

Discrimination and its effects in the electricity industry

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P.U.S.H.

Pursue Until Something Happens

ABSTRACT

Aim

This study contends and explains why discrimination in the workforce is a growing problem that has affected thousands of organisations, large and small, operating in today's global marketplace. The research is aimed at describing the perceived experiences of discrimination as well as its effects on employees within the organisation.

Method

Using a qualitative research design, interviews were used to facilitate the informal sharing of experiences amongst employees. The purpose of this was to understand the different experiences employees had and the impact discrimination had on the individual performance within the organisation.

Results

Results reveal that employees experience three broad categories of activities that led to experiences of discrimination, namely activities that relates to management and supervision, daily interaction between various groups from diverse backgrounds and unfair general human resource functions.

Conclusion

The results of the empirical study were discussed according to the themes of Supervision/ Management, Human Resources/ Employee relations and Interactions. It was found that employees were exposed to different types of discrimination, which are explored in the literature review.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this mini-dissertation to my husband Archie Molefe, and my two lovely boys, Archie-Junior and Katleho, for their patience, respect, and understanding throughout my studies and during the times I spent away from home. Many thanks, to my loving parents Sinah and Philemon, for their unconditional love, support, and for always being there for me.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EDI	–	Electricity Distribution Industry
EE	–	Employment Equity
AA	–	Affirmative Action
EEO	–	Equal Employment Opportunity
DBSA	–	Development Bank of Southern Africa

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH TOPIC AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the problem statement, objectives of the study, the research methods and the research procedure will be discussed. The chapter ends with a layout of the study and a summary.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study focused on discrimination in the workplace. Prejudice as the attitudinal, and especially the affective biases, exist with regard to members or groups other than those to which one belongs. Stereotype refers to the cognitive biases against out-group members and includes not only attributions of trade to members of these groups but also beliefs about these individuals. Discrimination refers to the unfair behaviour biases demonstrated against these persons (Dipboye & Colella, 2005). The research is aimed at revealing and describing the perceived experiences of discrimination as well as its effects on employees within the organisation.

Discriminatory treatment includes the formal procedures used not only in selection, appraisal, compensation, placement, promotion, training and working conditions, but also in the more informal and subtle forms of discrimination such as social exclusion. One group or person is placed in a disadvantage on the basis of group identity, social category, stigma, or ascribed characteristics relative to other groups with comparable potential, performance or proven success (Cox & Blake, 1991).

Discrimination entails treating people differently because of certain characteristics, such as race, colour or gender, which results in the impairment of equality of opportunity and treatment. The freedom of human beings to develop their capabilities and to choose and pursue their professional and personal aspirations is restricted, without regard for ability, skills and competencies. It cannot be developed, rewards to work are denied and a

sense of humiliation, frustration and powerlessness takes over (Policy Coordination and Advisory Services, 2006).

South Africa is a country of intense social diversity, defined primarily around race, nationality, language, class and religion (Policy Coordination and Advisory Services, 2006). Many of the inequalities created and maintained by apartheid, seem to have remained in the South African workplace. Various nationwide surveys have proved that race relations have not adequately improved (Policy Coordination and Advisory Services, 2006) despite positional empowerment of previously disadvantaged employees and forced through legislation such as the Employment Equity Act and affirmative action.

According to UNDP (United Nations Development Programme, 2003), South Africa has one of the most unequal income distribution patterns in the world and poverty is still largely defined by skin colour, with Black people making up around 90% of the country's poor. While there has been a significant and rapid advance of Africans into and within the middle income group, the reality is that only 7.8% of Africans belong to this group, while 15.6% of this group are Coloured, 20.7% are Indian and 33% are White (Policy Coordination and Advisory Services, 2006).

The electricity utility employs 29 456 employees and encourages them to develop their potential through training. The utility has supported the objectives of the Employment Equity Act (No 55 of 1998) since 1994. It continues to make progress towards promoting and appointing people from the designated groups to ultimately reflect the demographic profiles of the country in the long term (Electricity Utility Employment Equity Plan, 2008). Being a multinational utility, the research organisation proclaims a progressive approach to promoting diversity, yet positive effects in this regard are not reflected in their workforce profile. Here the designated employees are distinctly in the minority and White males and White females still fill most of the senior positions.

As part of affirmative action, the new South Africa saw the importance of transforming the workplace to eliminate the discrimination of the apartheid era. The Employment

Equity Act No 55 of 1998 (SA, 1998) was passed in 1998 and announced in 1999, and was formulated to address the imbalances caused by the previous segregation laws in the workplace.

This Act has two central purposes:

- Promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and
- Implementing 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 workplace.

With regard to unfair discrimination, Section 5 of the Act states, "Every employer must take steps to promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice." It goes on to prohibit unfair discrimination by stating that, "No persons may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, age, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethics or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, disability, religion, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth" (SA, 1998).

Women are disadvantaged in the labour market (Stevens, 2002). They are more likely to be unemployed, or to be in poorly remunerated work. Seidman-Makgetla (2004) observes that black women are still more likely to be unemployed, to be paid less than men when employed, and to perform unpaid labour. Disability groups remain grossly under-represented. In 2002/2003, out of 12 million who were economically inactive, 1.2 million were people with disabilities. Low educational levels exacerbate unemployment among people with disabilities. There is poor integration into the workplace, for example, a lack of transport that is disability friendly (Electricity utility, 2008; DBSA, 2005). Despite efforts by Government through legislation, equal representation as a result of direct, indirect or structural discrimination of the past, continues to be a big challenge for the South African labour market. This challenge is evident from the

statistics released by the Employment Equity Commission (Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998 in South Africa, 1998).

Electricity utility – workforce profile

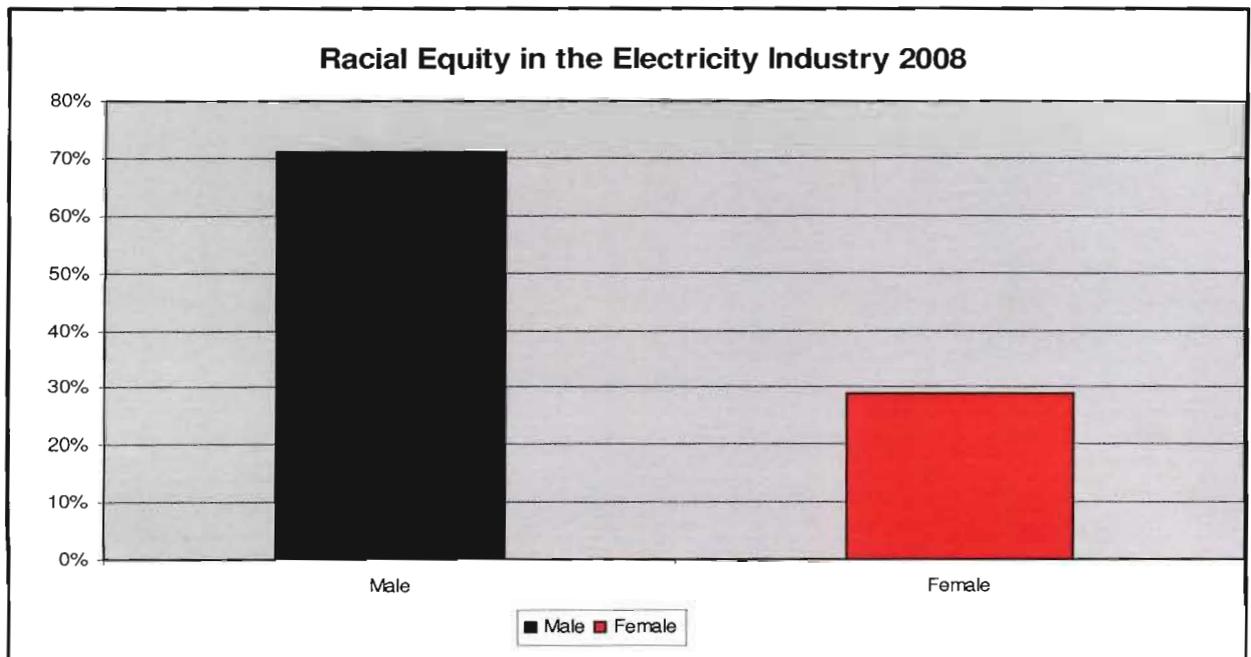
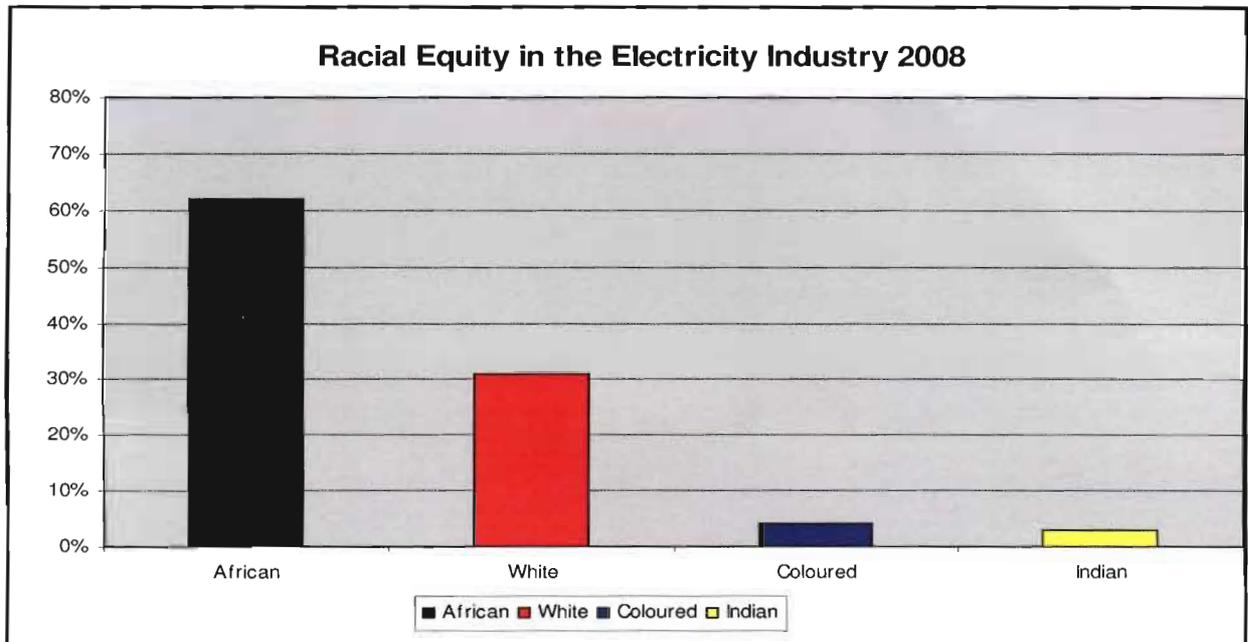
The electricity distribution industry (EDI) is a vital link between the supplier and customers that buy and use electricity. A distribution operation constructs and maintains equipment that transforms the power supply to the type that meets the customer's needs, meters the amount the customer uses, provides the appropriate billing and collects the payments.

Table 1.1: Electricity utility: Workforce profile

Occupational Categories	Male				Female				Total
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	African	Coloured	Indian	White	
Legislators, senior officials and managers	330	82	125	643	101	25	35	105	1446
Professionals	768	163	184	1154	469	120	84	447	3389
Technicians and associate professionals	1243	344	202	1570	393	54	36	193	4035
Clerks	1601	247	36	420	913	249	143	1511	5120
Service and sales workers	1417	177	4	97	48	1	0	8	1752
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Craft and related trades workers	4309	589	39	2665	92	14	5	94	7807
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	1272	65	5	178	72	5	2	12	1611
Elementary occupations	3157	217	0	0	70	2	0	0	3446
Total permanent employees	14097	1884	595	6727	2158	470	305	2370	28606
Non-permanent employees	371	47	17	89	272	17	12	25	850
Total	14468	1931	612	6816	2430	487	317	2395	29456

From the workforce profile above, it is evident that the electricity utility has one of the highest ratios of experience of racial discrimination. The results raise a question

whether racism is being left to fester in the organisation and whether the broad strategies pursued in order to enhance employment equity will succeed.



