



**THE EQUITY COMPOSITION OF EMPLOYEES IN A SELECTED PROVINCIAL
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT IN THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA**

BY

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**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE**

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

IN THE

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

AT THE

CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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DECLARATION

I, Mogamat Yasien Ryklief, student number 207118230, hereby declare that the content of this dissertation, “The equity composition of employees in a selected provincial government department in the Western Cape, South Africa,” is my own work. I herewith further declare that it has not been previously submitted for academic examination by myself or anyone else towards any qualification at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology or any other university. This dissertation is a representation of my own findings and not necessarily that of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. All sources used for the compilation of this dissertation have been accurately referenced according to the Harvard style which is the preferred method of referencing at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Mogamat Yasien Ryklief.....Date.....

ABSTRACT

In 1994 the newly elected democratic South African government inherited a nation deeply scarred by a history of racial division and social, political and economic inequality. The democratic government was determined to create an environment that felt like home to all, a society that welcomed all and a political environment that catered for all.

The democratic government therefore introduced laws and structures designed to promote the principle of “equity.” Although these have been in force for more than 22 years, statistics indicate that white people continue to receive preference over other racial groups. This study sought to provide an overview of the equity composition of employees in the Department of the Premier in the Western Cape government. “Equity composition” refers to the categories of race and gender invoked by the Employment Equity Act in order to promote equality. The aim was to reach a set of conclusions and make recommendations that might improve the equity composition of employees in the direction envisaged by the legislation.

The researcher has made use of a qualitative research methodology for this study. Unstructured interviews were conducted with twenty research participants purposively selected from the Department of the Premier, and the data gathered from the interviews was analysed using content analysis. The study found that there has been an increase in efforts to accommodate people with disabilities. It recommends that a dedicated training workshop regarding employment equity be designed by the director of the people management practices unit and rolled out throughout the department.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise and thanks is due to the Almighty for granting me the opportunity, strength and ability to pursue and complete this master's degree. Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "He who does not thank people, does not thank the Almighty." So the attitude of thankfulness and gratefulness to each and every one regardless of their religion, culture or race, whether they are your neighbor or non-neighbor, is the way to be thankful to the Almighty (Sound Vision, 2017).

I wish to thank:

- My parents Faldee and Lamees Ryklief for their love and support throughout my life. Their guidance, encouragement and perseverance has certainly been one of my pillars of strength.
 - Thank you mother for always encouraging me and for opening my eyes to new possibilities and telling me to believe in myself.
 - Thank you father for always encouraging me to do today what others won't so that I am able to do tomorrow what others can't;
- My beloved wife Faghmieda Ryklief for her undying devotion. Your love and encouragement has been the rock that has kept my head above the water throughout my studies. Your constant sacrifices and support has seen me through the difficulties to success and for that I am eternally thankful;
- My children Mustapha, Thaakirah, Abduraghmaan and Ghaafidha Ryklief for their support;
- My brother Yusuf Ryklief for his technical assistance and encouragement. Being the older brother he led by example and registered for his master's degree after which I followed;
- Prof. R. Hendrickse for her supervision, encouragement and positive criticisms throughout the study;
- Prof. David Cornwell for the editing; and
- All those who took part in this study. A special thank you to the Department of the Premier for allowing me to conduct my research at your department.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In 1994 the newly elected democratic South African government inherited a nation deeply scarred by a history of racial division and social, political and economic inequality. The democratic government was determined to create an environment that felt like home to all, a society that welcomed all and a political environment that catered for all.

According to Roux (2002:418) the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) cemented the path towards a new democratic dispensation. The new dispensation would be based on the rights that South Africans freely enjoy today, such as respect for life and property, freedom of association, freedom of speech, and the freedom to assemble, rights not previously extended to the general public of South Africa.

A constitutional restructuring such as that experienced after 1994 inevitably required the transformation of policies, practices and even structures within the South African government. Transformation in this context can be seen as the need for the post-apartheid government to first identify and secondly to amend all legislation, strategies and practices deemed incompatible with its vision (Roux, 2002: 419).

In order to achieve this, mechanisms such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) were introduced to ensure the effective and efficient transformation of South Africa from the old apartheid system into a modern democratic state. As the backbone of government, the South African public service was to play a pivotal role in the transformation process. But in order to play this role, the public service itself would have to undergo certain transformative processes to ensure that the government was representative of the citizens, and that all decisions were taken to meet the needs of all South Africans.

The democratic government's commitment to the process of transformation was clearly validated when it acknowledged institutional transformation as one of its medium- and long-term initiatives to help implement the Reconstruction and Development Programme (South Africa, 1995:3).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A problem statement creates focus and direction in a research project. The problem statement can be formulated as a declarative statement or as a question. The words of a problem statement should be indispensable, definitive and easy to read. The statement should enable the researcher to portray the problem in such a way that if any person read it they would understand the problem without any further explanation or mediation (Neutens, 2014:17). The problem statement for this study follows below.

From the inception of the democratic government in 1994, clear objectives were set and mechanisms such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme were introduced to achieve the successful transformation of the South African polity (South Africa, 1995:3).

However, the 16th Commission on Employment Equity report of 2016, which incorporates government, NGOs and the private sector, indicates that there has been a reduction in the representation of people with disabilities from 2% to 1.7% from the previous year's report. According to the report, white males are still recruited for top management positions. A major concern of the report is that it indicates that white people continue to receive preference over other race groups when it comes to employment (South Africa. Department of Labour, 2016:19).

The Western Cape in particular, the location of the study, has been described as the worst-performing province in terms of transformation. In the Western Cape white males are over-represented in management positions, despite the fact that coloured people make up 50.2 per cent of the total economically active population, followed by black people, who make up 31.7 per cent (Hartley, 2015:1).

