationship will exist between loyalty and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Non-designated group).

Hypothesis 3: A significant relationship will exist between stealing and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Non-designated group).

Hypothesis 4: A significant relationship will exist between exit and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Non-designated group).

Hypothesis 5: A significant relationship will exist between voice and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Non-designated group).

³² A lower score on the affirmative action debates indicated a more positive attitude, whilst a higher score indicate a stronger or more negative view towards affirmative action.

Hypothesis 6: A significant relationship will exist between silence and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Non-designated group).

Overall, it appears that hypothesis 2 and 3 and 4 was not supported as the correlation between attitudes towards affirmative action (total score) and the constructs of loyalty behavior, stealing behavior and exit behavior was slight and not significant ($r = -.127, n = 100, p > 0.05$ for loyalty, $r = -.21, n = 100, p > 0.05$ for stealing, and $r = -.251, n = 100, p > 0.05$ for exit.). However, hypotheses 5 and 6 appears to be supported as attitudes towards affirmative action was found to have a small and significant correlation with voice behavior ($r = .377, n = 100, p < .05$) and small and significant (inverse) relationship with silence behavior ($r = -.371, n = 100, p < .05$). A summary of the Pearson Product Moment correlations are listed in table 4.7 below.

These results imply that individuals who have a more negative attitude towards affirmative action (i.e. more sensitive towards debates such as tokenism or reverse discrimination) are more likely to make use of formal and informal grievance processes, either inside or outside of the managerial hierarchy which may involve different forms of protest (Farrel, 1983). Put differently, results indicate that it is more likely that individuals with a negative attitude towards affirmative action (i.e. more sensitive to debates surrounding quotas or drop in standards) would try and “rock the boat” in an organisation given certain perceived inequities in the work environment.

Finally, the results also imply that individuals who feel more strongly (negative) towards affirmative action would be more likely to not remain silent³³ regarding perceived inequities in the work environment. This is in contrast with the findings of Pinder (1998) who found employee silence to be one of the main consequences of perceived injustice in the workplace. Instead, this sample group apparently does not choose withdrawal and subtle manipulation but rather opts for challenge and open confrontation. Thus, despite affirmative action programmes, members of the Non-Designated group appears more,

³³ A high score on silence indicates a tendency to avoid forms of open confrontation and to remain silent about different forms of subterfuge in the organisation, whilst a low score indicates a tendency to “blow the whistle” and to openly confront and challenge policies that are not supported.

rather than less prone, to engage in whistle-blowing behaviour when they become aware of theft and other forms of subterfuge in their organisation. The findings therefore do seem to corroborate the observation that employee silence is often seen as the flipside of voice response mechanism (Pinder, 1998).

Table 4.7.

Pearson Product Moment correlations between attitudes towards affirmative action (total score) and dysfunctional consequences for the Non-designated group.

Construct:	EXIT	SIL	VOI	STE	LOY
Attitude	.251	-.371*	.377*	-.251	-.127

N = 45; EXIT = Exit response; SIL = Silence response; VOI = Voice response; STE = Stealing response; LOY = Loyalty response. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. (two-tailed); ** $p \leq 0.10$;
* $p \leq 0.05$

4.5.3. Affirmative action and dysfunctional consequences for the Designated groups

In terms of the relationship between attitudes towards affirmative action and different forms of dysfunctional work behaviour for the Non-designated group, it was proposed that:

Hypothesis 7: A significant relationship will exist between job satisfaction and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Designated groups).

Hypothesis 8: A significant relationship will exist between organisational commitment and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Designated groups).

Hypothesis 9: A significant relationship will exist between role ambiguity and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Designated groups).

Hypothesis 10: A significant negative relationship will exist between group cohesion and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Designated groups).

Hypothesis 11: A significant relationship will exist between conflict and attitudes towards affirmative action (for the Designated groups).

Unfortunately the results revealed that none of the hypotheses listed above could be supported in this study. This was because none of the correlations calculated between the hypothesised dysfunctional consequences and attitudes towards affirmative action for the Designated group were found to be significant. The Pearson Product Moment correlations for all of these constructs are presented in table 4.8 below. These results imply that the members of the Designated group in this sample had no specific inclination to exhibit behaviours that could have dysfunctional consequences in the work environment i.e. low commitment, low job satisfaction, high role ambiguity, high conflict, low group cohesion - regardless of whether they had negative attitudes towards affirmative action or not.

Table 4.8.

Pearson Product Moment correlations between attitudes towards affirmative action and dysfunctional consequences for the Designated group.

Construct:	OC	JS	RA	CON	GC
Attitude	-.015	.15	-.12	.101	-.058

N = 55; OC = Organisational Commitment; JS = Job Satisfaction; RA = Role Ambiguity; CON = Conflict; GC = Group Cohesion. ** $p \leq 0.10$; * $p \leq 0.05$

4.6. Multiple regression results

A further objective of the study was to use multiple regression to investigate which dimension of attitudes towards affirmative action (as measured by attitude towards merit, - reverse discrimination, - tokenism, - drop in standards, and – quotas) explains the most unique variance in different types of dysfunctional consequences in the work environment for both the Designated and Non-designated groups, as well as to establish how much variance is explained by each of the independent variables. The specific hypotheses that are relevant with regards to the Multiple Regression analyses are listed below:

Hypothesis 12: Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, -tokenism, -reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict loyalty behaviour in the Non-designated group.