Figures 1.1: Gender equity in the electricity industry in 2008 (Electricity Industry EE Plan, 2004-2008)

The trends from the above figures gives evidence that racial and gender discrimination exists in the Electricity Industry as Black males, Black females, and White females are not occupying managerial positions in comparison with the White males counterparts with equivalent qualifications (Electricity Utility Employment Equity Plan, 2008).

The elimination of discrimination at work places is central to social justice. It underpins the concept of decent work for all, which is founded on the notion of equal opportunities for all those who work or seek work and a living, whether as labourers, employers or self-employed, in the formal or the informal economy. The elimination of discrimination is an indispensable part of any viable strategy for poverty reduction and sustainable economic development.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the above problem, the following research questions arose:

- What is the level of prevalence of discrimination?
- What are the types of discrimination experienced?
- What are the effects of discrimination on the individual?
- What is the impact of discrimination on the performance of the organisation?
- What can be done to lessen/eliminate the negative impact of discrimination?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives were divided into primary and secondary objectives.

1.4.1 Primary objectives

The primary objective of the research was to understand discrimination and its effects in the electricity industry.

1.4.2 Secondary objectives

- To understand the prevalence of discrimination in the electricity industry;
- To understand the types of discrimination experienced;

- To understand the effects of discrimination on the individual;
- To understand the impact of discrimination on the performance of the organisation; and
- To understand what can be done to lessen/eliminate the negative impact of discrimination.

1.5 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method consists of a literature review and an empirical study.

1.5.1 Literature review

This section examined published material related to discrimination in general as well as in the South African workplace. The literature review involved providing some general background and application of theory to the research problem from which informed conclusions and recommendations could be made later in the study.

Research was conducted from previous literatures. Journals and websites were also assessed. The following sequence was followed:

- Literature on the historical background of discrimination at the workplace;
- The general overview of theories on discrimination;
- Literature review on the effects of discrimination, and different views and opinions outlined;
- Challenges and problem created by discrimination are re-assessed; and
- A detailed review of the main themes emanating from past research in relation to discrimination at the workplace.

1.5.2 Empirical study

1.5.2.1 Research design

The qualitative method was used in the execution of this research to extract themes or generalisations from evidence and organising data to present a coherent, consistent picture. Qualitative research is a method in which direct and unstructured interviews are used. The researcher interacts, they get to know the people being studied, and they may conduct informal interviews (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

1.5.2.2 Study Sample

Sampling is concerned with accessing and selecting respondents for a research study. In the present study, purposive sampling was used for a selection of the respondents. Non-probability sampling is the most appropriate sampling method to be used for the research. This method is applied for the reason that not all employees within the population have an equal opportunity of being selected. Some members have no chance at all of being selected as part of the sample (Welman & Kruger, 2003). Purposive sampling is applied in the sampling methods as the researcher uses his or her own judgement about which respondents to choose, and picks only who best meet the required criteria. Convenience or haphazard sampling is another sample design used as it involves selecting haphazardly those cases that are easiest to obtain for the sample (Welman & Kruger, 2003).

For this study, the target population was all full-time staff in the industry and it included 50 participants, both male and female, black and white who are knowledgeable in the subject. These were: The Assistant Technical Officials who are normally called technicians, in different levels and grades, the administrators, engineers and management. This study focused on some of the Distribution centres of electricity industries. The centres are located in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. The labour force comprises managerial, technical and engineering administrative staff. The industry is culturally diverse, not only in nationality, but also in its employee base with regard to race, gender, culture, lifestyle, age, disability and sexual orientation. The Distribution Division's core functions are:

- The sale of electricity to the domestic, industrial and commercial market including mining customers;
- Customer services functions;
- Electricity billing services; and
- Revenue collection.

1.5.2.3 Data collection method

Data was collected by means of unstructured interview schedules that were individually administered to respondents by the researcher. The interview schedules consisted of open-ended and closed-ended questions. The purpose of the questions and interviews was to develop a coherent and complete picture of employees' challenges faced on the basis of discrimination. Questions dealing with discrimination were based on the work of other researchers who have explored the same topic.

1.5.3 Analysis of data

The researcher used the unstructured interview method on employees which are based on predetermined and standardised answers. Unstructured interviews were used on the participants to explore in depth the intensity of the problem at hand. The recorded contents of the interviews were transcribed word-by-word by the researcher so that information gathered could be analysed. The data collected were analysed quantitatively and descriptively. Data are presented in tables and discussions. The following steps (Giorgi, 1997) of the qualitative methods were followed for the analysis of data.

- Collecting of verbal data: Data were collected by means of interviews and questions.
- The reading of the data: Data were read thoroughly before beginning any analysis.
- Organisation and expression of raw data: Data were examined, probed and re-described.
- Expressing the structure of the phenomena: This step determined the data essential for the phenomenon studied.

1.5.4 Research procedure

The interviews were done during a normal working day. Permission was requested from the management to make use of their staff during this research. Appropriate slots were identified during working hours, while the participants worked at the Distribution Centres in their normal work environment, and therefore constituted a field condition study.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study were the following:

- The selection of the population randomly out of 50 employees was not an adequate representation of full-time staff and not representative of the electricity industry.
- The qualitative method of research is based on individual opinions and perceptions, which differs from person to person.
- The limited knowledge around the subject of discrimination and its effects amongst the employees made it difficult to get accurate answers, as it is defined differently by the older staff as some of the acts were perceived as norms.
- Setting up and honouring of appointments with the managers and their Senior Supervisors were difficult, because of their busy work schedules and with the technicians who are working in the field.

1.7 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 2 – Literature review

Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature and establishes the foundation of the dissertation. It also reviews in detail existing theoretical paradigms on the research topic of discrimination, specifically on the role of the effects of discrimination in the electricity industry. A review on the previous literature from other researchers who worked on discrimination is done with a view to seek some tentative guidelines and possible solutions to the research problem.

Chapter 3 – Research methodology

Chapter 3 provides the research methodology in which the methods and procedures are stated. It also includes sampling methods, the research design, data collection and measuring instruments used.

Chapter 4 – Research findings

The results obtained from the research are presented, interpreted and analysed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions and recommendations

Finally, a conclusion of the study is drawn by summarising the literature review and the results of the empirical research. The conclusion aims to present a response to the problem statement and objectives as defined in Chapter 1. The recommendations to the management of the electricity industry are made in this chapter, with the necessary action plans and conclusion of the research.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the problem statement was outlined. General and specific objectives were set and the research and the methods that would be used to reach the research objectives were discussed.

Chapter 2 examines the research literature related to discrimination in general as well as its manifestation in the workplace.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section examines research literature related to discrimination in general as well as its manifestation in the workplace. Literature reviews involve providing some general background and application of theory to the researched problem from which informed conclusions and recommendations can be made later in the study. It is in the literature review section that the researcher also provides a theoretical explanation of the relationship among variables of interest. According to Welman and Kruger (2003), compiling a review of research findings on a particular topic that have already been published, enables the researcher to indicate exactly where the proposed research fits in. Besides, the researcher can also identify gaps and inconsistencies that may justify further research.

The literature review focuses on the conceptualisation of discrimination, the historical background of discrimination in South African society as well as in the workplace. It provides a general overview of theories on discrimination, and a typology of discrimination, followed by common processes involved in discrimination.

However, it should be noted that there are a myriad of schools of thought and contributions on the subject of discrimination. The volume of literature on discrimination is immense. Thus, the literature review focuses only on the material that provides solutions to the problem being studied and is closely related to the purpose of the study.

2.2 DEFINITION OF DISCRIMINATION

Stone (2004) defines discrimination as any practice that distinguishes between different groups based on characteristics defined in the anti-discrimination legislation (for example, sex, race, disability, marital or parental status) resulting in one group being advantaged and the other group being disadvantaged. Unfair discrimination involves making a distinction between individuals or groups so as to disadvantage some, and

advantage others, in an unreasonable or unjust manner. Discrimination is a behaviour that is prohibited by the anti-discrimination legislation. Discrimination does not have to be conscious or intended to be illegal.

Discrimination can occur when a person receives less favourable treatment than received by others because:

- they have a characteristic identified in the legislation;
- assumptions are made about the person based on certain characteristics (for example, the assumption that a female employee will be unfavourable to work overtime because she has children, or that a person with a mobility impairment will be unable to drive a car); and
- unreasonable conditions or requirements are set (Stone, 2004).

Discrimination in the workplace is when people are treated differently. It can take the form of unfair dismissal or the much more subtle overlooking of an individual for training or promotion. Discrimination can come from fellow employees as well as managers and supervisors if, for example, workers refuse to work alongside somebody. However, managers and supervisors have the greatest power to discriminate against people because of the authority they hold over others (Soko, 2008).

2.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF DISCRIMINATION

Any effort to describe discrimination in the workplace with tracing its roots to the broader society in which the organisation operates and realises its profits would be incomplete. Therefore, the following section focuses on the historical roots of structural direct and indirect discrimination in the South African society to provide a basis for comprehension of the phenomenon in the workplace.

Apartheid (apartness) was a racial policy which dominated South African culture, politics, society, and economics during the twentieth century. Officially established by D.F. Malan in 1948, it had emerged from policies of segregation which had been progressively introduced in the different parts of the country before the creation of South

Africa, and were continued by the unified state from 1910, with the support of every Prime Minister and every White political party. It became a cornerstone of the politics of the National Party (NP) governments from 1948, taking segregation to new, unparalleled levels. Its official justification was that each race (White, mixed-race (Coloured), Indian, and Black (Bantu)) would prosper most if it developed separately. Harmony would be possible through the races living peacefully side-by-side, while tension would result from them being mixed together in the same environment, competing for the same resources (Palmowski, 2004).

Apartheid served to maintain the political and economic supremacy of a White minority, which comprised less than 20% of the total population. By keeping other races apart, poor, and uneducated, the system was designed to prevent them from developing a sense of solidarity and demanding the same rights and benefits which the Whites enjoyed from South Africa's natural wealth and industrialisation. The enactment of apartheid was made possible through the 1950 Population Registration Act, which made compulsory the carrying of a pass to identify the racial group of each holder (Population Registration Act, 1950).

In 1951, the Bantu Authorities Act was the first of a series of acts designed to create separate and distinct areas in which Blacks would live separately, without intruding into White neighbourhoods (Bantu Authorities Act, 1951). The 1952 Native Law Amendment Act established the close control of the movement of urban Blacks in particular. The 1953 Bantu Education Act for the first time created a national education system for Blacks. Yet, through taking education away from the independent churches this increased state control over Blacks, providing inferior education to prepare Blacks for an inferior role in apartheid society (Native Law Amendment Act, 1952). Discrimination in the workplace was enhanced, and sexual relationships between whites and non-whites were forbidden. In 1953, 'petty apartheid' began, whereby public amenities (restaurants, lavatories, beaches, post offices, and more) were set apart for Whites. This was relaxed and gradually abolished under J.B. Vorster and P. W. Botha. Apartheid itself, however, did not come to an end until 1993, after a referendum in the previous year in which two-thirds of White South Africans approved its abolition. This was caused by a combination

of the protest of the Black majority, international isolation, and the burden of a vast security apparatus on the resources of a White minority whose relative size was declining. In 1996, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to deal with the moral and social effects of apartheid (Palmowski, 2004). Bishop D. Tutu called on all South Africans to end emergency rule and dismantle apartheid, release political prisoners, allowed the return of political exiles and he began dialogue with the authentic representatives of black South Africans.