Therefore the researcher was curious to determine why, 22 years into democracy, the South African government still finds itself in the spotlight of the South African media such as the *Cape Times*, *The New Age* and *News 24* (Annexure 1), still fighting to achieve total transformation and social, political and economic equality, despite having implemented legislation such as the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998), the Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995), the White Paper on Affirmative Action (1998) and the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995). The researcher opted to investigate the equity

composition of employees in the Department of the Premier, in the Western Cape Province, South Africa, to determine whether the department was indeed complying with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The above problem statement led the research investigation to focus on assessing the legislation, theory and practice relating to the equity composition of the Department of the Premier in the Western Cape, South Africa. The research objectives of the study are to:

- provide a theoretical overview of the equity composition of employees of the South African government in general, and the Western Cape Government in particular;
- determine if the Department of the Premier's Employment Equity Plan is in line with the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998);
- present its research findings to the Department of the Premier for consideration for possible realignment of its strategic goals and objectives; and
- formulate a set of conclusions and recommendations on how to improve the equity composition of employees in the Department of the Premier.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does managing the equity composition of employees inform and influence employment equity in the Department of the Premier in the Western Cape, South Africa?
- What measures are in place to monitor and evaluate the equity composition of the Department of the Premier in the Western Cape, South Africa?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study provides information for the attention of the chief director of the People Management Planning Unit of the Department of the Premier, by sharing its findings on possible areas for improvement in policies and processes with regard to employment equity. It is envisaged that the research study will benefit the Department of the Premier by passing on the perceptions of its employees regarding the effective implementation of the department's employment equity. These perceptions were gathered through the interviews

conducted with the research participants, in the hope that the department might improve the implementation of equity measures based on this feedback and on the literature reviewed.

The research study further sought to benefit the Department of the Premier by highlighting gaps, inefficiencies and shortcomings in the current operational environment in relation to a lack of communication or a lack of understanding on the part of employees regarding policies and processes. This lack of understanding could be negatively influencing employment equity as identified in the study.

1.6 BACKGROUND: THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER

The Department of the Premier of the Western Cape is considered to be the leading department in the province. The department is headed by the Premier of the Western Cape who has a Director General and five Deputy Director Generals who lead the five branches that constitute the department. The Department of the Premier is responsible for providing support to the Western Cape Government, and its functions are to:

- play a coordinating role in provincial affairs;
- provide a professional support service to other departments;
- provide legal service to the Western Cape Government; and
- provide a support service to the director general of the Western Cape Government.

The vision and mission of the Department of the Premier are as follows:

- *“The vision of the Department is to be a leading department enabling the Western Cape Government to improve the quality of life of all its people.*
- *The mission of the Department is to embed good governance and to enable integrated service delivery in the Western Cape through partnerships, innovation and people excellence”* (Western Cape. Department of the Premier, 2016).

The preliminary literature review that follows focuses on reviewing books, articles, legislation and other literature in an effort to define and discuss concepts relating to the effective implementation of employment equity.

1.7 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

Engaging with literature should be seen as a process of engaging with ideas. Engaging with the relevant literature will demonstrate that the researcher has:

- A comprehensive understanding of the research topic;
- Established an understanding of the disciplines appropriate to the research topic;
- Read enough literature to be able to effectively identify key themes in disciplines appropriate to the research topic; and
- Established who the key authors are in the research field (Trafford & Leshem, 2011:73).

The literature review in this research study served as a method of collecting secondary data so to obtain a better understanding of the topic at hand before proceeding with the collection of the primary data. This assisted the researcher to obtain information necessary to identify and understand the equity composition of employees in the Department of the Premier, as well as prevent the duplication of previous research done.

The literature review for this research study focussed on both the technical aspects of the equity composition of employees of the Department of the Premier, as well as the application of the relevant legislation more widely in the public sector.

The following areas formed the focus of the preliminary literature review:

- Highlighting the philosophical location of the study within public management
 - The research study was located in the field of public human resource management.
- Conducting a theoretical review
 - The theoretical review enabled the researcher to determine what other researchers and authors have written on the topic.
- Conducting a legislative review
 - The legislative review assisted the researcher to determine what legislation governs the equity composition of employees.

The three areas were explored with a view to identifying possible gaps, inefficiencies and shortcomings that may exist within the public sector, especially in relation to the equity composition of employees in the Department of the Premier.

1.7.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

1.7.1.1 ACHIEVING EQUITY THROUGH THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

According to Indiana Business Research (2011), sustainability has always been one of the goals in every organisation, in both public and private sectors, since the early era of the concept of business. Yet the question of how to measure the sustainability of a business has always been a challenge. In the mid-1900s, John Elkington developed a new framework called the Triple Bottom Line (hereafter known as the TBL), which surpassed traditional ways of measuring profit and returns on investment by including environmental and social dimensions. This new concept of led to a process of determining the profit margin of an organisation by focusing on its social, economic and environmental dimensions, in terms of which economic = finance, environment = planet and social = people. The fact that the notion of people had now been brought into the equation for measuring the performance and sustainability of an organisation shows that organisations would henceforth be placing greater emphasis on complying with the norms, standards and regulations pertaining to employment. For this reason, the researcher felt that researching the concept of the TBL would be useful for this research study. TBL be explored in greater detail in the literature review chapter.

1.7.1.2 PROGRESS OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AS REPORTED BY THE COMMISSION FOR EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Since the implementation of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) and the formation of the Commission for Employment Equity, employers have been required to report annually on their employment equity status. The commission has issued reports since 2002 that contain various details regarding the employment equity status of government departments and organisations reported on for that particular period (SA Board for People Practice, n.d:6).

The literature review chapter compares the findings of the first report of 2002 with those of the most recent, 2016 report, to determine the extent to which employment equity has improved in South Africa.

The following section reviews the legislation instrumental in the achievement of transformation in South Africa generally, emphasizing measure aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for all.

1.7.2 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

1.7.2.1 THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, ACT 108 OF 1996

Chapter 2 of the Constitution, which is titled the Bill of Rights, explicitly sets out the right of every South African to equality: “*everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law*” (2.9.1). This clearly indicates that all practices and processes involving the citizens of South Africa should be equal and fair for all citizens (South Africa, 1996:06).