Hypothesis 13: Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, -tokenism, -reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict exit behaviour in the Non-designated group.

Hypothesis 14: Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, -tokenism, -reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict stealing behaviour in the Non-designated group.

Hypothesis 15: Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, -tokenism, -reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict silence behaviour in the Non-designated group.

Hypothesis 16: Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, -tokenism, -reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict voice behaviour in the Non-designated group.

Hypothesis 17: Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, -tokenism, -reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict job satisfaction in the Designated groups.

Hypothesis 18: Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, -tokenism, -reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict organisational commitment in the Designated groups.

Hypothesis 19: Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, -tokenism, -reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict role ambiguity in the Designated groups.

Hypothesis 20: Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, -tokenism, -reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict group cohesion in the Designated groups.

Hypothesis 21: Attitudes towards affirmative action (e.g. attitude towards merit, -tokenism, -reverse discrimination, -drop in standards, and –quotas) can be used to predict conflict in the Designated groups.

As significant correlations were found only between attitude towards affirmative action and two specific types of dysfunctional consequences (behaviour) in the Non-designated group (voice and silence), only these two regression models were tested. Hypotheses 17-21 could not be tested because no significant correlations were found between attitudes towards affirmative action and dysfunctional behaviors in the Designated group in previous analyses.

The first model for the Non-designated group included attitudes towards affirmative action (attitude towards merit, -towards quotas, attitude towards drop in standards, -towards tokenism as predictors (independent variables) and silence as the criterion (dependent variable). In the resultant analysis, the R for regression was significantly different from zero, $F(5, 44) = 2.785$, $p < .05$. Also, the standard regression results indicate that the model was significant ($p < .05$) and that it explained 26% of the variance in silence behavior in the Non-designated group. However, it was found that none of the independent variables made a unique, significant contribution to the model by themselves, indicating a great deal of overlap between these variables.

The second model for the Non-designated group included attitudes towards affirmative action (attitude towards merit, -towards quotas, attitude towards drop in standards, -towards tokenism, as predictors (independent variables) and voice as the criterion (dependent variable). In the resultant analysis, the R for regression was not significantly different from zero, $F(5, 44) = 1.807$, $p > .05$ and therefore this hypothesis was also not supported.

In summary, no support was found for hypotheses 12-14, 16 and 17-21 as no significant correlations emerged between attitudes towards affirmative action and dysfunctional consequences in the work environment for the Designated groups and three of the five (with the exception of silence and voice) regression models for the Non-designated groups were not tested.

4.7. Summary

In this chapter it was reported that the average respondent in this study is currently employed on a non-managerial level and that the average (relative to each other) attitude towards affirmative action was more negative amongst members of the Non-designated group than for members of the Designated groups. Knowledge of affirmative action was proven to correlate inversely with attitudes towards affirmative action, (total score) implying that more knowledge of the Employment Equity Act (1998) leads to less sensitivity on all (or most) of the affirmative action-related debates. In addition, attitudes towards affirmative action were proven to have a significant correlation with voice and (inverse) silence response mechanisms in the Non-designated group. In particular, it was reported that attitudes towards affirmative action explained 26 % of the variance in silence behaviour in this study. Finally, the hypothesis that attitude towards affirmative action leads to certain dysfunctional consequences for the Designated groups was not supported in these results.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

Affirmative action and –related legislation is becoming increasingly pertinent in the South African context, so much so that it is not hard to imagine that this legislation will eventually be one of the more influential reforms brought about by the current government.

Crucial in redressing past imbalances, the legislation is pervasive and will affect most, if not all, South Africans at some stage of their working lives. Affirmative action will be so intertwined with the fabric of the South African labour market (if not already) that most businesses and employees will have no choice but to sit up and take notice. How these role-players will respond remains a matter of debate and cannot accurately be predicted. It is against this backdrop that the present study aimed to investigate the affirmative action attitudes of several employees that are represented by some of the leading recruitment agencies in the Western Cape. The objectives of the study was to firstly determine if knowledge of affirmative action (as described by the Employment Equity Act) has a significant influence on whether or not a person has a more positive attitude towards affirmative action or not and secondly, whether attitude towards affirmative action can be used as an accurate predictor of certain dysfunctional consequences in the workplace.

The rest of this chapter will provide an integrated discussion of the empirical evidence presented in this study. Comparisons with, and references to, the relevant literature and previous research findings will also be provided where possible or relevant.

5.2. Findings: relationships between knowledge of affirmative action, attitudes towards affirmative action and dysfunctional consequences.