As part of affirmative action, the new South Africa saw the importance of transforming the workplace to eliminate the discrimination of the apartheid era. The Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998 (SA, 1998) was passed in 1998 and announced in 1999, and was formulated to address the imbalances caused by the previous segregation laws in the workplace.

This Act has two central purposes:

- Promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and
- Implementing 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 workplace. (SA, 1998).

With regard to unfair discrimination, Section 5 of the Act states, "Every employer must take steps to promote equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination in any employment policy or practice." It goes on to prohibit unfair discrimination by stating that, "No persons may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, age, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethics or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, disability, religion, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth" (SA, 1998).

2.4 THE PREVALENCE OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LABOUR MARKET

Women are disadvantaged in the labour market (Stevens et al., 2003). They are more likely to be unemployed, or to be in poorly remunerated work. Seidman-Makgetla (2004) observed that black women are still more likely to be unemployed, to be paid less than men when employed, and to perform unpaid labour. Disability groups remain grossly under-represented. In 2002/2003, out of 12 million who were economically inactive, 1.2 million were people with disabilities. Low educational levels exacerbate unemployment among people with disabilities. There is poor integration into the workplace, for example, a lack of transport that is disability friendly (Leshilo, 2004; DBSA, 2005).

Despite efforts by Government through legislation, equal representation as a result of direct, indirect or structural discrimination of the past continues to be a big challenge for the South African labour market. This challenge is evident from the statistics released by the Employment Equity Commission. The figures below are based on the recent annual Employment Equity Commission Report (South African Department of Labour [SADoL], 2008).

Figure 2.1 follows on next page

Figure 2.1: Economically Active Population (SADoL, 9th CEE Annual Report 2008/2009)

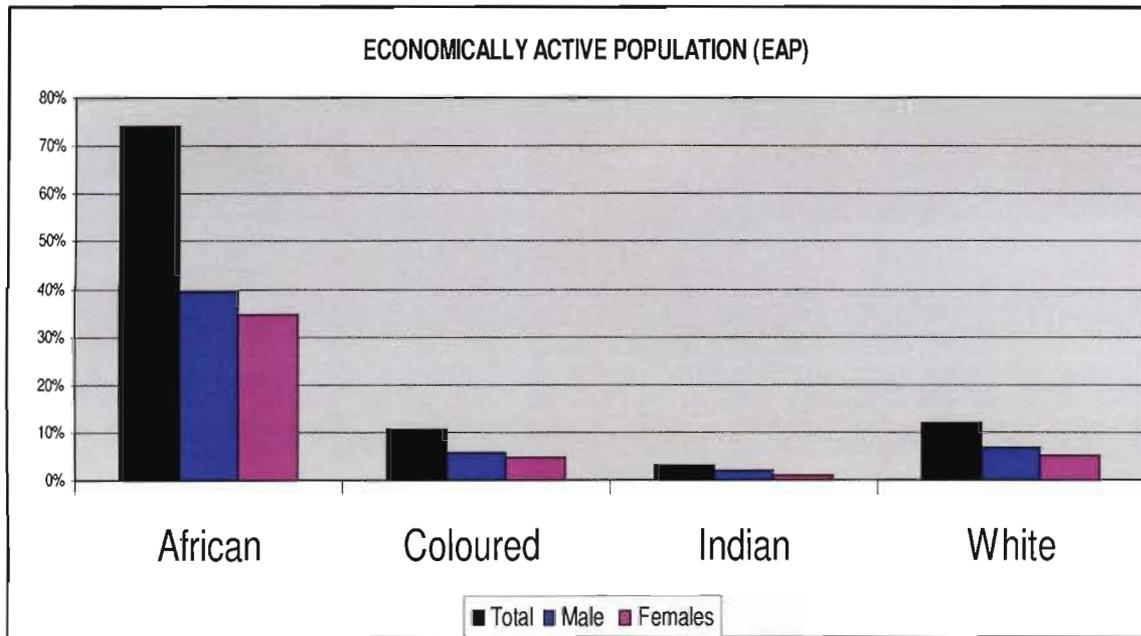


Figure 2.2: Top management (SADoL, 9th CEE Annual Report 2008/2009)

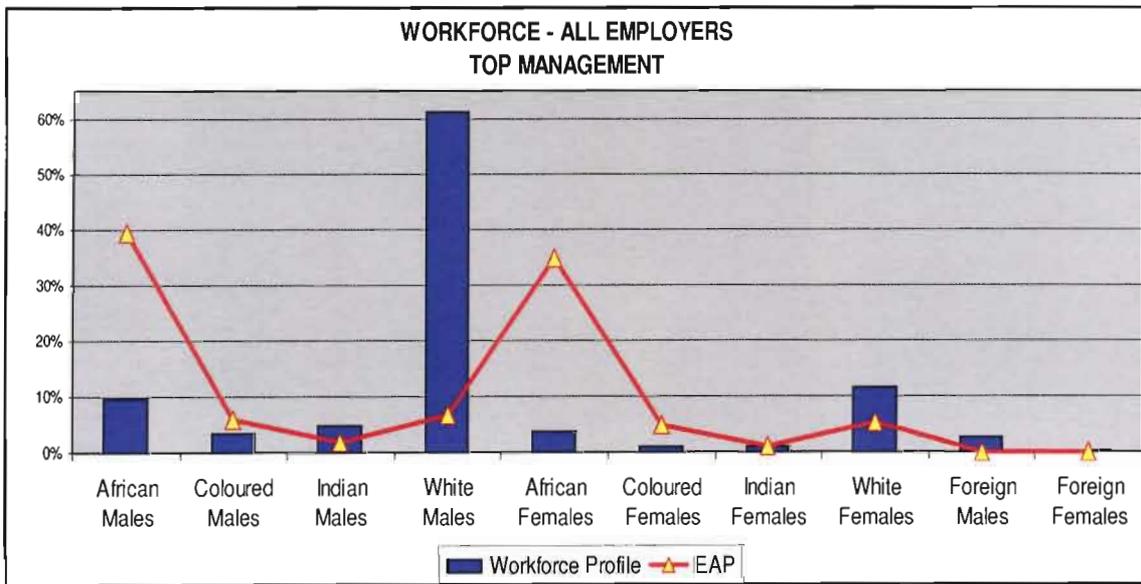
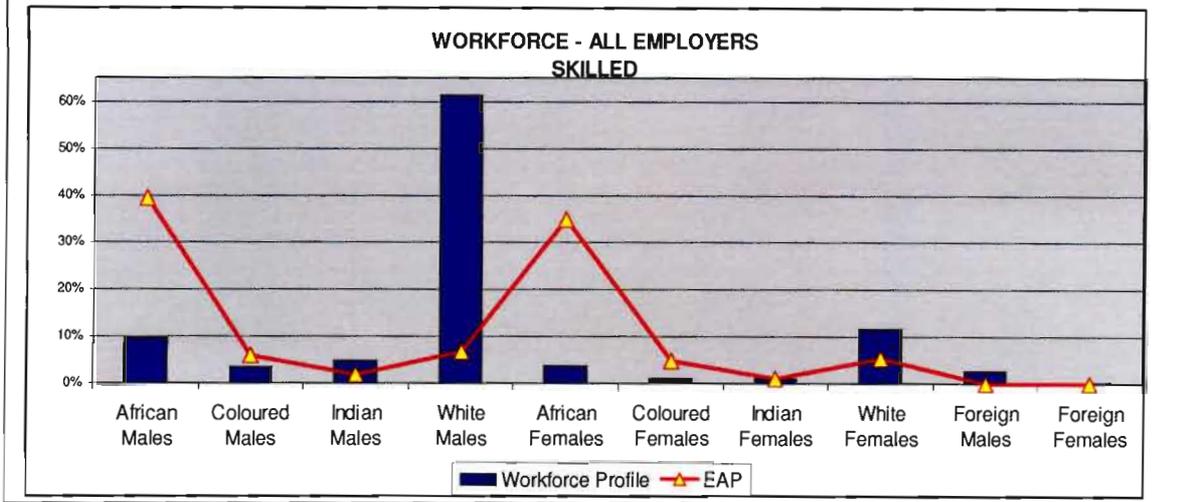


Figure 2.3: Skilled workforce (SADoL, 9th CEE Annual Report 2008/2009)



Close inspection of these figures indicate that Blacks form the majority of the labour market and represents demographic profile of the country. However, the principle of the demographic representativity is not evident from the filling of top management positions. It seems from the data that positions for top management are still being occupied by White males. Africans constitute the majority in the professionally qualified and skilled levels; however, this majority is not carried through proportionately to the higher levels (South African Department of Labour [SADoL], 2008).

2.5 ELECTRICITY UTILITY: WORKFORCE PROFILE

The electricity utility employs 29 456 employees and encourages them to develop their potential through training. The utility has supported the objectives of the Employment Equity Act since 1994. It continues to make progress towards promoting and appointing people from the designated groups to ultimately reflect the demographic profiles of the country in the long term (Electricity utility, 2008). Being a multinational utility, the researched organisation proclaims a progressive approach to promoting diversity; yet, positive effects in this regard are not reflected in its workforce profile. Here the designated employees are distinctly in the minority and White males and White females still fill most of the senior positions.

Table 2.1: Electricity Utility: Workforce Profile

Occupational Categories	Male				Female				Total
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	African	Coloured	Indian	White	
Legislators, senior officials and managers	330	82	125	643	101	25	35	105	1446
Professionals	768	163	184	1154	469	120	84	447	3389
Technicians and associate professionals	1243	344	202	1570	393	54	36	193	4035
Clerks	1601	247	36	420	913	249	143	1511	5120
Service and Sales workers	1417	177	4	97	48	1	0	8	1752
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Craft and related trades workers	4309	589	39	2665	92	14	5	94	7807
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	1272	65	5	178	72	5	2	12	1611
Elementary occupations	3157	217	0	0	70	2	0	0	3446
Total permanent employees	14097	1884	595	6727	2158	470	305	2370	28606
Non-permanent employees	371	47	17	89	272	17	12	25	850
Total	14468	1931	612	6816	2430	487	317	2395	29456

2.6 THEORIES OF DISCRIMINATION

2.6.1 Socialisation and modelling

Social psychologists who have been interested in the external conditions that promote prejudice have suggested that children develop prejudices by modelling the behaviour of adults and by internalising the values of the society. Parents, peer groups, schools and the mass media are all sources of prejudiced attitudes. Since prejudiced attitudes are often shared by the victims of such attitudes, it follows that such attitudes are learned and do not necessarily satisfy intra-psychic needs (Brigham, 1971).

2.6.2 Stereotypes

It is generally agreed that a stereotype is a broad generalisation about the characteristics of a group of people. Stereotypes in themselves do not necessarily result in prejudice; they are essential for organising the multiplicity of experiences people have from infancy on through to adulthood (Hamilton, 1979). Stereotype is a broad generalisation about the characteristics of a group of people. Intergroup hostility may be reduced by establishing super-ordinate goals for the competing groups, by promoting contact between them, and by educating people to respond to the members of other groups as individuals rather than in terms of social stereotypes (Penrod, 1985).

2.6.3 The contact hypothesis

Contact between members of groups that previously were isolated from each other, can, under certain conditions, lead to attitude change and a reduction of prejudice. When people interact personally with members of other groups that they had remained aloof from before, stereotypes are frequently disproved. However, intergroup contact does not always lead to a reduction of prejudice, and under certain conditions such contact can lead to an escalation of conflict (Deutsch & Collins, 1951).

2.6.4 Social impact theory

According to the social impact theory, when more people work together, even though the group as a whole may outperform any single individual, individuals within the group are likely to exert less effort. In his social impact theory, Latane (1981) extended the ideas originally offered by Ringlemann. Social impact theory is a comprehensive attempt to account for a broad range of phenomena. There are two main points to the theory. The first is that the impact of a group on an individual increases as the size of the group increases. The second point is that the larger the group, the smaller the impact of any individual on each member of the group (Latane, 1981).