1.7.2.2 THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT 55 OF 1998

The Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) defines employment equity as “the promotion of equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination.” The Act further defines employment equity as “*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*” (South Africa, 1998:5).

1.7.2.3 WHITE PAPER ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF 1995

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (hereafter designated the White Paper) is arguably one of the most vital pieces of legislation to have guided the process of transformation in South Africa. For the purposes of the research study the researcher will conduct a review of 5 of the 16 chapters in the White Paper that are directly related to the research topic, and summarise each chapter in order to highlight the important role that this document has played in the transformation of the South African public service. Information is considered to be one of the most powerful tools and therefore the post-1994 government of South Africa decided to raise awareness among its citizens to enable them to exercise their rights to good service delivery (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2009:8).

1.7.2.4 WHITE PAPER ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF 1998

The core purpose of the White Paper on Affirmative Action (1998) (hereafter referred to as the Paper) was to provide a policy framework for the requirements and standards necessary for government departments to effectively implement their affirmative action programmes. The Paper also highlights the monitoring and reporting responsibilities of those involved in affirmative action programmes. It should be noted that the formulation of the Paper bore testimony to the growing commitment that government was showing towards achieving transformation of the public service to a model underpinned by equality (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2009:8).

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is fundamentally a thought process adjoining accumulated facts and data, which seeks to determine what the facts “say” and what the data means. Put differently, research is a method of action by means of which people solve problems in an attempt to extend the limits of their knowledge. It is a form of endeavor to obtain answers to questions and solve identified problems in a systematic manner with the support of verifiable facts. Hence research encompasses the interpretation of data, which is used to draw conclusions (Brynard & Hanekom, 2006:2).

1.8.1 DEFINITION OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Supino and Borer (2012:10) observe that quantitative research involves the measurement of factors such as morality, demographics and behaviors that have been acquired under specific conditions, by either structured or semi-structured composition and which may be subjected to prescribed statistical analysis. In quantitative research numerous subjects are usually studied, and the researcher’s contact with them is usually very brief and marginally interactive so that he or she can remain unbiased and neutral.

In quantitative research the most powerful tool that the researcher has at their disposal is the use of statistics. Without the support of statistics, quantitative data would simply be a disordered set of numbers. A statistical method allows the researcher to make sense of the data and categorise it to allow for interpretation (Brink et al., 2012:178).

1.8.2 DEFINITION OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Brynard and Hanekom (2006:37) define qualitative research methodology as research that produces descriptive data, generally in the participant's own written or spoken words pertaining to their experience or perception. Usually no numbers or counts are assigned to these observations. The qualitative approach also allows the researcher to get to know the participant through physical interaction. This enables the researcher to interpret and describe the situation and perceptions of the participant in greater detail.

In qualitative research, the methods used include case studies, in-depth interviews, questionnaires and the perusal of personal documentation (such as life histories, diaries and autobiographies).

It can therefore be assumed that qualitative research is usually conducted when one wants to obtain information directly from the identified participants. It allows the researcher to transcribe the data according to the feedback received, provided that he/she stays within the context of the intended research as the research methodology does not restrict the researcher to closed-ended interviews or questionnaires.

The researcher adopted a qualitative research approach as he was keen to hear the experiences and observations of the research participants on the question of equity. He sought to find out about the impact that the transition of the equity composition (from the previous dispensation to the new) of employees of the Western Cape Government had on its employees, and how it was implemented in order to achieve its intended objectives and outcomes.

1.8.3 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is the gathering of data relevant to the research purpose or objectives (Supino & Borer, 2012:132). One of the challenges that a researcher faces is to select a system for both collecting and managing the study data. A well-designed data management method will help ensure the validity and reliability of the data to be analysed. Reliability and validity are key factors to consider when reflecting on the trustworthiness of the research findings.

In order to answer the research questions an interview schedule was administered to management and staff from the Department of the Premier (this will be discussed in Chapter

3 of this research study). The aim was to determine their experiences and feelings about the impact of the transition of the equity composition from the previous dispensation to the new.

This study made use of an unstructured interview technique to collect data.

1.8.3.1 UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

According to Welman et al., (2005:198) unstructured interviews can be described as a process in which the interviewer simply suggests the general theme of the discussion and poses further questions as they arise in the spontaneous development of the interaction between interviewer and research participant.

Interviews tend to be flexible, to allow the researcher to adapt or change the questions as the interview unfolds. Unstructured interviews provide a further level of flexibility as the researcher does not conduct the interview with a specific set of questions, but rather creates themes for the research that will give the researcher the option to extract specific areas that he/she feels needs to be researched more vigorously (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:114).

Welman et al., (2005:198) further state that in unstructured interviews an attempt is made to understand how individuals experienced certain events and how they made sense of what was happening to them. The interviewer's questions should therefore be directed at the participant's experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions about the topic at hand.

This method was appropriate for the data collection in the study due to its flexibility and the fact that the researcher would be able to establish the theme of the interview while at the same time allowing the respondent to raise concerns and highlight key points of their own, without deviating from the overall tenor of the questions.

1.8.3.2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

In qualitative research participant selection is purposive. Research participants are generally selected because of their ability to contribute and respond to the research questions and thereby help provide a better understanding of the research topic. One of the key components of the research is to identify appropriate research participants. The decision to include someone as a participant is based on but not restricted to the research questions, certain

theoretical perspectives, and the knowledge they possess regarding the study. The participant must be able to relate to and influence the study in a positive way by sharing their in-depth knowledge and practical experience. The participants should be made up of various categories representing diversity of population or age group, rank and perspective. Qualitative research does not require a predetermined quantity of research participants but the number of participants required is dependent on reaching a point of saturation (National Centre for Biotechnology Information, n.d.).