5.2.1. Knowledge of affirmative action provisions and attitudes towards affirmative action

Data analysis revealed several statistically significant relationships between knowledge of affirmative action and attitudes towards affirmative action. These (inverse) relationships was found specifically with regards to knowledge of affirmative action and attitudes towards reverse discrimination, -tokenism and – merit. In all of these cases a higher score on the knowledge test (e.g. a more knowledgeable respondent) led to more positive (or less sensitive) attitudes to affirmative action in general.

Thus, the above seems to indicate that being knowledgeable on the provisions of the Employment Equity Act (1998) is associated with one's attitude towards affirmative action. This means that training programmes that are aimed at educating South African employees on the employment equity legislation could have a positive effect on their attitudes on affirmative action in general.

5.2.2. Attitude towards affirmative action and dysfunctional consequences for the Designated groups

Using relational demography theory (Dipboye & Cotella, 2005) as a point of reference, it was anticipated that strong correlations would be found between attitudes towards affirmative action and different dysfunctional consequences, specifically for the Designated group (e.g. low job satisfaction, high role ambiguity, etc.). The results revealed that attitudes towards affirmative action did not have any significant relationship with organisational commitment, ($r = -.015, p > 0.05$) job satisfaction, ($r = .15, p > 0.05$) role ambiguity, ($r = -.109, p > 0.05$) conflict, ($r = -.101, p > 0.05$) nor group cohesion, ($r = -.02, p > 0.05$) thereby rejecting the notion that members of the out-group (i.e. “tokens”) experience dysfunctional consequences in the work environment as a result of affirmative action programmes.

It appears therefore, that the sample respondents reported role ambiguity, job satisfaction, group cohesion together with relatively average levels of organisational commitment and low levels of conflict regardless of whether they had a positive or negative stance on affirmative action. However, these findings do not completely dispel the theory of relational demography as the study once again had a specific limitation that may account for this phenomenon, namely that of availability sampling. The fact that the research relied only on respondents that was available for sampling, meant that although a high degree of respondents were from both the Designated and Non-designated groups, largely only White respondents were surveyed (84% of respondents were White). Within the context of relational demography that focuses on the perspective of the minority group member, the problem here should become quite apparent. Whilst almost certainly also suffering some forms of discrimination, White women can hardly regard themselves as a “token”-group in the workplace, especially since the majority group dominating the South Africa labour market with them is from the same race group. Under these conditions it is suggested that future research with a definite focus on Black, Indian and Coloured respondents should be more fruitful in this regard.

5.2.3. Attitude towards affirmative action and dysfunctional consequences for the Non-designated group

By using Adam’s (1965) equity theory as a point of reference, it was argued that many members of the Non-designated groups could possibly perceive inequity in their current input-output ratios, if compared with that of affirmative action appointments. Conversely it was argued that in an effort to restore equity, individuals could engage in different strategies, some of which might have dysfunctional consequences for the work environment. The relationships anticipated between attitudes towards affirmative action and dysfunctional consequences for the Non-designated group that were reported in other studies (Hirschman, 1970; Lynch, 1989) were therefore partially replicated in the present study’s data, with the exception of the loyalty, exit and stealing response mechanisms. The correlations between attitude towards affirmative action and silence, ($r = -.371, p < 0.05$) and voice ($r = .377, p < 0.05$) were found to be small yet significant, and thus supportive of Hirschman (1970) and Lynch’s (1989) earlier work regarding White male

employees' different responses to reverse discrimination in the workplace. It was found that attitudes towards affirmative action had a significant influence on silence behaviour in particular, with the regression model indicating that the construct explained 26% of the variance in reversed silence behaviour in the Non-designated group.

It appears therefore that the research done on response mechanisms in the United States are also partially useful in the South African context, despite drastic differences in affirmative action legislation and the targeted beneficiaries between the two countries. Furthermore, it also appears from the sample that White males would tend to engage in reversed silence and voice response mechanism if they have a more negative attitude towards affirmative action in response to perceived reverse discrimination in the workplace.

In an attempt to shed light on these results, several popular, high-profile and recent examples of where reversed silence and voice response mechanisms could have surfaced were examined in the South African society. These include Mr. Jacob Zuma who have been investigated by the scorpions for years and who accused him of corruption and fraud, Mr. Jacki Selebi who has been suspended after being charged with corruption, Mr. Papi Mokoena (mayor of Manguang city in Free State province) who was fired from his post after investigations into tender irregularities amounting to R 150 million (Boyd & Williams, 2007) and Mr. Truman Prince who was fired from the position of municipal manager in the Central Karoo District in 2005 due to charges of sexual misconduct (Hartley, 2007). Many more such incidents emerged during the past decade of which Mr J Arthur Brown (Fidentia Group of companies) who is currently being charged for fraud (Cameron, 2008) and the recent power outage crisis, where "poor decisions and miscalculations" from the side of Eskom were reported as among the most important causes for the crisis, (Wannenburg, 2008) are again among the most news-worthy. The point is that regardless of whether or not such irregularities have increased or not since 1994 (and it has probably not), incidents of misconduct and mismanagement in South Africa have certainly become more visible in the media, locally and abroad.