2.6.5 Social identity theory

The social identity theory maintains that individuals gain their sense of self-esteem in part, from identification with the social groups to which they belong. When a particular

social identity is salient, individuals are motivated to achieve positive distinctiveness between their own group and relevant out-groups: they prefer to see their own group as both different from and better than other groups. This low in-group favours individuals that contribute to the positive value of that group identity in comparison with out-groups. Individuals who have experienced a temporary setback to personal self-esteem are particularly likely to discriminate on behalf of their in-group in the minimal intergroup situation (Hogg & Sunderland, 1991). In line with the social identity theory, studies suggest that discriminatory behaviour is related to the degree of in-group identification and the achievement or maintenance of a positive social identity within the minimal situation (Sachdev & Bourhis., 1991). Furthermore, a number of studies provide evidence that minimal group subjects who discriminated had higher self-esteem than those who did not (Chin & McClintock, 1993). However, the theory does not suggest that intergroup discrimination is the only means of achieving a positive social identity and lays down specific conditions for predicting when this will occur (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

2.6.6 Social distance

Social behaviours differ in terms of the degree of intimacy they imply. In today's society, for instance, working in the same office or riding on the same bus are relatively impersonal, non-intimate social relationships. Belonging to the same social club, sharing meals, and engaging in personal self-disclosure are progressively more intimate forms of interaction. The concept of social distance refers to the level of intimacy of social interaction that individuals find acceptable between themselves and members of particular social categories. The development of measures of social distance was initiated by the publication in 1933 of the Bogardus Social Distance Scale, used to assess the degree of prejudice towards various racial and ethnic groups in the United States of America (Bogardus, 1933).

2.6.7 Realistic conflict theory

The realistic conflict theory is essentially an economic theory of intergroup behaviour that is based upon three central assumptions about human behaviour. First, it is assumed that people are selfish and will try to maximise their own rewards. Second,

conflict is assumed to be the outcome of incompatible group interests. Third, it is assumed, sometimes explicitly, that the social psychological aspects of intergroup behaviour are not determinants of, but, rather, are mainly determined by, the compatibility or incompatibility of group interests (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994).

2.7 TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

There are three types of discrimination namely direct, indirect and structural or systematic.

2.7.1 Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when irrelevant criteria exclude a person from an employment opportunity. It refers to any bias towards a person based on characteristics such as age, sex, race, disability and more. Direct discrimination is often the product of stereotypes about a particular group. It can be expressed through a refusal to hire, dismissal, providing unfavourable working conditions or limited opportunities. It occurs when a decision or action of one person or group excludes another person or group from a benefit or opportunity, or significantly reduces their chances of obtaining a benefit or opportunity, because a personal characteristic irrelevant to the situation is applied as a barrier (Stone, 2004).

While some countries such as the United States of America, have held that discrimination is only direct if there is an intention to discriminate, recent European court decisions show that direct discrimination may occur even if the employer's motive in dismissing or refusing to hire is financial, rather than sexist. Direct discrimination can only be justified where the attribute in question is essential to the work at hand (Stone, 2004).

2.7.1.1 Race discrimination

Another example of direct discrimination, according to Stone (2004), would be if race were the sole reason why two employees from different ethnic or racial groups were paid different salaries for doing the same job. Blank et al. (2004) used the term race to designate a subjective social category under which observed or ascribed characteristics

have acquired socially significant meaning. The National Academy Study (Blank et al., 2004) used the definition of racial discrimination as the differential treatment on the basis of race that disadvantages a racial group and treatment on the basis of inadequately justified factors other than race disadvantages a racial group.

2.7.1.2 Disability discrimination

Labour statistics indicate that people with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed and paid less than people who do not have disabilities (Dipboye & Colella, 2005). Direct discrimination may even occur in a downsizing situation if management decides to first terminate the employment of people with disabilities because they can always collect social welfare. In all these situations, an employment decision has been made to disadvantage a person based on a characteristic that is relevant to the employment issue (Stone, 2004). It is not unreasonable to require an airline pilot to be sighted and to have specified levels of visual acuity – these are necessary job requirements. It would not, therefore, be indirect discrimination for a blind person to be denied employment as an airline pilot. While the consequences of the blind applicant not meeting the vision requirements mean that they will be excluded from an opportunity to be employed as a pilot, the employer has no reasonable alternatives that would allow a blind person to be employed as a pilot. Research suggests that the accommodations required to allow people with disabilities to work competently and effectively are often low cost (Stone, 2004).

2.9.1.3 Gender discrimination

Direct discrimination based on gender can also be presumed from outcomes. Assume a company has hired only men as management trainees yet half the applicants for these positions were women, all with relevant tertiary qualifications and work experience. This suggests that the company is directly discriminating against women, even if there have been no overt discriminatory statements or behaviours. It may be that the selectors are unaware of their discriminatory practice; they may honestly believe they have chosen the best qualified applicants (Stone, 2004).

There are several ways in which gender discrimination takes place at work. Here are the four ways in which gender discrimination can take place:

- **Direct discrimination on gender:** At times, there are instances where people treat others differently at workplace. Direct discrimination includes acts like a difference in salary based on gender although both are doing the same job, or promoting someone because they are single instead of an equally qualified person.
- **Indirect discrimination on gender:** Instances where people are indirectly discriminated against include examples where a certain set of rules or laws are made which indirectly imply that people of a certain gender cannot qualify those laws or rules. The height discrimination of a number of police forces several years ago is another example of indirect discrimination. All applicants had to be at least a minimum height. This was a seemingly neutral policy: every applicant who met this criterion could go on for further consideration. However, this criterion worked to eliminate from selecting most women, regardless of ethnic group, and many men from certain ethnic groups. Thus, it was a form of indirect discrimination. The height requirement had not been intended to be discriminatory. It was thought that height would give police officers greater ability to control unruly individuals and crowd situations. As it turns out, height is not a good criterion on which to judge a person's interpersonal skills and abilities to control violent or potentially violent situations.
- **Harassment at work:** This type of discrimination is perhaps the worst of the lot since it not only discriminates but causes emotional as well as psychological trauma for the employee who is discriminated against. Sexual or verbal harassment or inferior treatment owing to gender is included under this category.
- **Victimisation:** Unfair or biased treatment based on the employee's gender translates into victimisation at work. This is also a form of employee discrimination based on gender (Stone, 2004).

2.7.2 Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when policies, procedures and / or practices that appear neutral (that is, non discriminatory) have an adverse outcome for persons with a particular characteristic, thus reducing the employment opportunities for those persons.

Other groups besides women can be the subjects of indirect discrimination, for example, substitute persons with a visual impairment for women, and persons without a visual impairment, for men. It is important to note that indirect discrimination can be found only if the person alleging discrimination is required to meet an unreasonable criterion or condition (Stone, 2004). Indirect discrimination occurs when benefits are conferred on the basis of criteria which appear to be neutral but which simply cannot be met by a disproportionate number of a certain group. For example, a pension scheme may be open to full-time workers only. On the face of it, there is nothing sexist about a distinction between full- and part-time workers. It is frequently the case, however, that a disproportionate number of part-time workers are women who are attempting to combine formal employment with child-care. Hence, a disproportionate number of women are ineligible for pension benefits, and are therefore victims of indirect discrimination (Innes, 1993).

2.7.3 Structural or systematic discrimination

Structural or systematic discrimination is the product of longstanding direct and indirect discrimination. A form of hidden discrimination is the product of social conditioning and has become embedded within the system. The system may be both societies as a whole, and / or individual organisations and their cultures. The occupational segregation of the workforce is an example of systematic discrimination. Occupational segregation occurs both in the workforce at large and in the microcosm of individual organisations. Secretaries are more likely to be women and engineers are more likely to be men, for example, both across the national workforce and in any individual organisation (Stone, 2004).

Organisational behaviours that have been shown to have discriminatory impacts in some circumstances include policies, practices and decision-making surrounding jobs and careers, as well as norms, values, attitudes and informal social behaviour and communication patterns. Discriminatory impacts can occur across a spectrum on employment decisions including access to employment, terms and conditions of employment, access to training and development, promotion, evaluation of performance, task and work assignment, compensation, opportunity to participate in

decision-making and termination of employment. The quality of work life, including informal social interaction on the job, a sense of belonging, job satisfaction and personal identity may also be significantly damaged by workplace discrimination (Jenson, 2000).

Systematic discrimination may also be defined as patterns of behaviour that are part of the social and administrative structures of the workplace, and that create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for some groups, and privilege for other groups, or for individuals on account of their group identity. It is patterns of organisational behaviour that are part of the social and administrative structure, culture and decision-making processes of the workplace, and that creates or perpetuates relative disadvantages for members of some groups and privilege for members of other groups. Systematic discrimination encompasses the complex and interrelated pattern of policies, institutionalised practices, norms and values that perpetuate exclusionary structures and relationships of power and opportunity within organisations and labour markets. At the level of the workplace, systematic discrimination may be embedded in decisions affecting access to employment, compensation, promotion, performance appraisal, quality of work life, work-family relationships and terminations. The analysis of systematic discrimination means adopting a structural perspective on the workplace and recognising the recurrent, patterned nature of some discriminatory behaviours and the processes through which these become institutionalised. Discrimination may be systemic in the sense that there are mutually reinforcing behaviours that perpetuate traditional structures of power and opportunity, and exclude or create disadvantage for outsiders to those structures (Agocs, 2002).

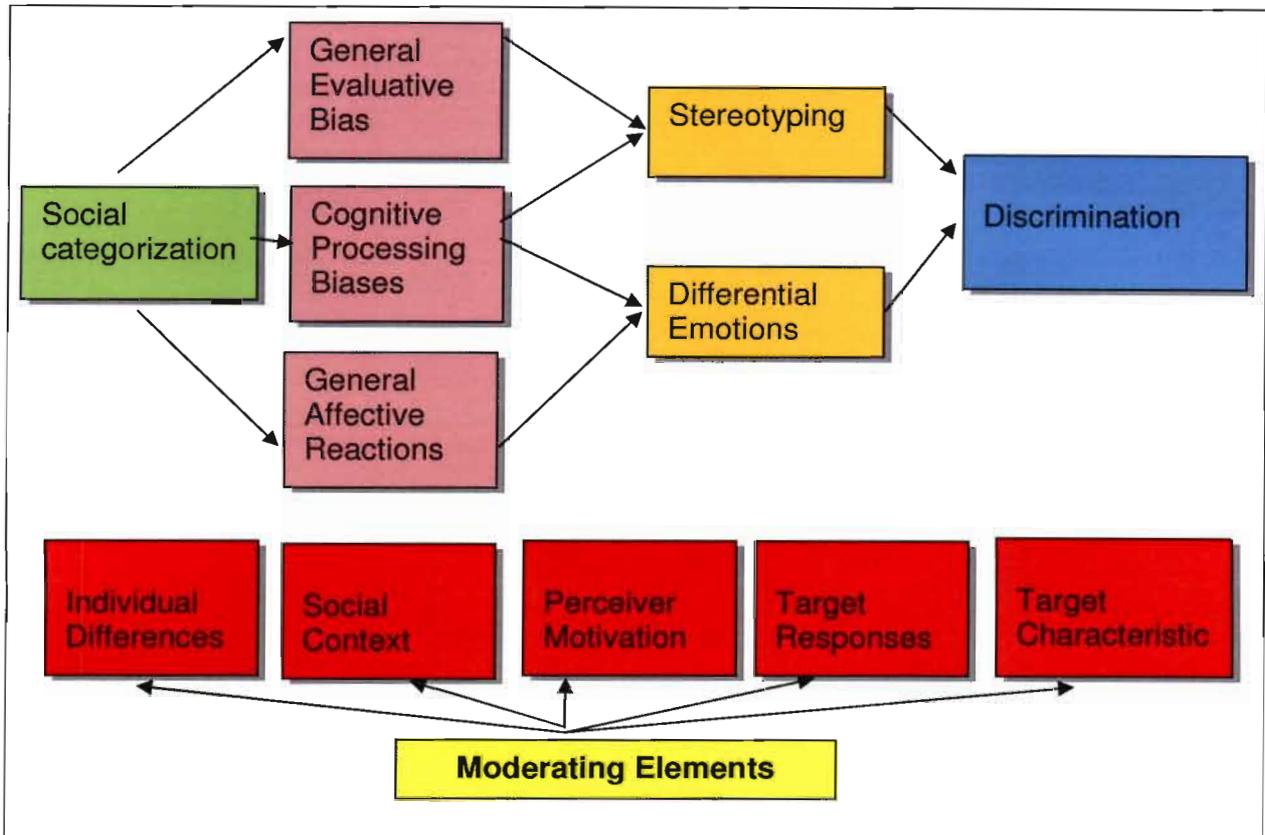
2.8 COMMON PROCESSES IN DISCRIMINATION

2.8.1 Individual level discrimination in the workplace

The key concepts for understanding individual processes that produce discrimination are attitudes, prejudice and stereotypes, *attitudes* being conceptualised as having both cognitive and affective elements. The cognitive component involves specific thoughts or beliefs about the attitude object. With respect to intergroup attitudes, cognitive processes include both the basic consequences of categorising people into in-groups