In this research study, twenty (20) officials comprising employees of the Department of the Premier, Western Cape Government, in both managerial and lower level positions, were purposively selected to be interviewed. They all had some degree of knowledge about the transformation processes of the Department of the Premier. To determine a satisfactory number of participants, the researcher sought advice from the in-house statistician at the Cape Peninsular University of Technology. She suggested that, based on the segmentation of the Department of the Premier, four officials from each branch would suffice. The Department of the Premier is made up of five branches, so a total of 20 officials were selected to be part of the study. The researcher identified officials on various salary levels, including managerial (directors) and operational staff.

1.8.4 DATA ANALYSES

This study followed a qualitative research approach and therefore the researcher used content analysis as the data analysis technique. In qualitative data analysis researchers often analyse unstructured interviews by means of content analysis. Content analysis can be described as the quantitative analysis of qualitative data. The basic technique involves counting frequencies and sequencing of particular words, phrases and/or concepts, in order to identify themes (Welman et al., 2005:21; see Chapter 3 of this thesis).

1.9 ETHICAL STATEMENT

Researchers in the field of social sciences are faced with unique ethical challenges that researchers in the natural sciences would not be exposed to, due to the fact that human beings are the object of the research. In the past researchers tended to be lenient in respect of ethical matters, to the point of ignoring professional ethics and conduct. Then it was realised that the

proper handling of all ethical aspects is essential for achieving the goal of conducting successful research (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005:123).

According to Brown (2006:114) ethics can be defined in terms of the principles and precepts that guide one's behavior and influence relationships. The primary objective of ethics in research is to ensure that no one is harmed in any way by the research or its consequences. In this regard, the researcher promises to observe the highest possible ethical standards while conducting this study. The researcher will maintain the highest integrity while gathering the data and will only report information that is within the public and legal domain. The researcher will to the best of his knowledge and ability avoid plagiarism and fully acknowledge others for work cited in this research. The research findings will be reported honestly and truthfully.

The research study is considered to be worthwhile and of benefit to the sample department. While acknowledging the rights of all the research participants, the researcher retains his right to report the study's findings, providing that there is compliance with all the ethical protocols outlined here. It is acknowledged that that the researcher is and was solely responsible for the research study, and that he has met the following requirements:

- The permission of the sampled department(s) was obtained prior to the commencement of the research;
- At no time did the research detract from the normal work of the departments;
- Strict confidentiality has been adhered to. The names and personal details of the interviewees are not included in the written report;
- The relevant officials from the department were appraised of all stages of the study and had the right to withdraw their participation and data at any time; and
- The relevant permission of the department to use written transcripts in the future for writing purposes was sought.

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This section will briefly outline what each chapter of the research study will entail.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This chapter has introduced the problem and elaborated on the significance and purpose of the study. The chapter also briefly introduces the research techniques used in the study and addresses the question of research ethics.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes the views of various authors relevant to the topic, while providing a detailed overview of legislation, policies and departmental publications pertaining to the topic.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the various types of social science research, explains why the researcher chose a qualitative research methodology, and describes how it was used.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the data obtained by the researcher, then analyses and interprets it.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter concludes the study and provides recommendations on the transformation of the Western Cape Government, Department of the Premier.

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced the research study and has provided background information about the research topic and the department in which the research took place. The research objectives were outlined and the research questions posed after a statement of the research problem.

This chapter also identified and briefly discussed the research methodology used in the study, identified the data collection tool and the selection of research participants, and briefly outlined how the data was analysed in order to respond to the research questions. An ethical

declaration was made before a concise summary of each chapter was presented to provide an overview of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the theoretical and legislative underpinnings of the study. The literature reviewed assisted the researcher to provide the information which best characterises the equity composition of employees of the Department of the Premier in the Western Cape. At the same time, the possibility of duplicating previous research was eliminated.

Engaging with literature can be described as a process of engaging with ideas. Engaging with the literature relevant to a research topic will show that the researcher has:

- A comprehensive understanding of the research topic;
- Established an understanding of the disciplines appropriate to the research topic;
- Read enough literature to be able to effectively identify key themes in disciplines appropriate to the research topic; and
- Established who the key authors are in the research field (Trafford & Leshem, 2011:73).

The literature review for this research study focused on both the technical aspects of the equity composition of employees of the Department of the Premier, as well as the theory and general application of the principles of equity in the public sector. The review comprised two key strands:

- A theoretical review that will enable the researcher to ascertain what other researchers and authors have written on the topic.
- A legislative review that will help the researcher determine what legislation governs the equity composition of employees.

These two areas will be researched with a view to identifying possible gaps, inefficiencies and shortcomings that may currently exist in the equity composition of employees in the Department of the Premier, and the public service more generally.

2.2 THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

This section of the study will review and discuss books, journals, articles and previous dissertations written on the research topic that the researcher feels best highlight the key issues involved.

The section will begin by defining key concepts, then go on to discuss matters that led to and are involved in the national transformation of the public administration and the private sectors. The researcher will discuss some of the benefits of having a well-balanced equity composition within an organisation and conduct a SWOT analysis to determine the impact that a balanced equity composition might have on the public sector.

2.2.1 DEFINITIONS

- **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY**

Kleynhans, Markham, Meyer, Van Aswegan and Pilheam (2006:186) are of the opinion that employment equity can be defined as the process of creating an impartial and equal basis for the recruitment of employees by an employer. This process should be free of any favouritism or discrimination, and employment equity offers principles for an organisation to practice fair and equal recruitment and selection, ensuring both equal opportunity and fair treatment for all employees. An important factor to note is that the recruitment and selection process should ensure that designated groups of people, those disadvantaged by the previous political system of apartheid (principally black people, but also women and people with disabilities) are given preference to boost their career development. This is in essence to ensure that people whose careers were previously restricted can now develop and occupy top positions within organisations, based on their qualifications, skills and experience.