It is argued here that this visibility could act as a sort of an outlet, specifically for members of the Non-designated group. In fact, one of Hirschman's (1970) initial arguments when he coined the concept of voice response mechanism was that the availability of response mechanisms acts as a kind of an outlet for the subjected groups in societies and that it serves as a crucial mechanism for societal reform and development.

In summary then, it therefore appears that for some individuals of the Non-designated group, the increased global visibility of organisational fraud and theft and financial mismanagement amidst affirmative action may be an effective outlet as a way of balancing their perceived income-outcome ratios. However, this could either be because of a genuine effort to change the workplace for the greater good or an effort to gain from it personally.

5.2.4. The impact of group membership on attitude towards affirmative action

A significant difference ($\eta = .07$) were found with regards to attitude towards affirmative action between the Designated and Non-designated groups. As stated earlier, this finding partially replicates the findings of other research (Crosby et al., 2001, Truax et al., 1998) that was done in the United States regarding the beneficiaries of affirmative action. The expectation that members of the Non-designated group (White males) would have a more negative (sensitive) attitude towards affirmative action was therefore supported in this study.

5.2.5. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

A number of limitations to the study can be identified. The first limitation relates to the sample used. Even though both the Designated- (55%) and Non-designated groups (45%) were relatively equally represented in the sample, an inherent weakness in the study is that 84% of the respondents surveyed were of the White race group in South Africa. This made it quite difficult to properly test relational demography theory in the Designated group category, because most respondents that participated here were White females. The limited results obtained with regards to the link between attitudes towards affirmative action and low job satisfaction, high role ambiguity, low group cohesion, etc.

in the Designated group is therefore not surprising. In addition, the use of an availability sampling method also places limitations on the generalisability of the obtained results.

A second limitation to the study relates to the measurement instruments used. Several new measures had to be developed and were used here for the first time, some of which did not necessarily yield the appropriate reliabilities. For example, the knowledge test, ($\alpha = .405$) the stealing scale, ($\alpha = .49$) and the quota scale ($\alpha = .58$) did not meet the .7 cut-off value. A question had to be omitted for the quota scale in order to increase the reliability coefficients for this entire scale. These scales should be developed further in future studies

A third limitation to the study relates to how attitude towards affirmative action was defined conceptually. In the study the focus was to measure how much employees support affirmative action or how much they are opposed to affirmative action. However, increased local and global pressure to appear politically correct (Wingrove, 1991) has meant that there has possibly been a shift in arguments, namely that people are no longer questioning whether or not affirmative action is wrong or right, but they are rather now questioning the fairness of how certain affirmative action programmes are implemented. It could possibly therefore make more sense in the future to measure employee opinions regarding the perceived fairness of affirmative action programmes instead (Vermeulen & Coetzee, 2006).

Should all of the above-mentioned improvements be made in future studies, it is suggested that the overall results would be enhanced, specifically with regards to insights into the Designated group. Should this be the case, it is suggested that the Designated group category also be further broken down into its different race groups. This will make it easier to study differences between race groups in terms of fairness perceptions and dysfunctional consequences, which could in turn allow for a more targeted approach regarding who and what to cater for in organisational sensitivity- or training programmes.

5.3. Conclusion

By studying attitude towards affirmative action and certain dysfunctional consequences for the work environment to perceive inequities and/or out-group status, the present study builds on several theories. It intended to investigate the classical typologies of White male responses to reverse discrimination in the workplace via Adam's (1960) equity theory, (Hirschman, 1970; Pinder, 1998; Lynch, 1989) as well as relational demography theory (Dipboye & Cotella, 2005) and token group membership within the context of affirmative action legislation in South Africa.

At a conceptual level, one important finding was that knowledge of the Employment Equity Act (1998) does seem to coincide with a less sensitive attitude towards reverse discrimination, - tokenism, and –merit. Thus, being knowledgeable on the Employment Equity Act (1998) does seem to improve one's attitude towards affirmative action in general. The most important finding was probably that stronger opposition to affirmative action programmes actually leads to the Non-designated group being more prone engage in voice and the flipside of silence response mechanisms.

It therefore appears that in the absence of other options, disgruntled White males are increasingly engaging in reversed silence and voice behaviour as a way of balancing their input-output ratios in the workplace. No correlations was found between reported self-knowledge and actual knowledge of affirmative action, and no significant correlations was found between attitude towards affirmative action and lower levels of organisational commitment, higher levels of conflict and role ambiguity, lower levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of group cohesion in the Designated group.

At the descriptive level, no major findings emerged. It appears as if both groups had an average level of knowledge of actual affirmative action legislation in South Africa. Group membership appears to have a significant influence on employees' attitudes towards affirmative action, with White males apparently being more negative or sensitive towards affirmative action as expected. This finding partially replicates data from prior studies of the beneficiaries of affirmative action (Crosby et al., 2001) in the United States

that indicated that the beneficiaries of affirmative action are usually more positive in terms of their attitudes towards affirmative action.

In summary then the current study provides evidence that interventions that familiarise members of the Non-designated group with actual affirmative action legislation could play a role in making them more supportive of affirmative action, and also decrease the possibility that they would engage in reversed silence and voice response mechanism. Hence, whilst much research is still required to understand the subtle intricacies, the findings of this study provides the impetus to view attitudes towards affirmative action as a probable antecedent to different forms of dysfunctional work consequences, specifically in the Non-designated group.