and out-groups and the types of generalisations that people make about particular groups. The affective component of attitudes relates to feelings and emotions associated with attitude object. Prejudice is defined as an unfair negative attitude toward a social group or a person perceived to be a member of that group. Prejudice serves fundamental functions. Like other attitudes, it provides a schema for interpreting the environment by signalling whether others in the environment are good or bad, thereby preparing people to take appropriate action. *Prejudice* may be reflected in general evaluative responses and may also involve emotional reactions, such as anxiety or contempt. A *stereotype* is a generalisation of beliefs about a group or its members that is unjustified because it reflects faulty thought processes or overgeneralisations, factual incorrectness, inordinate rigidity, misattributions, or rationalisations for prejudiced attitudes or discriminatory behaviours. Rather than representing an overall orientation towards a group, a stereotype represents a particular constellation of traits and roles associated with a group. Because stereotypes operate as coherent cognitive schemas, they fundamentally influence how information about a group or group member is acquired, processed, stored and recalled (Dipboye & Colella, 2005).

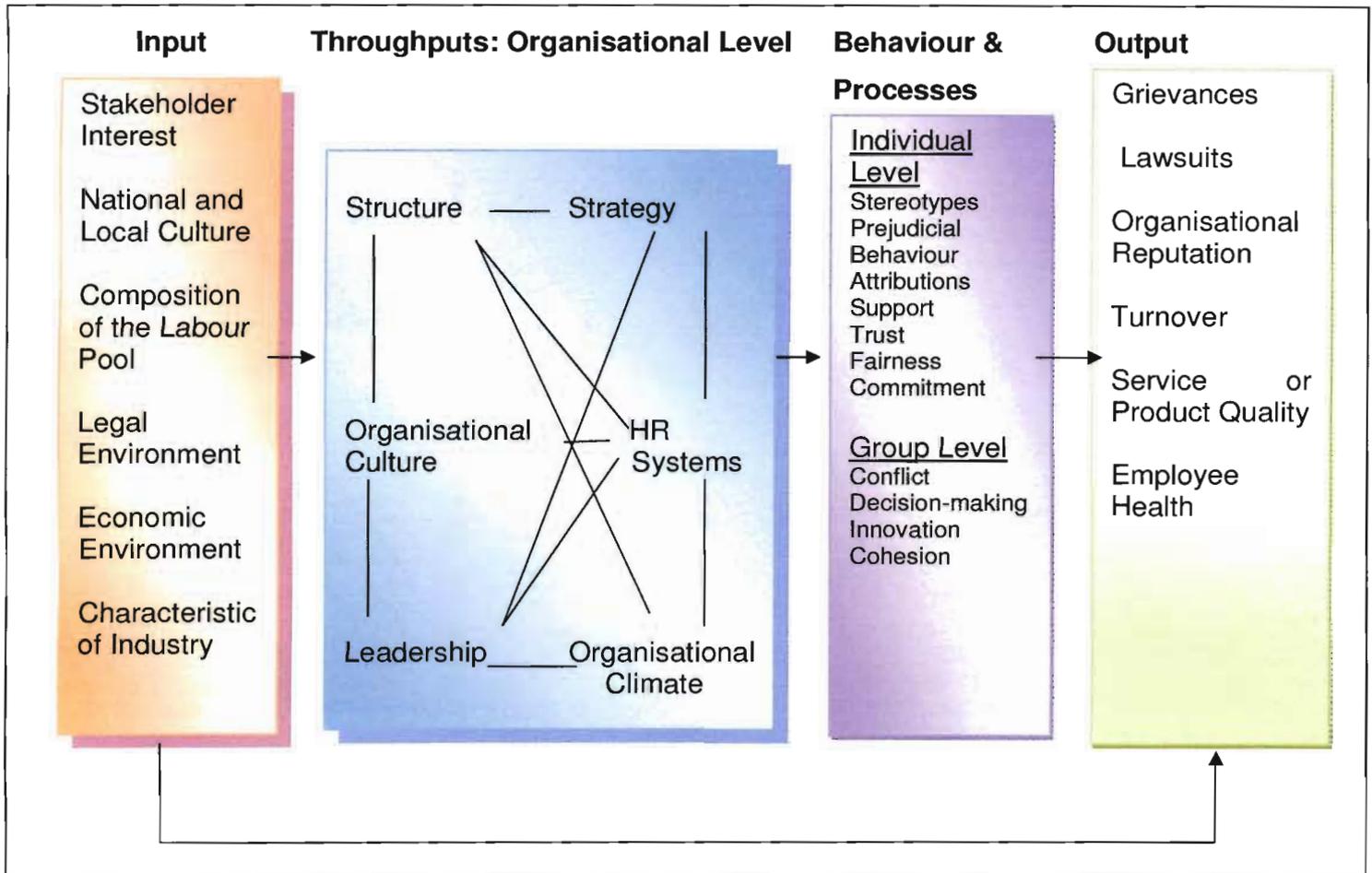
Figure 2.4: Common processes and moderating factors in discrimination at the individual level



2.9 DISCRIMINATION IN ORGANISATIONS: AN ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

It has become increasingly clear to organisational decision-makers that employment discrimination is a serious and expensive problem. The costs associated with discrimination settlements extend beyond the costs of the actual settlement to include negative stock price changes, presumably the result of investor perceptions that discriminating firms may have less talented and committed workforces, high operating costs because of turnover, absenteeism and job dissatisfaction, poor reputations with diverse customers and/or lower organisational adaptability (King & Spruell, 2001).

Figure 2.5: A model of discrimination at the level of organisation



(Source: King & Spruell, 2001)

Figure 2.5 illustrates the ways in which aspects of organisations – including formal and informal structure, organisational culture, leadership, strategy, human resource systems and organisational climates – may contribute to or attenuate discrimination. The relationship between these organisational level processes and actual levels of discrimination is necessarily mediated by individual cognitions and interpersonal behaviours. Organisations do not exist in a vacuum but rather they exchange resources and information with the environment.

To fully attend the implications of this point, an open-systems model of organisation has been utilised to discuss inputs from the environment and organisational outputs to the

environment. A brief overview of environmental factors – such as legal, economic and social environment – serves as inputs into the organisation that are relevant to the phenomenon of discrimination. This exploration is accomplished through an examination of six different organisational throughputs: organisational structure, organisational cultures, leadership, strategy, HR systems and organisational climate (Dipboye & Colella, 2005).

2.9.1 Influence of the organisation's larger context

Organisations as systems function within the larger context in which they exist. Environmental inputs into organisations can have a marked impact upon the types of behaviours, processes and structures that are enacted within the organisation. A number of inputs from the environment into the organisation system that influence the levels of discrimination that might emerge will be discussed briefly. This does not mean that these inputs from the environment of the organisation always, or even likely, yield discrimination. However, what is important to understand is that organisations existing in specific contexts have an increased probability of engaging in discriminatory behaviours because of these contextual issues (Dipboye & Colella, 2005). National culture influences the extent to which discrimination will occur in organisations, particularly resulting from cross-cultural variability in the extent to which discrimination against certain groups is codified in cultural norms. In addition, local norms and socio-cultural legacy with respect to prejudice may influence people's propensity to discriminate within organisations in those communities and the legal environment in which organisations operate, affect both experiences of discrimination, and attention is paid to discrimination related issues by organisations and their employees (House et al., 2004).

2.9.2 Influence of the organisation's internal context

The environmental factors discussed above all feed into the organisation, which comprises several interdependent processes, systems and structures. Six organisational level antecedents to discrimination will be discussed below as depicted in figure 2.2 (formal and informal structures, organisational culture, leadership, strategy, HR systems and organisational climate).

- **Structure**

- i. **Formal structure.** The most widely publicised form of discrimination in organisations is the glass ceiling which refers to the invisible barrier that blocks women and racial minorities from advancing to senior leadership positions in organisations (called access discrimination). There is substantial evidence suggesting that women and racial minorities are underrepresented in upper management.
- ii. **Informal structure.** The patterns of interpersonal relationships in organisations also play an important role in organisational discrimination. Racial minorities often lack access to informal social networks in organisations, because participation in informal groups is influenced by socio-cultural similarity or homophily (Dipboye & Colella, 2005).

- **Organisational culture**

Organisational culture can be defined as the set of shared, implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about and reacts to its various environments (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). Schein (as cited in Barnard, 1993) defines organisational culture as the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaption and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to these problems. Organisational culture is a multi-dimensional concept that can be seen as something which may be influenced, changed and manipulated and in turn influence, change and manipulate members and features of the organisation (Kilbourne, 1991). Traditional approaches to eliminating discrimination have typically focussed on recruiting and hiring increased numbers of non-traditional employees, but have stopped short of emphasising the elimination of more subtle forms of discrimination in organisations, such as in an organisation's basic assumptions and values or culture. The organisational culture is referred to as

the personality of an organisation which is typically defined by shared values, common understandings and patterns of beliefs and expectations which are often taken for granted (Dipboye & Colella, 2005).

- **Leadership**

Without the full commitment of upper-level leaders in an organisation, diversity initiatives are likely to fail and thus discriminatory practices are unlikely to be eradicated. However, it is also necessary to look below the upper-most levels to examine the ways in which the behaviours and decisions of mid-level management and direct supervisors may also perpetuate discrimination. At the highest levels of leadership in organisations, top management teams and the corporate board are instrumental in determining the direction that the organisation will take with regard to diversity and discrimination. Whereas top management serves a symbolic function and makes decisions that affect the organisation as a whole, most employees' daily experiences with organisational leaders are with direct supervisors or mid-level departmental managers. These instrumental leaders interpret organisational strategies, policies and practices (Zohar, 2000); therefore, they act as a lens through which employees perceive the organisation. When management fails to punish discriminatory behaviours, employees may assume that such discriminatory actions are acceptable which then perpetuates such acts. The quality of leader-subordinate relationships is also an important consideration for discrimination in organisations (Hiller & Day, 2003).

- **Strategy**

When strategies for advancing diverse employees and creating a culture of inclusiveness are embedded within an organisation's strategic business plan, consequent levels of discrimination tend to be lower. Actually, including Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) as part of a company's business strategy is important because statements of non-discrimination are a very tangible and salient sign that discrimination is not tolerated within an organisation. Publicly stating the importance of diversity as a basis of competitive advantage and

human resource quality fosters the belief that diversity represents an opportunity for the organisation than a problem (Dipboye & Colella, 2005).