- **TRANSFORMATION**

According to the Business Directory (n.d.), transformation in an organisational/ business context can be defined as the process of profound change that positions or steers an organisation to its desired outcomes. Transformation in the context of this research study thus implies a process of change that would lead to little or no survival of the structures of the past and the policies that governed these.

- **DESIGNATED GROUPS**

The “designated groups” are black people, women and people with disabilities. A specific group that is often disregarded are white women as they were also disadvantaged by the laws governing employment in the past. These people are designated as those who were previously disadvantaged by unfair treatment and discrimination experienced pre-1994 in South Africa. These groups are now the main beneficiaries of the laws governing employment such as the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) and the White Paper on Affirmative Action. This legislation sought to up-skill and employ these groups to rectify the imbalances in employment of the past. The categories of the concept of designated groups are defined by Penceliah Phago, Maserumule, Wessels, Ndevu, Mahlangu, Mzini, Lues & Dorasamy (2013:55) as follows:

- **Black**

In South Africa the term “black people” is usually used for people of African descent, which includes blacks, coloureds and Indians. In terms of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) “black people” form part of the designated group of people who have been previously disadvantaged (South Africa, 1998:3).

- **Women**

“Women” in the context of designated groups refers to women of all races. Although black women were more disadvantaged by the laws of the past which prohibited them from enjoying certain privileges that white women had access to, it should be noted that women in general were discriminated against as previous laws promoted racial segregation and sexism (Penceliah et al., 2013:55).

- **People with disabilities**

According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (n.d), the category of people with disabilities includes any individual who has either a physical or mental disability that limits their life activities and that would ultimately limit their prospects of being employed. People with disabilities have been previously disadvantaged, but with the inception of legislation such as the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998), employers are now forced to appoint a particular percentage of people with disabilities as employees, adequate accommodation and provisions should be in place in the workplace to ensure their equitable status.

DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Kleynhans et al., (2006:131) define diversity management as a process of eliminating the wrongs of the past. Prior to the election and the appointment of the new democratic government of South Africa in 1994 there was a great deal of discrimination against various groups, in the work environment and elsewhere. People in the groups of the previously disadvantaged were either not employed at all or tended to be employed without training, benefits and salaries. One of the main objectives of diversity management as we know it today is to put plans in place in the working environment and in society to compensate for the discriminations of the past. Diversity can further be defined as the process of ensuring that an organisation's or department's employees are representative of the population in which it is located. This definition can be interpreted as follows: if a certain race group (e.g. black) makes up 60 per cent of the population of a particular province, then it would mean that 60 per cent of the employees at the organisation or department should be from the black race group.

Effective diversity management contributes positively to creating a work environment in which diversity results in improved performance rather than the creation of problems. Every working environment in South Africa is diverse in some way. But diversity management in the context of this study refers to embracing the differences that each individual brings to the table and building on the similarities that exist within the team to effectively and efficiently achieve the goals of the organisation. Diversity management should therefore be used as a tool for the successful implementation of employment equity within South Africa to ensure that transformation can occur without impacting on business continuity. This would ultimately require the support from both the current staff of organisations and those who stand to be employed from the designated groups (Mekwa, 2012:16).

The first research question of this study seeks to determine if the equity composition of employees informs and influences social integration in the Department of the Premier in the Western Cape, South Africa. The researcher will therefore explore in the following section how not just a company or a department but also a nation can be transformed in such a way as to ensure equity in the workplace.

2.2.2 HOW TRANSFORMING A SOCIETY CAN LEAD TO EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Transformation in this context means changing a society from its oppressive and unjust ways into one that promotes peace, diversity, equality and social cohesion. Nation building has been at the core of the government's business since its inception in 1994. To ensure that the notion of diversity and equality will remain an objective of government and individuals the Constitution states in its preamble that the people of South Africa are aware of the inequalities of the past, and that they believe that the country belongs to all its citizens united in their diversity. With the adoption of the Constitution as the supreme law of the land, the government intended to eradicate the divisions of the past and create a society based on human rights, democratic values and social justice. The desire of government is to create a country that is united in diversity, a country in which every person feels equal to every other, a country in which every person can find a sense of belonging and be proud to be part of a nation built on the concept of improving the quality of life of all its citizens. This is embodied in the national coat of arms by the motto: "*!ke e / xarra // ke*" – which can be translated as diverse people unite (South Africa. Department of Arts and Culture, 2012:7).

2.2.3 THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ON THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER

The Department of the Premier is one of the departments that makes up the Western Cape Government (hereafter known as WCG) (South Africa. Department of the Premier, 2016:5-6). The WCG has made a promise to the people that it will provide quality services for all. The Department of the Premier has announced its ambition to become the best run regional government in the world. To achieve this, strict strategic objectives need to be established and implemented, employment equity being one of them. The WCG is faced with a variety of employment equity challenges that include:

- *“Addressing the under-representation of African employees at senior-management and middle-management levels. In most instances there is sufficient representation at the lower levels of the organisation.*
- *Addressing the under-representation of women of all races in different occupational categories and levels throughout the organisation with special focus on the more senior levels.*

- *Addressing occupational categories that have traditionally been gender dominated by implementing skills-development strategies to address the imbalance.*
- *Addressing the under-representation of people with disabilities in all occupational categories and levels in the organisation. Addressing the physical access and reasonable accommodation in the working environment for people with disabilities”* (South Africa. Department of the Premier, 2016:5-6).

The Department of the Premier has in its development of the employment equity plan highlighted its desire and efforts to strive towards a diverse and equitable workforce and a working environment and culture that respects and honors all who work in it and those whom they serve. The Department’s statement that: “This EE Plan 2016 -2021 confirms the Department’s commitment to employment equity and transformation” – is supported by the targets set to address representativeness. Meeting these targets through the implementation of positive affirmative action measures will ultimately lead to a diverse equity composition for the staff. To achieve the targets, the department needs to focus on capacity building and the development of skills to ensure that employees perform at their best. The Department of the Premier considers itself to be the leading department in the process of achieving transformation; it values diversity and promotes equality (South Africa. Department of the Premier, 2016:44). In order to measure the implementation of employment equity the researcher will have recourse to the framework known as the TBL for measuring performance and sustainability.