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APPENDIX 1:

TURNOVER THRESHOLD APPLICABLE TO DESIGNATED EMPLOYERS

[Date of commencement of Schedule 4: 1 December 1999.]

Sector or subsectors in accordance with the Standard Industrial Classification	Total annual turnover
Agriculture	R 2,00 m
Mining and Quarrying	R 7,50 m
Manufacturing	R10,00 m
Electricity, Gas and Water	R10,00 m
Construction	R 5,00 m
Retail and Motor Trade and Repair Services	R15,00 m
Wholesale Trade, Commercial Agents and Allied Services	R25,00 m
Catering, Accommodation and other Trade	R 5,00 m
Transport, Storage and Communications	R10,00 m
Finance and Business Services	R10,00 m
Community, Social and Personal Services	R 5,00 m

Source: The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998.

APPENDIX 2: ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT MEASURE (Angle, & Perry, 1981, p. 10).

Question	Subscale
1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to make this organisation successful	(Value commitment)
2. I talk up this organisation to my friends as a great organisation to work for	(Value commitment)
3. I feel very little loyalty to this organisation	(Commitment to stay)
4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organisation	(Value commitment)
5. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar	(Value commitment)
6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation	(Value commitment)
7. This organisation really inspires the best of me in the way of job performance	(Value commitment)
8. I could just as well be working for a different organisation as long as the type of work was similar (reversed)	(Commitment to stay)
9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organisation. (Reversed)	(Commitment to stay)
10. I am extremely glad I chose this organisation to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined	(Value commitment)
11. There is not much to be gained by sticking with this organisation indefinitely	(Commitment to stay)
12. I really care about the fate of this organisation	(Value commitment)
13. For me, this is the best of all organisations for which to work	(Value commitment)
14. Deciding to work for this organisation was a definite mistake on my part	(Commitment to stay)

APPENDIX 3: ROLE AMBIGUITY MEASURE (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman (1970b)).

Question
1. I feel certain about how much authority I have
2. Clear, planned goals and objectives exist for my job
3. I know that I have divided my time properly
4. I know exactly what my responsibilities are
5. I know what is expected of me
6. Expectations of what has to be done in my job are clear.

APPENDIX 4: GROUP COHESION MEASURE (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990)

Question	Subscale
I feel a sense of belonging to my immediate work team	Sense of belonging
I feel that I am a member of my organisation's community	Sense of belonging
I see myself as part of the organisation's community	Sense of belonging
I am enthusiastic about my immediate work team	Feelings of morale
I am happy to be at my organisation	Feelings of morale
My organisation is one of the best organisations in the country	Feelings of morale

APPENDIX 5: JOB SATISFACTION MEASURE (Churchill, Ford, & Walker 1976)

Question
With the extent to which I am fairly paid for what I contribute, I feel...
With the amount of compensation I receive, I feel...
With the kind of benefit plans (vacation, retirement and so on) that go with my job, I feel...
With the opportunity in my job for acquiring higher skills, I feel...
With the opportunity in my job to achieve excellence in my work, I feel...
With the chance of future promotion in my job, I feel...
With the working conditions (office space, location and so on) at my job, I feel...
With the nature of work I do in my job, I feel...
With the kind of company policies and practices that govern my job, I feel...
With the amount of recognition and respect that I receive for my work, I feel...
With the respect I receive for my work, I feel...
With the extent to which I am recognised for my work, I feel...
With the degree to which my work is perceived to be important for the company, I feel...
With the technical competence of my immediate boss, I feel...
With the considerate and sympathetic nature of my immediate boss, I feel...
With my boss' ability to lead me and my colleagues, I feel...
With the way my boss helps me to achieve my goals, I feel...
With the attitudes of my fellow workers toward me, I feel...
With the supportive attitudes of my colleagues at work, I feel...
With the opportunity I have in my job to work with people I like, I feel...
With the attitude of my customers toward me, I feel...
With the kind of customers I have, I feel...
With the amount of respect I receive from my customers, I feel...
With the support my family gives me, I feel...
With the amount of consideration my family gives me while on the job, I feel...
With the attitude of my family towards my job, I feel...

APPENDIX 6: CONFLICT MEASURE (Jhen, 1995)

Question	Subscale
How often do people you work with (the workgroup) disagree about <i>opinions</i> regarding the work being done?	Task conflict
How much conflict <i>about the work you do</i> is there among the people you work with (the workgroup)?	Task conflict
How frequently are there conflicts about <i>ideas</i> among people you work with (the workgroup)?	Task conflict
To what extent are there <i>differences of opinion</i> among those you work with (in the workgroup)?	Task conflict
How much friction is there between you and the people you work with (the workgroup)?	Relationship conflict
How much are personality conflicts evident between you and the people you work with (the workgroup)?	Relationship conflict
How much tension is there between you and the people you work with (the workgroup)?	Relationship conflict
How much emotional conflict is there between you and the people you work with (the workgroup)?	Relationship conflict

APPENDIX 7: QUESTIONNAIRE

June 2008
Dear Respondent,

RESEARCH STUDY ON GENERAL LABOUR RELATED ATTITUDES AND WORK BEHAVIOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Request to complete the attached questionnaire

A student at the Industrial Psychology Department of the University of Stellenbosch is undertaking a research study on peoples' general labour related attitudes and work behavior. Please note that your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can decide for yourself whether you will participate by choosing to respond to this request by completing the attached questionnaire. All responses will be treated with anonymity and will only be used for the research purposes of this project. Confidentially and anonymity is priority and will be honored in this manner.