- **Human resources (HR) systems**

Human resource practices play a critical role in shaping the extent of discrimination that occurs within an organisation by influencing the access that employees have to opportunities and valued rewards within the organisation (access discrimination) and their treatment as organisational citizens (treatment discrimination).

One of the hallmarks of equitable HR systems design is the establishment of objective or formalised criteria for various HR practices, which leads to the elimination of bias and subjectivity in the implementation of HR practices. It is important to emphasise that HR practices work as a system in influencing the level of discrimination that is experienced within an organisation – disproportionate opportunities or biased treatment in one area (such as access to mentoring, training) can have ripple effects in other areas of functioning (for example, promotions) within an organisation (Dipboye & Colella, 2005).

- **Organisational climate**

The final organisational level antecedent to discrimination in the model is organisational climate. Climate is most typically viewed as one manifestation of the culture that reflects shared perceptions of the organisation's policies, practices and procedures as well as employees' perceptions of the kinds of behaviour that management rewards, expects and supports. One important type of climate that is highly relevant for discrimination is an organisation's diversity climate, for organisations with positive climates for diversity are likely to exhibit lower levels of discrimination because of their heightened sensitivity and commitment to issues having to do with managing a diverse workforce (Schneider, 2000). Organisational climate can be described as the character of the organisation's internal environment. It refers to employees' perceptions with regard to specific characteristics of their work environment (Combrink, 2004).

Climate refers to individual perceptions that are short term and can be easily manipulated. An analysis of the organisational climate provides important information regarding the culture of the organisation, but a deeper analysis of values will lead to a better understanding of organisational behaviour (Bookbinder, 1984).

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the conceptualisation of discrimination from the literature, a historical background of discrimination in the broader South African society as well as in the workplace, provided a general overview of theories on discrimination, as well as a typology of discrimination, followed by common processes involved in discrimination. The next chapter presents the research methodology used for the empirical study.

CHAPTER 3

THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the line of track followed in addressing the research question and sub-problems being investigated. The empirical study is discussed, and it is divided into five steps, namely, the choice of the research design, the study population, data gathering, data analysis and the research procedure. Research methodology refers to the process that is followed to determine and define discrimination and its effects in the electricity industry. According to White (2002), research methodology is a process and series of activities unfolding over time. Furthermore, it is a process that involves the choice of the research design, the collection of data, and the evaluation of results.

Leedy and Omrod (2001) assert that the data that are collected in order to find solutions to the research problem dictates the research method: "The methodology to be used for a particular research problem must always take into account the nature of the data that will be collected in the resolution of the problem." More specifically, the research methodology provides details on the appropriate population and the sample of respondents, and guides in the designing of questions and managing them.

3.2 CHOICE OF RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information. It is a framework or blueprint that plans the action for the research project. The objectives of the study determined during the early stages of the study are included in the research design to ensure that the information collected is appropriate for solving the problem. The researcher must also specify the sources of information, the research method or technique, and the sampling methodology (Zikmund, 2003:65).

White (2002) stated that the research design includes the aims of the research, the final selection of the appropriate methodology and data collection techniques.

The research will be a qualitative research design. Qualitative research design tells the researcher the why and the how of things happening. Qualitative designs are interpretative techniques that seek to describe, decode, translate and come to terms with the meaning and not the frequency of certain phenomena (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Qualitative research is a method in which direct observation and semi-structured interviews are used. The researchers interact, they get to know personally the people being studied and they may conduct informal interviews (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

3.3 STUDY POPULATION

According to Welman and Kruger (2003), the population refers to the study of objects, which may be individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events or the conditions to which they are exposed. In addition, it includes the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make conclusions.

However, the general consensus among researchers is that it is usually impractical to involve all members of the population in a research project because of the population size. Consequently, the researcher has to rely on the data obtained from a sample of the population, which is a relatively small sub-group of individual units from the population, to draw conclusions about the entire population.

Brink and Wood (2001) suggests that an element can be sampled from the population only if it meets the researcher's inclusion criteria. Therefore, the population studied by the researcher was made up of managers and subordinates who were:

- Available at the time of data collection; or
- Willing to participate in the study.

The population of the electricity industry will be divided into two divisions and these are managerial staff (managers, professionals and supervisors) and subordinates for the purpose of the research, herein referred to as technicians and administrators respectively. The research population encompasses all employees in different divisions

of the organisation who are or not subject to discrimination. Because of this reason, the researcher will be able to truly, generalise the findings from the study. Nevertheless, the study consciously focused only on the electricity industry.

3.4 THE SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Sampling refers to the strategy used by the researcher to access and select the participants in research study. Punch (2000) notes that it is not possible to study everyone everywhere doing everything. In selecting the sample for the present study, the researcher employed purposive sampling. A sample of 10 members of middle management was drawn from the electricity industry.

The researcher contacted senior managers of the industry in order to obtain their permission to conduct the study. Once permission has been obtained, the researcher contacted the prospective respondents to discuss the details of the research and to obtain their informed and voluntary consent to participate in the study. The middle management sector was selected as they are directly involved with the employees' feeling discriminated against.

3.4.1 Sampling

The sample had 50 participants of the electricity industry of which 10 are in management positions. It is recommended in the literature that a small sample should be used (Moustakas, 1994). Thompson (1999) also argues that sampling is guided not by the need to generalise about people but rather by the need to select subjects and data likely to generate robust, rich and deep levels of understanding.

In order to judge the representatives of the obtained sample in the study properly, a sampling frame was drawn. The sample studied characterized the sampling frame. A sampling frame is a complete list on which each individual in the sample is mentioned once. Non-probability sampling is the most appropriate sampling method to be used for the research. This method is applied for the reason that not all employees within the population have an equal opportunity of being selected. Some members have no chance at all of being selected as part of the sample (Welman & Kruger, 2003).

The sample design used in this study is purposive sampling. This sampling design is the most important kind of non-probability sampling and is applicable to the study for the reason that the researcher is able to rely on his experience, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample obtained may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population (Saunders et al., 2000). Convenience or haphazard sampling is another sample design used as it involves selecting haphazardly those cases that are easiest to obtain for a sample. The sample selection process is continued until the required sample size is reached. Although this technique of sampling is used widely, it is prone to bias and influences that are beyond our control due to the fact that the cases appear in the sample because they were easy to obtain (Welman & Kruger, 2003).

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Punch (2004) noted that the method of data collection method refers to the tools used to access and to collect data. In this study, data were collected through the use of an unstructured interview schedule that was individually administered by the researcher. Rubin and Babbie (1993) described how structured strategies attempt to ensure that all respondents are asked the same question, in the same sequence to maximise comparability of responses and to ensure that complete data is gathered from each person on all relevant questions.

According to Giorgi (1997), one-on-one interviews have the highest success rate, and permit the longest questionnaires. He further notes its advantages being that is high on costs and that the appearance, tone of voice and so forth of the researcher may affect the respondent. When a description and an interview are used together, the description usually comes first and it is used as a basis for further elaboration during the interview. In general, descriptions are briefer but more organised. Interviews are more rambling and disorganised but more spontaneous. Each has certain advantages and disadvantages. When interviews are used, they are recorded and transcribed.

3.5.1 Rationale of the interview

The researcher used unstructured interviews in the study. It is a purely qualitative interviewing strategy in which questions and follow-up probes are generated during the interview itself. The unstructured interview is completely open-ended in character and differs from other approaches in allowing the interviewee to give their definition of a situation, thereby facilitating a greater understanding of the subject's point of view (May, 1993). The purpose of qualitative interviewing in evaluation is to understand how people in a programme view the programme, learn their terminology and judgements, and to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences (Welman & Kruger, 2003).

3.5.2 Description of the interview

Participants were involved in an informal, directive interview in which questions about discrimination and its effects were asked and they were told that there were no wrong or right answers. The interviewee was given an opportunity to talk freely about events, behaviour and beliefs in relation to the topic area.

The researcher defines reasons that suggest the use of interviews (Saunders et al., 2000). These include:

- The exploratory or explanatory nature of the research;
- Situations where it will be significant to establish personal contact, in relation to interviewee sensitivity about the nature of the information to be provided and the use to be made of this;
- Situations where the researcher needs to exercise control over the nature the nature of those who supply data;
- Situations where there is a large number of questions to be answered;
- Situations where questions are complex or open ended; and
- Situations where the order and logic of questions may need to be varied.

3.5.3 Administration of the interview

The researcher's attitude is very important, not only because it must actually be an invitation for the participant to talk, but also because the participant will imitate the

researcher's attitude (Neuman, 1997). At the beginning, the interviewer explained the purpose of the study to the prospective participants and sought their co-operation. Among other things, the researcher provided an indication of how long the interview or series of interviews would take.

According to Welman and Kruger (2003), the interviewer should keep as much as possible to the previously formulated questions contained in the interview schedule to prevent different interviewers from collecting information that is not compatible. The interviewer's questions should be directed at the participant's experience, feelings, beliefs and conviction about the theme in question.

The researcher defines guidelines to keep in mind when conducting an unstructured interview (Welman & Kruger, 2003). These include:

- **Compiling of field notes.** Notes should be made of everything that is said during the interview. For this purpose, a tape recorder can be particularly useful.
- **The setting.** Researchers should consider the practical issue of gaining access to the setting. This strategy varies from group to group and depends on the type of research.
- **Presenting oneself.** Another decision concerns in which researchers should present themselves to the respondents. Another issue which the researcher should consider concerns wearing the appropriate clothing. These decisions are important as first impressions can have a profound impact on the interview.
- **Trust.** It is important for the interviewer in unstructured interviews to gain the trust of the respondents. This is closely related to the nature of the interview topic.
- **Rapport.** Establishing good rapport with the respondents opens many doors for the researcher and will lead to the collection of valuable information. However, it can also create problems because the researcher can become too involved in the problems of the respondents. The researcher must therefore take care to remain objective.
- **Language and culture differences.** Although respondents may be fluent in the language of the interviewer, various expressions have different meanings in the

different languages. The language and cultural values of the respondents must therefore be taken into consideration.

- **Sexual differences.** Apart from taking language and cultural differences into account, the researcher should also be aware of sexual differences. Male researchers or interviewers should be careful not to act in a paternalistic way towards female respondents, for instance.

3.5.4 Reliability and validity of the interview

Reliability and validity ascribe to secondary data which is a function of the method by which the data were collected and the source of data. For all the secondary data, a detailed assessment of the validity and reliability will involve the researcher in an assessment of the method or methods used to collect the data. Reliability and validity are central issues in all scientific measurement. Both are concerned with how concrete measures or indicators are developed for constructs (Neuman, 1997).

3.5.4.1 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Reliability, on the other hand, is the extent to which a measuring device is consistent in measuring whatever it measures.

Welman and Kruger (2003) assert that validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores, while reliability specifically refers to the extent to which an individual scores nearly the same in repeated measurements as indicated by a high reliability coefficient. Saunders et al. (2000) advise that to ensure that the data collected will enable the research questions to be answered and the objectives achieved, the following process may be followed:

- Decide whether the main outcome of the research is descriptive or explanatory;
- Subdivide each research question or objective into more specific investigative questions about which data are to be gathered;
- Identify the variables about which data to be collected to answer each investigative question (attitude, belief, behaviour and attribute); and

- Establish how to measure the data for each variable.

3.5.4.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of scores. Reliability refers to the strength of the shared systematic variance, usually conceptualised as some statistical association, between a theorised entity and an overt indicator of that theorised entity. One response to the issue of reliability is that the findings from using non-standardised research methods are not necessarily intended to be repeatable since it reflects reality at the time of collection, in a situation which may be subject to change. The assumption behind this type of research is that the circumstances to be explored are complex and dynamic. The values of using this non-standardised approach are derived from the flexibility that the researcher may use to explore the complexity of the topic (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:114).