2.2.4 ACHIEVING EQUITY THROUGH THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

According to Indiana Business Research (2011), sustainability has always been one of the goals in every organisation, in both the public and private sectors, since the early ages of the concept of business; yet the question of how to measure the sustainability of the business has always been a challenge. In the mid-1900s, John Elkington developed a new framework called the TBL which surpassed traditional ways of measuring profit and returns on investment by including environmental and social dimensions. The new concept of TBL included in the process of determining the profit margin of an organisation the social, economic and environmental dimensions, in terms of which economic = finance, environment = planet and social = people. The fact that the notion of people has been brought into the equation for measuring the performance and sustainability of an organisation has

meant that organisations have since been placing a greater emphasis on complying with the norms, standards and regulations pertaining to employment, including employment equity.

The following section will discuss how the social leg of the TBL benefits employment equity and then briefly indicate its affiliation to the economic and environmental legs of the TBL.

Diagram 2.1: A depiction the synergy of the Triple Bottom Line



Source: Tools 4 Management (2016).

The diagram above depicts the synergy between the three legs of the triple bottom line. It is important to note that all three legs include the concept of “people.”

2.2.4.1 SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The social component of transformation measures an organisation’s profits in terms of human capital, which includes the current position of the organisation within society. The social component of the bottom line can be improved / increased by adopting and implementing employment practices (such as employment equity and affirmative action) that are both fair and mutually beneficial, and by ensuring that the organisation is actively involved in the corporate community. It is seen as a positive for any organisation to maintain and foster new relationships with its stakeholders to ensure business continuity. The social component of the bottom line questions the notion that a business could survive longer if it paid its employees less. The social bottom line counters this argument by claiming that a business that also represents a desirable workplace will always be well staffed, which contributes to its long-

term sustainability. Like most public sector initiatives, the social bottom line will be difficult to measure and therefore organisations would have to develop specific guidelines to both report on and measure their social impact (ERA's Environmental Compliance Management Blog, n.d.).

Naude (2008:82) is of the opinion that the social sustainability of an organisation is dependent on how effectively it implements performance indicators that are focused on social enhancement and the development of its staff and the community it is located in. To achieve effective social sustainability management should highlight and understand the importance of diversity and fair labour practices such as employment equity, affirmative action and other regulations that promote equality and fairness.

2.2.4.2 ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Although the economic sustainability leg of the triple bottom line deals predominantly with the financial aspect, it includes various social aspects such as employment & unemployment status, redevelopment and job creation. The Australian Policy and Cabinet Division (2012:22) confirms this by acknowledging that no clear divisions exist between the social and economic legs of the triple bottom line. It is necessary for the economic leg to incorporate matters such as the workforce composition, skills assessment, underemployment and the determination of the status in which employees are employed (either permanent or part time).

2.2.4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The environmental leg of the TBL adopts the stance that the fewer dependencies an organisation has on the environment, the fewer natural resources it will consume. To control and monitor the environment leg of the TBL an organisation would have to report on and manage their waste and emissions. This is where the people or human factor comes into play. An organisation cannot effectively preserve the environment without creating awareness among its employees regarding the concepts and regulations that govern environmental sustainability (ERA's Environmental Compliance Management Blog, n.d.).

Saving the environment is clearly dependent on the human race, and to eradicate old habits and replace them with new ideologies of saving the planet and "going green," an organisation has to create an enabling environment for its employees that promotes equality and diversity

and is not influenced by politics, race, inequalities and discrimination. Staff cannot be forced to practice saving the environment; they should rather be drawn into it by the positivity and encouragement created by an enabling environment. The creation of a longer lasting desire will ensure sustainability more effectively than any initiative driven by compliance factors alone.

It is clear that human resources are an integral part of any organization, and that the contentment of human resources is dependent on factors such as equality and equity

2.2.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF EQUITY TO AN EMPLOYER

Since the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the introduction of legislation such as the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) and the White Paper on Affirmative Action, the human resource environment in South Africa has been fundamentally transformed. The willingness of an organisation to constantly transform itself in order to align its recruitment and selection processors with these regulations (regardless of the fact that they are often amended) is a key differentiating factor among businesses, directly affecting their sustainability and how they fit into an ever-changing working environment. The introduction and implementation of employment equity in the workplace is a means of achieving the goals of eradicating all forms of discrimination. The adoption of a clear equity system should lead to job satisfaction, which should in turn result in improved performance (Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, 2002).

2.2.6 PROGRESS OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AS REPORTED BY THE COMMISSION FOR EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Since the implementation of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) and the formation of the Commission for Employment Equity, employers have been obliged to report annually on their employment equity status. The commission has issued annual reports since 2002 that contain various details regarding the employment equity status of government departments and other organisations reported on (SA Board for People Practice, n.d:6).

The researcher has reviewed the findings of the first report of 2002 and compared it with the most recent report of 2016 to determine the extent to which employment equity has improved in South Africa.

The then chair of the Commission for Employment Equity, Professor Mapule Ramashala, comments in the first report that it has become evident and universally accepted that the process of removing discriminatory laws and eradicating discrimination will not be enough to achieve equal and fair employment opportunities. The Act therefore places tremendous importance on eradicating the imbalances of the past within the organisation by emphasising institutional transformation. It should be noted that there were employers who made every effort to eliminate discrimination by improving the representation of black people, women and people with disabilities within their organisations. These efforts required drastic interventions that would see employers prioritising the development of previously disadvantaged groups (South Africa Board for People Practice, n.d:4).

According to the feedback in the report, this was a strenuous process that required employers to take a first step towards complying with the conditions set out in the Employment Equity Act. This would inevitably bring about a complete transformation within certain organisations, while allowing the smaller organisations to either merge with bigger organisations or simply to grow into organisations of stature now that equal opportunities existed.