Please note that the attached questionnaire consists of 3 *sections*. Please respond to all questions in all the sections. Choose the relevant option to each item and indicate your answer in the applicable manner. The questions are intended to cover your views towards work and work-related topics from various perspectives. There are no right and wrong answers to any of the questions; we are only interested in your personal opinions. Please keep in mind that you are participating in a scientific study, frank and truthful answers are the most important contributions you can make to its success.

Please follow the instructions as carefully as possible. The questionnaire should take you approximately 35 minutes to complete.

IMPORTANT: INFORMED CONSENT

Before you continue please read and sign the following statement of voluntary consent.

CONSENT FORM (please fill in your name, sign below & tick the relevant box)

I, _____, (Name & Surname) agree to take part in this study.

Signed at _____ on the ____ of June 2008.

(Signature)

Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of access to the data that will be restricted to the researchers (Jacques Pienaar & Gina Ekermans) only. When publishing the data, the name of the institutions where the data was collected will not be mentioned.

Participation and Withdrawal

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Identification of Investigators

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Jacques Pienaar [jacquespienaarorama@gmail.com].

Rights of research respondent

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

SECTION A

Please answer the following general questions. This information is for statistical purposes ONLY.

1. Gender

Male (01)	Female (02)
Designated (i.e. Black woman, men; coloured woman, men; Indian woman, men; disabled, White women) (01)	Non-designated (White male) (02)

2. Indicate group membership

3. Age	Please specify:		
4. Language: Languages in which proficient (you may indicate more than 1)	Afrikaans (01)	English (02)	Xhosa (03)
	Venda (04)	Zulu (05)	Ndebele (06)
	South Sotho (07)	North Sotho (08)	Tsonga (09)
	Tswana (10)	Swazi (11)	Other (12)

5. Highest Qualification obtained

Secondary school (01)	Standard 10 or equivalent (02)	Post-school certificate / diploma (03)
National diploma / National higher diploma (04)	Bachelor's degree or equivalent (05)	Honours degree or equivalent (06)
Masters degree or equivalent (07)	Doctoral degree or equivalent (08)	

6. Most strongly supported political party (ies)

Please indicate the political party that you most strongly support with a 1, the next one in line with a 2, and so on. Indicate the political party that you support the least with a 6

African National Congress (01)	Democratic Alliance (02)	New National Party (03)
Inkatha Freedom Party (04)	Pan Africanist Congress (05)	Other (06)

7. Job level in the organisation

Non-Managerial (01)	Lower level management (02)	Middle level management (03)
Upper level management (04)	Top management (05)	

8. Socio-economic status

Very higher-level income group (e.g. R400 000+ per year) (01)	High level income group (e.g. R250 000 – R399 000 per year) (02)	Medium to high level income group (e.g. R140 000 – R249 000 per year) (03)
Medium level income group (e.g. R80 000 – R139 000 per year) (04)	Medium to low level income group (e.g. R40 000 – R79 000 per year) (05)	Low level income group (e.g. less than R40 000 per year) (06)

SECTION B

Directions: Please answer the following general questions. This information is for statistical purposes ONLY.

1. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 after reading the following statement:

I am knowledgeable about the Employment Equity Act.

Your answer: (1-10)

--

1- No knowledge, 10 – Expert on affirmative action

2. I have obtained information about the Employment Equity Act and more specifically affirmative action from the following sources: [please rank the options from the source from which you obtained the most information (by using a 4) to the source from which you obtained the least information about affirmative action (by using a 1)]

My colleagues

Friends (other than colleagues)

Publications (books, magazines, newspapers)

Training courses/workshops offered by my current or previous organisation

Please answer the following general questions about the Employment Equity Act:

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The Employment Equity Act requires employers to implement employment policies that establish absolute barriers to the prospective employment or advancement of people that are not from the designated groups.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
2. An employer must take reasonable steps to consult and attempt to reach agreement with his/her employees or a trade union representing them, on the preparation and implementation of the organisation's employment equity plan.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
3. The Employment Equity Act requires employers to appoint people that are not suitably qualified for a job.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
4. An employer can be fined for failure to make affirmative action appointments.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

SECTION C

Directions:

This section consists of a list of descriptive statements. The statements indicate the different attitudes people could have on different labour-related matters and different forms of work behaviour.

You need to choose your response to each statement from one of five options for each item, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Try not to think too long about the exact meaning of the statements. Work quickly and try to answer as accurately as possible. There are no right and wrong answers!