3.6 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Analysis of data is the process used by the researcher to find meaning in the data collected. Data gathered in the present study were analysed quantitatively and descriptively. Thereafter, the findings were summarised in tables and discussion formats. Neuman (1997) explained that analysis of data provides a condensed picture of all data gathered. He noted further that the use of tables clearly facilitates the display of evidence collected by the researcher.

The previous section looked at how data are collected. Ideally, once data have been collected, one has to analyse it in order to obtain results of the research. Data analysis is the process of reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries and looking for patterns (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Huysamen (1994) stated that before data can be analysed it should be defined clearly.

- **Step 1.** The universe of the content that has to be analysed is defined and categorised. Categorisation is perhaps the most important part of the analysis because it is a reflection of the theory, hypothesis or feelings being tested.
- **Step 2.** Units of analysis are determined. Five major units of analysis are used namely, words, themes, characters, space and time measures and items with the

word being the smallest unit. A theme is often a sentence, or a proposition about something. Themes are combined into sets of themes.

- **Step 3.** Quantification of the units through assigning numbers to the objects of the analysis. The reason for this is if the material is not representative, or if the category items are relatively infrequent, generalisation from statistics calculated would be invalid.

The study investigated discrimination and its effects, for instance:

- The prevalence of discrimination;
- The typology of discrimination;
- The effects of discrimination;
- The psychological impact of discrimination on the employees; and
- The impact of discrimination on the performance of the industry.

3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The employees who were selected for the interviews were not available. There were fewer respondents from the organisations than intended and this affected the results accordingly. Some respondents were reluctant to elaborate on some of the open-ended questions, and as a result, the data were not complete and it affected generalised findings. The level of literacy shown on the records of employees did not correlate with the real literacy level of the employees. Some of the employees could not respond very well with the questions and the researcher had to assist by explaining where they did not understand.

3.8 PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

De Vos et al. (1998) explained that respondents have a right to privacy (information that is normally not intended for others to observe or analyse) and confidentiality. Privacy is the ability to control known information about oneself and confidentiality promotes privacy by preventing the spread of privileged information that would violate privacy (Discovery Institute, 2005). Singleton in De Vos et al. (1998) explained that the right to privacy is the individual's right to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent his

or her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour will be revealed. Protecting this right is a way of respect given to the respondent. In this study, only the researcher had access to data gathered from individual respondents. After completion of the study, all raw data will be destroyed. The dissemination of findings will be given to the participating organisations to report the findings.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored and justified the research methodology that was employed in the study. The units of analysis that were used were specified and the reason for choosing them was explained. The section described the type of research design that was applied, and operationalised the variables included in the proposed evaluation under data collection. The following chapter will present and interpret the results obtained from the interviews.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is to present data that were obtained from the respondents. Data analysis is the process of reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries and looking for patterns (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Data will be presented descriptively using grouped data and frequency distribution tables and discussions. The use of descriptive statistics summarises the characteristics of the sample. This process helps to get the full picture as accurately as possible. Frequency distribution is used to describe the number of time the values of a variable occur in a sample.

This study aimed to cover 50 respondents, but only 33 respondents were accessed. This chapter is divided into five sections. Section A is the demographics of the respondents, Section B is the prevalence of discrimination, Section C is the type of discrimination the respondents have experienced, Section D is the effects of discrimination on the individual, and Section E is the impact of discrimination on the performance of the organisation. The findings of this study are based on the respondents' perceptions.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS DATA

Table 4.1: Gender of respondents

Gender	No. of respondents	% of responses
Male	19	58%
Female	14	42%
TOTAL	33	100%

Table 4.1 shows that 58% of respondents were male and 42% were female.

Table 4.2: Age of respondents

Age	No. of respondents	% of responses
21 – 25	7	22%
26 – 30	4	12%
31 – 35	10	30%
36 – 40	0	0%
41 – 45	8	27%
46 – 50	1	3%
51 – 55	1	3%
56 – 60	0	0%
61 – 65	1	3%
TOTAL	33	100%

In terms of the above table, 64% of respondents were between the age of 21 and 35, 30% between 36 and 40, only 9% between 41 and 65.

Table 4.3: Race of respondents

Race	No. of respondents	% of responses
White	10	30%
Black	23	70%
TOTAL	33	100%

Table 4.3 indicates that 34% of the sample, were White respondents and 66% Blacks.

Table 4.4: Tenure of respondents

Tenure	No. of respondents	% of responses
1 – 5	12	37%
6 – 10	10	30%
11 – 15	0	0%
16 – 20	4	12%
21 – 25	4	12%
26 – 30	3	9%
TOTAL	33	100%

From the table above, it is evident that there were 67% of the respondents with between 1 and 10 years tenure in the organisation.

Table 4.5: Education of respondents

Education	No. of respondents	% of responses
Certificate	19	58%
Diploma	9	27%
Degree	5	15%
TOTAL	33	100%

Table 4.5 indicates that 19 respondents have certificates which is 58% of the sample and 27% of them have diplomas, and 5% have degrees.

Table 4.6: Position of respondents

Position	No. of respondents	% of responses
Admin supports	3	9%
Technicians	17	51%
Engineers	3	9%
Senior supervisors	7	22%
Managers	3	9%
TOTAL	33	100%

According to the statistics showed in table 4.6, the positions of the respondents vary and there are a number of technicians (51%) as the industry environment is more in the technical field.

4.3 LEVEL OF PREVALENCE OF DISCRIMINATION

Respondents were asked if they thought that discrimination prevails in their organisation. Most of the respondents thought that there is still discrimination. Table 4.7 presents the number of respondents who perceived that discrimination still exists in their organisation.

Table 4.7: The prevalence of discrimination

Prevalence	No. of respondents	% of the responses
No	6	18%
Yes	27	82%
TOTAL	33	100%

4.4 TYPOLOGY OF DISCRIMINATION

Respondents were asked if they have experienced or witnessed any form of discrimination, and if so, they should mention which. The majority of respondents (60%) reported that there is still racial discrimination. Some reported gender discrimination (18%) and age while only 3% mentioned the disability discrimination. Table 4.8 presents the type of discrimination according to the feedback from the respondents.

Table 4.8: Typology of discrimination

Typology	Respondents' experience	% of responses
Racial	20	60%
Gender	6	18%
Age	3	9%
Disability	1	3%
Not applicable	7	21%
TOTAL	37	100%

4.5 THE RESPONSE OF THE EMPLOYEES

The aim of this study was to describe the perceived experiences of discrimination as well as its effect on employees in an electricity utility.

The type of and examples of discriminatory experiences and activities. Analysis of the qualitative data on the examples of discriminatory practices experienced or witnessed revealed that three super-ordinate themes could be extracted namely, activities and practices that are related to supervision and management, daily interaction and human resource and employee relations practices.

Super-ordinate theme 1: Supervision and management. Management-leadership and supervision are central elements in securing the success of organisations. However, results of the study indicate that employees experience the certain management and supervision functions and activities of the organisation to be discriminatory. Employees are frustrated by inconsistencies and double standards in how authority, discipline and control are being handled in the organisation. This dimension also demonstrates a strong racial undertone. Some of the responses in this regards were:

" ... My black and white colleagues were supposed to be authorised to work in the field, the white guy was authorised and the black wasn't even though all his documents were correct."

" ... A black guy was fired for breaking a cardinal rule and later two whites were not fired for breaking a cardinal rule and were just suspended without pay."

Super-ordinate theme 2: Daily social interaction. Extended periods of uninterrupted concentration is necessary for those involved in high creativity/precision activities such as software design and programming, graphics design, writing, and accounting. The ability to "be in the flow" is essential for productivity and quality.

But when it comes time to come up for air, it's important to have other human beings with whom to interact. There is an undeniable camaraderie that develops when working within a team. However social contact is frequently coupled with challenges especially if it involves people from diverse backgrounds, such as the case of where the research were conducted. People interviewed revealed dissatisfaction and sensed discriminatory undertones in various daily social interactions when remarks and comments are made that raised one group at the expense of another, as well as in the language being used to communicate. Race, disability and age seem to be the basis for this perception in this super-theme. Some of the responses in this regard were:

" ... the older guys say I don't know anything as I don't have all the years experience and I'm not capable to learn."

" ... the unfair part is when pregnant women are indirectly made to feel less useful because of their health status, by remarks from their colleagues."

" ... being in a men-dominated field and having disability, people tend to be prejudiced even for the mere fact that you got the post you are in, as they would pass silly comments."

" ... there is still the age gap between the older and the younger generation as they don't have the switchover of working together."

" ... other people are not allowed to speak their own language as they are forced to speak either English or Afrikaans."

Super-ordinate theme 3: Human resource functions and general employee relations. The human resource function includes a variety of activities and key among them is grading, promotion, placements, position, appointments and induction. Human resources deal with performance issues and ensuring personnel and management practices conform to various regulations. From the analysis of respondents, the general feeling is that the human resource function of the organisation still requires transformation to address the imbalances and inequalities that still exist. This dimension demonstrates racial, gender and disability undertone. Participants' responses in this regard were:

" ... Certain categories of staff are graded better than others that are even more professional and qualified."

" ... Office clerks are not equally recognised in terms of development and promotion."

" ... I applied for a Supervisor position and later I learned that the position was meant for a female employee."

" ... Positions are advertised only for AA or gender equity."

" ... I was moved from a position due to a medical condition, but when I was healed they couldn't let me go back to my original position and that delayed my career path I loved."

Employees were concerned of the lack of proper orientation on joining the organisation and how it impacted them in the first few months. Employees would have liked to receive guidance regarding various issues. Participants explain:

"... when I joined the organisation, it was some sort of initiation that I had to go through."

Activities of human resources also include managing employee benefits, remuneration, records and personnel policies. Participants contend that unfairness still prevails in terms of race with regard to salaries and benefits awarded to employees. An example of comments made in this regard:

" ... when I came to this division, I came with a salary increment approval, but the HR practitioner was white and he sent me from pillar to post when he was supposed to give me the increase and he ended up not giving it to me and when I escalated the issue to the manager who is white, nothing changed."

Training and development improve the organisation's effectiveness, and imply that the work people do must be enhanced and the continued growth of the company is achieved. From the analysis, respondents experienced racial discrimination in terms of opportunities available for skills development which hampers their career path and limit their contribution to the organisation. Examples of the respondents are:

" ... in our environment, people from different race are treated differently; when my co-worker wanted to apply for a bursary to do an IT degree as we are working in the IT field he was told not to bother as he was black."

The human resources department is responsible to create a culture of fairness within the organisation, with racial and gender discriminatory dimensions exposed to equal opportunities. The sense of belonging and loyalty of employees are determined by the

treatment, recognition and compensation given. Respondents feel that the implementation of affirmative action and employment equity is reverse discrimination.

" ... I just feel that AA needs to be handled in another way."

" ... The unfair part is when pregnant women are indirectly made to feel less useful because of their health status, by remarks from their colleagues."

" ... I was moved from a position I was due to a medical condition, but when I was healed they couldn't let me go back to my original position and that delayed my career path I loved."

" ... Positions are advertised only for AA or gender equity."

" ... Females can have qualifications and not get the positions since they are not males."

" ... I applied for a Supervisor position and later I learned that the position was meant for a female employee."

Effects of discrimination. One of the major problems facing management today is that of understanding what motivates people. In order to be able to control people, it is necessary to understand what makes them move. For some, it will be the offer of more pay and for other higher status, but there is no single thing which will satisfy all people for most of the time. All people are different and have different wants and desires and those motives are complex and dynamic. Employees commented on the lack of support received from management and how it adversely impacted their performance in the organisation. Participants explained:

" ... People will be discouraged and not do their best."

" ... It has a potential of making you feel less valued than others and demotivates."