According to the South Africa Board for People Practice (n.d), the report for 2002 stated that the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) would not be enough to achieve the task of ensuring equality in employment, and recommended that the Skills Development Act (97 of 1998) be used in conjunction with the Employment Equity Act in order to optimise results. It was made clear in the report that the attitude of the employer would determine the success rate of the organisation. Successful organisations saw affirmative action and employment equity not as a burden but rather as an opportunity. They made a conscious effort to train, retain and advance current staff in their employ who belonged to the designated groups of black people, women and people with disabilities, while making an effort to attract new employees from these groups. Among the negative points included in the report were that compliance was good on paper but bad in reality, that overall companies showed a lack of interest and commitment to employment equity processes, and that, even though information regarding employment equity was available within an organization, it was not easily accessible to all employees.

The 16th report of the Commission for Employment Equity noted that on 1 August 2014 the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) was amended to further ensure the promotion of

designated groups and ensure equality in the workplace. As was the case in 2002, businesses could now either benefit from the accountability process or suffer from defaulting on the amended compliance regulations. A core objective of the amendment was to reinforce the role of the Constitution by facilitating working environments that both promote and motivate employees to contribute towards achieving the goals of the organisation. The report claims that transformation is indeed a core element of business and without it no business would survive in the long run. The constantly changing environment and the need for the use of technology and for compliance with specific regulations is a function of change (Department of Labour, 2016:8).

Another amendment noted in the Report was the review and adoption of the Code of Good Practice on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities in 2007. The Code of Good Practice was reviewed to bring it in line with the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. The adoption of the revised Code of Good Practice shows that government is indeed striving towards creating an environment that is welcoming and accommodating to all (Department of Labour, 2016:23).

According to the Department of Labour (2016:23) the term of the third Commission came to an end in November 2015 and led to the appointment of the fourth Commission in December 2015, its eyes firmly set on achieving fairness in employment. The fourth Commission for Employment Equity formulated the following objectives for the period 2016-2021:

- *Provide sound advice to the Minister of Labour on the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998);*
- *Engage stakeholders in order to promote effective implementation of the objectives of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998);*
- *Conduct research in order to inform and enrich the work of the Commission; and*
- *Monitor, evaluate and report employment equity trends in the country.*

The 16th report indicates that there has indeed been a significant change in the employment environment and that since the inception of the Employment Equity Act in 1998 employers have made considerable efforts to enhance the representation of designated groups. Reporting mechanisms have also improved immensely since the first report in 2002. The report shows that the increase in representation is still mostly at an operational level. The report also clearly highlights the fact that males still occupy 66.6% (+ 1% with disabilities) of senior

management posts, while females occupy 31.9% (+ 0.5% with disabilities) of senior management posts. Within the minute consolidated figure of 1.5% of senior management posts occupied by people with disabilities, we find that the male representation is double that of female. An alarming fact is that whites still occupy the majority of senior management post in all the provinces of South Africa, except for Limpopo, which has a predominantly black senior management cohort. This raises the question of whether these statistics can be attributed to the fact that no black people, women or people with disabilities possess the required skills to occupy these posts (if not, why have they not been developed since 2002?). Is the presence of a white senior manager still seen as necessary to ensure performance and demand respect from subordinates, as was the situation in the past (Department of Labour, 2016: 40)?

The workforce profile at the professionally qualified level for the public sector by race shows that 71.8% of employees in the public sector are black, with Africans being the most represented, yet the same report indicates that 51.8% of senior management posts are occupied by the whites. This indicates that employers are recruiting black people at the lower levels within organisations (Department of Labour, 2016:29).

The chairperson of the Commission for Employment Equity stated that the 16th report was compiled on the basis of data received from compliant organisations in accordance with the annual obligations set out by the Employment Equity Act. The report reflects the returns of the companies registered on the 2015 employment equity public register and depicts the rate of transformation in the country. The chairperson is of the opinion that the amendments made to the legislation were instrumental in the transformation rate, as penalties have been introduced for organisations who are non-compliant. Organisations are urged to comply with regulations to allow the Commission for Employment Equity to draw accurate conclusions regarding the effort the country has made to ensure equal opportunities for all (Department of Labour, 2016:8).

The history of the country and the sensitivity surrounding employment equity give rise to concern regarding the ethical conduct of those involved in the process of enforcing employment equity. It is therefore important to note that introducing new legislation or managing change in the workplace has an impact on employee productivity. It is therefore recommended that management constantly review policies governing human resources to

ensure that the organisation is centered and sensitive toward diversity and historical discrimination (Scielo, 2009).

2.2.7 EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AND ETHICS

With the introduction and enforcement of legislation governing employment equity, departments of human resources have had to take charge of and responsibility for the processes that govern transformation and employment equity within their work environments. The topic of equity always evokes sensitivity and nervousness, given the history of the country in which one would want to question the morals of human resource professionals and their ethical conduct. The public and private sectors should ensure that all human resources professionals act in accordance with the standards set out by the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998). It is important that human resources professionals are encouraged to adopt and implement these standards in spirit as well as professionally, which would assist with the eradication of the challenges being experienced in the efficient and effective implementation of employment equity. In order for any human resources department to lead the process of transformation it should itself be transformed, and its officials properly trained in all legal regulations, including employment practices and organisational development processes and design (SA Board for People Practice, n.d :23).

2.2.8 SWOT ANALYSIS OF TRANSFORMING THE EQUITY COMPOSITION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The researcher has chosen to undertake a SWOT analysis of transforming the equity composition of the public sector, with the aim of identifying the potential benefits verses the complications resulting from transformation.

A SWOT analyses in the context of this study can be described as a tool to help determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in respect of transforming the equity composition of the public sector. A SWOT analysis's main objective is to assist the organisation in developing a broad perspective on all the factors that need to be considered. It is not advisable to make decisions on matters without looking at them from every angle. A SWOT analysis is usually conducted during the strategic planning process. A SWOT analysis can also be used to determine the inefficiencies of an organisation so as to improve business standards. The results are often depicted in a two-by-two table that allows for easy analysis (Tech Target, 2016).