FOR EXAMPLE:

If you feel the following statement is not true of your attitude(s) or that you somewhat disagree with it, mark in block number 2.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
In secret and for my own personal gain I do or would use the company copier machine to make copies that are of a personal nature when I need to do so – e.g. do you, for example, use the copy machine to copy (parts of) books or notes that have nothing to do with your job for yourself, friends, or family?	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

Read each statement carefully and choose only ONE answer!

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
1. In secret and for my own personal gain, I would not use the company copier machine to make copies that are of a personal nature.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
2. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to make this company successful.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
3. I feel certain about how much authority I have.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
4. I am satisfied that I am fairly paid for what I contribute.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
5. I am dissatisfied with the amount of compensation I receive.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
6. I feel a sense of belonging to my immediate work team.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
7. I am enthusiastic about my immediate work team.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
8. There is a lot of friction between myself and the people I work with (my team/workgroup).	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
9. In our workgroup, we often disagree about <i>opinions</i> regarding the work being done.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
10. I want to leave my company because the company implements affirmative action programmes that may disadvantage some employees.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
11. I regularly ask my friends, colleagues, and family to be on the lookout for other job opportunities for me because I want to leave my current place of employment.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
12. When I know about employees that are purposefully sabotaging our company or certain operations the company is running, I would report this to the appropriate people in the company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
13. When I see an affirmative action candidate being appointed or promoted ahead of me or another deserving member of the Non-designated group, I would definitely confront management about this.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
14. In general (therefore do not think only about your company) when a company implements affirmative action, I feel that an affirmative action candidate is appointed at all costs above a non-	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

affirmative action candidate.					
15. Affirmative action appointees are given grand titles and offices without concomitant responsibilities.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
16. Companies and departments within companies are prone to make more mistakes and to deliver a poorer service quality because of the fact that they appoint and employ affirmative action candidates.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
17. I do not sell this company to my friends as a great company to work for.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
18. Clear, planned goals and objectives do not exist for my job.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
19. I do not feel satisfied with the kind of benefit plans (vacation, retirement and so on) that go with my job.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
20. I do not feel that I am a member of my organisation's "community".	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
21. I am happy to be at my current organisation.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
22. There are not a lot of personality conflicts evident between myself and the members of my workgroup.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
23. There is not a lot of conflict <i>about the work we do</i> among the people I work with.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
24. Affirmative action programmes force quotas on business so that they have to appoint people from previously disadvantaged groups.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
25. Affirmative action results in employers only taking race and gender into consideration when making appointments, instead of other criteria like qualifications and experience.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
26. I would make personal phone calls from the office phone that has nothing to do with work.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
27. I remain positive about the company that I am working for even though I know that the company will implement affirmative action more rigorously in the future.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
28. I avoid looking at, or reading advertisements about job vacancies, that fall within my field of expertise because I do not plan to leave the company I am presently working for.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

29. When I know about employees that disobey company rules, I would report this to the appropriate people in the company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
30. When I see an affirmative action candidate being appointed or promoted ahead of myself or another deserving colleague, I would not openly question nor challenge management's decision on the matter.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
31. I feel that affirmative action places an absolute barrier to the career advancement of members of the Non-designated group – e.g. that there is no way that these individuals will be promoted ahead of an affirmative action candidate in a company that implements an affirmative action.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
32. Affirmative action appointments are only made to “window dress” the company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
33. The occurrences of errors will not increase in companies as the number of affirmative action candidates that they appoint increases.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
34. I feel very little loyalty towards this company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
35. I know that I have divided my time properly in order to complete all my daily tasks effectively.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
36. I am satisfied with the opportunities in my job for acquiring higher skills.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
37. I feel dissatisfied with the opportunities in my job to achieve excellence in my work.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
38. I see myself as part of my company's community.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
39. This company is one of the best companies in the country.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
40. There is a lot of tension between myself and the people I work with (the workgroup).	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
41. We are frequently in conflict about <i>ideas</i> in my work group.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
42. Affirmative action is much more about the quality, rather than the quantity of previously disadvantaged people that are appointed in a company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
43. Jobs that are advertised as “affirmative action positions” are jobs in which the main criteria for being selected are race and gender characteristics.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

44. I would use the company fax machine to fax messages that have nothing to do with my work.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
45. Even though the company I am working for implements affirmative action, I feel that I want to stay on despite a possibility that some of my or my colleagues' future careers (promotions and career goals) may be threatened by affirmative action.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
46. I feel compelled to update my CV because I feel that I should be sending it out in search of new employment.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
47. When I know about people that are stealing company property, I would report this to their superiors or to management.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
48. When an affirmative action candidate is appointed ahead of an equally deserving member of the Non-designated group I would actively express my disappointment about such a decision whenever possible via the company grapevine.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
49. I feel affirmative action is not a way of making it impossible for previously advantaged job applicants to get a job they are actually suited for.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
50. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
51. I find that my values and the company's values are very similar.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
52. I know exactly what my responsibilities are.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
53. I feel satisfied with the chance of future promotion in my job.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
54. I feel dissatisfied with the working conditions (office space, location and so on) at my job.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
55. I feel dissatisfied with the nature of work I do in my job.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
56. There is not a lot of emotional conflict between myself and the people I work with (the workgroup).	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
57. There are not a lot of differences of opinion between those I work with (in the workgroup).	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
58. Affirmative action candidates are appointed or promoted in companies, who follow an affirmative action	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	2 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