“ ... It demoralises employees at all times and affects the performance.”

“ ... Lack of confidence at work, confusion of not knowing whether you are doing what is expected of you.”

Employees described the atmosphere in the organisation as impersonal and cold, which sometimes lead to feelings of isolation and instability. The perception exists among employees that friendliness is not a valued norm in the organisation. Some responses from participants:

“... the impact on the black employee was that he was affected psychologically and we were scared that he is unsafe hence he will burn himself out there in the field.”

Employees experienced the overall organisational culture as restrictive, lacking warmth and support. They find the organisation to be extremely bureaucratic, evident not only in the multitude of policies and procedures that are in place, but also because the organisation is slow to adapt to the changes.

“ ... People are less confident with their presentations when they are scrutinised for nothing. People get off sick on a continuous basis.”

“ ... People tend to hate their workplace and wish to be transferred to other departments.”

DISCUSSION

The aim of the study is to describe the discriminatory experiences of employees in an electricity utility as well as to highlight the impact of these experiences on the individual and production. Analyses of the results revealed that there are basically three broad categories of activities that led to the experience of discriminatory experiences, namely

activities that relates to management and supervision, daily interaction between various groups from diverse backgrounds and general human resource functions and activities.

Theme 1: Supervision / Management. To make an organisation effective, management-leadership and supervision is critical at all levels. It is evident that people prefer to be led, facilitated, supported, mentored by example rather than be controlled. Non consistency and unfairness in treatment of workers create a de-motivated work force, which will not support the organisation's goals. Employees raised a concern in the levels of authority given to workers in the same positions, whereby others are entrusted with some functions above others. Evidence highlights racism in terms of trustworthiness of quality of work amongst workers. Employees believe that the application of disciplinary actions on workers prove not to be consistent based on race. This causes a lot of instability and creates barriers between the different races in the organisation. Employees do not feel as though they are receiving the necessary support from the organisation. They find it difficult to know who to contact when they are in need of support and even when they do find the right person they do not find them to be efficient or reliable. This lack of assistance points to a climate lacking warmth and support (Kolb et al., 1979), while the need for more structure can be indicative of a strong level of uncertainty avoidance present amongst employees (Hofstede, 2001).

Employees experienced a lack of awareness and respect for different cultures in the organisation. According to Cox and Blake (1991), employees will naturally prefer an environment that is culturally sensitive and are therefore more likely to be attracted to an organisation if they see their cultural background valued, rather than ignored or disparaged (Iles & Hayers, 1997). According to Peterson and Vermeulen (1999), an openness and awareness of the needs of diverse groups contributes to a positive organisational climate that is crucial for successful management of diversity (Daniel, 1994).

Theme 2: Interaction. Due to diversity that exists within the organisation, it is important to create a clear medium of communication which will be well understood by all. With a clear medium of communication, instructions and work processes can be efficiently

communicated and discussed for best results. Some employees tend to make arrogant remarks about fellow colleagues which negatively influence other colleagues, and can de-motivate and negatively impact on the level of contribution of those members avoiding not to be criticised. Other employees are made to feel less important and ignored as their input/views are not valued and considered.

Theme 3: Human Resources / Employee Relations. HR recognises the importance of career planning and development in satisfying individuals and organisational needs. If the HR department is fully aware of the organisation's future HR needs, career openings and training and development opportunities, then it is well placed to promote career planning among employees. The HR department can do this by providing career education information, vocational guidance, career counselling information on job opportunities and career options, and by publicising training and development programmes (Stone, 2004). According to Werther and Davis (1996), HR can realise a number of benefits for the organisation by supporting career planning and development:

- It aligns strategy and internal staffing requirements;
- It develops promotable employees;
- It assists with workforce diversity;
- It lowers turnover;
- It taps employee potential;
- It furthers potential growth; and
- It assists affirmative action plans.

Recognition is important for employees and they confirm that it is highly motivating when recognition is given where it is due. According to Chambers (2001), employees want to know that management recognises their time and contribution. While money is a foolproof way to show appreciation, recognition through non-financial means also has an impact on employee morale (Manas, 1998). The fact that employees feel they are being recognised for good work points to a climate of reward (Kolb et al., 1979). The value that recognition and reward holds for employees in masculine cultures believe work is central to life and view job recognition as very important. This aligns an

individualistic culture where employees strive for personal achievement and recognition (Reyneke, 2006). According to Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, the recognition received will positively impact the employee's job satisfaction (Robbins, 1998).

Employees believe the lack of a detailed orientation programme is a big drawback in the organisation. They believe better orientation regarding policies and procedures, processes and tools and guidance would have assisted them in better performance of their jobs. Instead they had to find out all these things for themselves. Employees also commented on the lack of structured, easily accessible information in the organisation. This need for structure and guidance points to strong uncertainty avoidance present amongst employees and to acclimate lacking organisational clarity (Hofstede, 2001).

Employees are frustrated about the way their careers are currently being managed in the organisation. Their lack of ability to influence the direction their career is taking is indicative of a high power-distance culture within the organisation. Employees also encounter obstacles in advancing their careers in the organisation, which causes frustration as they are ambitious and would like to see their career grow. This is evident in the diversity profile of the business unit that clearly shows the lack of progression of employees beyond a certain level in the organisation (Lere & Portz, 2005).

4.6 THE EFFECTS OF DISCRIMINATION ON THE INDIVIDUAL

Respondents who believe discrimination still exists were requested to indicate if there were any psychological effects to those employees who were discriminated against. Employees would be discouraged and be de-motivated; some felt that they would not perform at their best, some mentioned that they hated their jobs as they are not looking forward to go to work, some mentioned that employees would wish to be transferred to other departments so they could be away from the people that discriminate against them, some mentioned that there could be accidents happening in the field where they are working and as they are operating on dangerous equipments, there could even be fatalities and vehicle accidents as they would not be concentrating on the road; a few

mentioned that there would be a high level of absenteeism as employees would just report off-sick from work to be away from the situation.

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aim of the study was to describe the discriminatory experiences of employees in an electricity utility as well as to highlight the impact of these experiences on the individual and production. Employees believe that the application of disciplinary actions on workers prove not to be consistent based on race. This causes a lot of instability and creates barriers between the different races in the organisation. Due to diversity that exists within the organisation, employees felt that it is important to create a clear medium of communication which will be well understood by all. With a clear medium of communication, instructions and work processes can be efficiently communicated and discussed for best results.

Similarly, the response to the interviews was also positive and some employees reported that they have not experienced any kind of discrimination or even witnessing it happening to any employee. However, certain areas for improvement were evident and could aid in further entrenching the culture and these include prompt and immediate feedback to employees on issues that they might have raised, more interaction at the departmental level and positive reinforcement on positive contributions made by the employees.

Chapter 5 entails the conclusion and recommendations of the research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The final chapter of the study makes recommendations and draws conclusions on the elimination of discrimination in the electricity industry. Limitations of the study are also mentioned. Recommendations are also made based on the findings from the discussions on the literature review and the empirical study. Future research that could emanate from his study is also given.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The findings are reported in relation to the objectives of the study.

5.2.1 Conclusions with regard to the literature review

- Social psychologists who have been interested in the external conditions that promote prejudice have suggested that children develop prejudices by modelling the behaviour of adults and by initialising the values of the society. Parents, peer groups, schools and the mass media are all sources of prejudiced attitudes (Brigham, 1971).
- Stereotypes in themselves do not necessarily result in prejudice; they are essential for organising the multiplicity of experiences people have from infancy on through to adulthood (Hamilton, 1979).
- Contact between members of groups that previously were isolated from each other can, under certain conditions, lead to attitude changes and a reduction of prejudice (Deutsch & Collins, 1951).
- According to the social impact theory, when more people work together, even though the group as a whole may outperform any single individual, individuals within the group are likely to exert less effort (Latane, 1981).
- The social identity theory maintains that individuals gain their sense of self-esteem in part from identification with the social groups to which they belong. When a particular social identity is salient, individuals are motivated to achieve positive

distinctiveness between their own group and relevant out-groups: they prefer to see their own group as both different from and better than other groups (Hogg & Sunderland, 1991).

- In line with the social identity theory, studies suggest that discriminatory behaviour is related to a degree of in-group identification and the achievement or maintenance of a positive social identity within the minimal situation (Sachdev & Bourhis, 1991).
- The concept of social distance refers to the level of intimacy of social interaction that individuals find acceptable between themselves and members of particular social categories (Bogardus, 1933).
- Overt discrimination has been removed and policies designed to achieve equal opportunities in employment. These policies have been designed to remove perceived barriers which these groups possess when competing for employment, that is, they seek to make women equal to men.
- Apartheid employment practices resulted in distortions in the labour market creating artificial, racially-based skills shortages. In the external labour market, skills shortages remain, requiring employers to continue to adjust remuneration policies to attract employees who have the skills even though they may have been beneficiaries of discriminatory labour market policies.

5.2.2 Conclusions with regard to the empirical study

- It was found that, generally, discrimination still prevails in the workplace and has a major influence on the performance of employees' normal daily duties.
- Individual factors such as work values, principles, attitude, discipline and self-control, motivation and expectation will be greatly determined with the level of discrimination one has previously been exposed to.
- Discriminatory behaviours create serious and expensive consequences for the organisation. The most tangible consequences of discrimination are the costs associated with lawsuits, grievances and turnover.
- With the high cost of recruiting, selecting and training replacement employees, turnover associated with perceived bias and discrimination can be extremely costly for the organisation.

- The reputation of the organisation is likely to impair public awareness of discrimination in that organisation. An organisation's reputation not only influences current employees' commitment and the perceived fulfilment of their psychological contracts, but also influences the organisation's ability to attract qualified applicants and may also influence customers' willingness to purchase products and services.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher set out to investigate discrimination and its effects in the workplace on Blacks, Coloureds, Whites and Indians. However, no Coloured and Indian employees took part in the study and as a result the findings are not representative of their experience in the organisation. The majority of the research participants were male and as a result the possibility exists that the experience of female employees are not adequately portrayed in the findings. The results from this study are highly contextual as they are derived from narrative content very specific to the research organisation. As a result, the findings cannot be generalised to other contexts. From the interview sessions, the researcher noted that some participants were reluctant to disclose their honest experiences on the researched topic avoiding being implicated and incriminated, despite the explained confidentiality of their information to the researcher.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The part of the study consists of proposed solutions and the recommendations for further study.

5.4.1 Recommendations and proposed solutions to the problem

- There are two aspects to confronting discrimination: the first is to recognise the conditions and context that support discriminatory attitudes. The second focuses on the individual: getting people to examine their own actions and experiences, identifying how they have been affected by discrimination and giving them opportunities to move beyond prejudice.

- A comprehensive attempt to confront prejudice and discrimination must also challenge the policies, procedures and programmes which uphold unequal power relations in the organisation.
- Self-development programmes could be provided to employees on aspects such as interpersonal relations, innovative and positive thinking, which could make them sensitive to cultural and individual differences. The aim of the development programme should be to promote positive work ethics in the workplace.
- Review the affirmative action policies in the organisations as it is policy designed to overcome the discriminating effect of past or present practices.
- Revise diversity management programmes to maximise the organisation's competitive advantage.

5.4.2 Recommendations for future research

- Explore the relationship between the effects of affirmative action on the staff turnover and productivity.
- The research should concentrate on the development of an instrument to measure and monitor the continuous need for self-development of staff on issues relating to interpersonal relations and innovations.
- Qualitative research should be carried out with the use of questionnaires on employees based on the secondary objectives identified in this research so that employees' satisfaction can be monitored.
- Continuous campaigns and communication between management and employees would be vital to discuss these issues and make people understand the impact discrimination has on the performance of the organisation.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 5 is the final chapter of the study. It draws conclusions, offers some recommendations and make some recommendations for future research regarding the employment environment, affirmative action and discrimination.

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