programme and strategy, for the exclusive purpose of looking “politically correct” to the public.					
59. Internal efficiency, productivity, and discipline (e.g. punctuality, good attendance, work ethic) of a company will not suffer when affirmative action candidates are appointed in a company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	2 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
60. Members of the Non-designated groups can fairly compete for available positions (promotions or new positions) even though quota systems are being used in the labour market to advance affirmative action targets.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
61. I generally perceive members from the designated groups to possess the appropriate qualifications (e.g. specialist and background knowledge) to be competent in my position/department/company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
62. I would not take home any equipment from the office for my personal use if the opportunity presents itself – e.g. discarded electronic parts, small quantities of chemicals, etc.)	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
63. I will stay on in my company as I endorse affirmative action programmes regardless of the impact it could have on me or some of my colleagues at the company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
64. I often find myself planning how and when to leave the company that I am currently working for.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
65. When I know about colleagues that are bad-mouthing (verbally degrading) the company I am working for in front of clients or friends and in doing so spoil possible future business for the company, I would report this to company management.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
66. When I see an affirmative action candidate being appointed ahead of myself or another deserving member of the Non-designated group, I would get legal advice about the issue, and based on this take legal steps to try and change the decision.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

67. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
68. This company really inspires the best of me in the way of job performance.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
69. I could just as well be working for a different company as long as the type of work was similar.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
70. I know what is expected of me in my job.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
71. I feel satisfied with the kind of company policies and practices that govern my job.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
72. I feel dissatisfied with the amount of recognition and respect that I receive for my work.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
73. I feel satisfied with the respect I receive for my work.	1 Extremely Dissatisfied	2 Somewhat dissatisfied	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat satisfied	5 Extremely satisfied
74. I feel dissatisfied with the extent to which I am recognised for my work.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
75. I feel that affirmative action creates an absolute barrier to the employment possibilities of members of the Non-designated group – e.g. that there is no way that a these individuals will be appointed ahead of an affirmative action candidate.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
76. Companies implement affirmative action programmes because they support the ideology or rationale behind such policies, and not because they are forced to do so.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
77. I think that the appointment of affirmative action candidates does not lead to a drop in the work standards and performance of a company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
78. It would take a lot of change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
79. I am disappointed that I chose this company to work for over others I was considering.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
80. Expectations of what has to be done in my job are not clear.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
81. I feel dissatisfied with the degree to which my work is perceived to be important for the company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
82. There is not much to be gained by sticking with this company indefinitely.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

83. I feel dissatisfied with the technical competence of my immediate boss.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
84. I really care about the fate of this company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
85. I feel satisfied with the considerate and sympathetic nature of my immediate boss.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
86. For me, this is the best company to work for.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
87. I feel dissatisfied with my boss' ability to lead me and my colleagues.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
88. Quota systems are implemented without any concern for the skill and potential of the person that is eventually appointed.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
89. I generally perceive members of the designated groups not to have the required amount of experience (e.g. work-related and acquired expertise and insight) to be able to work in my position / department / company.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
90. I would use some of my company's intellectual capital (e.g. research, inside information about stocks, etc.) for my own personal use and gain should such an opportunity present itself.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
91. I am a loyal employee of the company I work for.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
92. I often daydream about leaving the company that I am working for.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
93. When I know about people using company property and/or resources for their own personal use/gain, I would report this to company management.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
94. When an affirmative action candidate is appointed ahead of an equally deserving member of the Non-designated group, I would make a point of it to try and get other colleagues to assist in openly protesting against such an appointment.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
95. I feel that the implementation of affirmative action legislation and practices in South African businesses are not giving members of the Non-designated groups a fair chance to compete against affirmative action candidates.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
96. People who are appointed in affirmative action positions generally have the appropriate and required skills to be successful in these positions.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

97. The appointment of affirmative action candidates in companies positively affects a country's immediate ability to compete globally.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
98. Deciding to work for this company was a definite mistake on my part.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
99. I feel dissatisfied with the way my boss helps me to achieve my goals.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
100. I feel dissatisfied with the attitudes of my fellow workers toward me.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
101. I feel satisfied with the supportive attitudes of my colleagues at work.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
102. I feel satisfied with the opportunity I have in my job to work with people I like.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
103. I feel satisfied with the attitude of my customers toward me.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
104. I feel satisfied with the kind of customers I have.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
105. I feel dissatisfied with the amount of respect I receive from my customers.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
106. I feel satisfied with the support my family gives me.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
107. Affirmative action programmes can be effective without quota systems.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
108. I feel satisfied with the amount of consideration my family gives me while on the job.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
109. I feel dissatisfied with the attitude of my family towards my job.	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!