The table below presents a SWOT analysis conducted by the researcher of the existing practices of the Department of the Premier, suggesting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in transforming the equity composition of the department:

TABLE 2.1: SWOT analyses of the Department of the Premier

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good governance practices that conform to the norms and standards set out by legislation; • Institutional stability; • “On the map” globally as a diverse democratic government; • Developed public administration that has staff who are fit for purpose in terms of both qualifications and experience without any form of nepotism or discrimination; and • Solid recruitment and selection processors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of job creation strategies to counter the high unemployment rates of the province, including those who have been previously disadvantaged.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an open society for all; • Leverage outside stakeholders who can assist with the process of transformation due to expertise which could result in international best practice; • Using existing skills of staff and up-skilling them to capitalise on current opportunities for improved standards of living; and • Using a diversity of people for projects could result in better performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High unemployment rates threaten to create a lost generation of citizens who do not have any skills or work experience; and • Changes in the working environment and dynamics within the organisation.

Source: Western Cape Government (2015)

2.2.9 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES IN PUBLIC HUMAN RESOURCE

MANAGEMENT

Public administration has always been the victim of the social, political and cultural environment in which it is located. No exception is made for the human resources departments of these administrations. This can clearly be seen if one compares human resource management systems in South Africa with those in the rest of the world. The most profound distinction of the South African human resource management system is that all public sector employees enjoy the luxury of being employed and thereafter treated in accordance to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which clearly defines the rights of citizens and the way in which they should be treated, specifically emphasising equality and fairness. It should however be noted that this was not the case prior to 1994, and apartheid-era systems will be referred to as Early Developments and discussed below in conjunction with the modern-day approaches to public sector human resource management (Erasmus, Swanepoel, Schenk, Van der Westuizen & Wessels, 2005: 62).

- Early Developments

According to Penceliah et al., (2013:5), employment practices have periodically undergone modernisation due to rapid change in society. In the past, systems like the spoils system, the personal service system and the commodity system allowed employment practices to be determined and controlled by politicians in power. Politicians would employ people who were closely aligned to their political parties. The notion behind this type of employment was that these people would offer no resistance and would accept all new laws and policies implemented by government, as their values were either closely linked to the values of the ruling party. These types of systems did not take qualifications and experience into consideration and were not aiming to employ staff who were best suited for the job.

- Modern Developments

The merit system

The merit system adopts the notion that employees should be employed based on their ability to perform the job competently rather than as a result of nepotism. With the new laws that were created in South Africa such as the Employment Equity Act, human resources management systems now focus on trying to employ staff based on merit while at the same

time seeking to rectify the irregularities created by the previous government. The key difference that separates the merit system from other systems is that it uses both educational and occupational qualifications as well as the job performance as bases for selection (The Free Dictionary, 2008).

New public personnel administration and management system

According to Erasmus et al. (2005:69), the new public personnel administration and management system differs drastically from the merit system. The new approach emphasises different elements of the public sector. There are various types of human resource management sub-system that have emerged from the new public personnel administration and management system, as listed below:

- The collective bargaining sub-system;
- The equal employment opportunity and affirmative action sub-system;
- The client-orientated sub-system;
- The management sub-system;
- The management flexibility sub-system; and
- The integrated human resources management sub-system.

This concludes the theoretical overview. The next section of the study will review and the legislation and policies that were/are instrumental in shaping the public understanding of the concept of employment equity.

2.3 LEGISLATIVE OVERVIEW

Upon its appointment post 1994, the new South African government had a vision of creating a new framework for labour legislation that would holistically control every aspect of employment in South Africa. The government, together with representatives of the business sector and labour, formulated what is known as the four pillars of this framework: The Constitution, the Employment Equity Act, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and the Skills Development Act. It is evident that these Acts have drastically affected employment in post-apartheid South Africa (Kleynhans et al., 2006:247).

The National Development Plan 2030 (NDP) sets out to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. To achieve this goal will require all South Africans to contribute, whether

it be by means of enhancing competencies and proficiencies or by building the capacity of the country through developing key partnerships in society. The Constitution of the country emphasises the rights of all citizens and the vision of creating a successful, non-racial, non-sexist democracy that will feel like home to all. The Constitution further insists that the inequalities created by the racial exclusions of the past be rectified: “Access to services has been broadened, the economy has been stabilised and a non-racial society has begun to emerge. Millions who were previously excluded have access to education, water, electricity, health care, housing and social security, the poverty rate has declined and average incomes have grown steadily in real terms” (South Africa. The Presidency, 2013:16).

One of South Africa’s key challenges is inequality. The NDP emphasises the key capabilities required for the transformation of both the society and the economy. The NDP set out to achieve the desired transformation through these interlinked priorities: Uniting the country on a common course to achieve prosperity and equity; strengthening democracy and accountability through the promotion of active citizenry; enhancing economic growth, investment and better labour captivation; focusing on identifying and enhancing the key capabilities of both the citizens and the country; developing a skilled and progressive country; and developing strong leadership for enhancing effective problem solving. The NDP further states that equity measures should be focused on the dynamics of the environment in which they were developed (South Africa. The Presidency, 2013:16).

The following sections review the “four pillars” of legislation to glean their significance for employment equity.

2.3.1 THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, ACT 108 OF 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Constitution), is considered to be the supreme law of the land. It outlines the values of the country, provides important information regarding the rights of citizens, and describes the various structures that exist in South Africa and how they operate. Because of the superior authority of the Constitution it will be treated as the first point of reference in this discussion of the legal framework for employment equity.

Chapter 2 of the Constitution, which is titled the Bill of Rights, explicitly sets out the right of every South African to equality, stating in Chapter 2 (9) (1) that “everyone is equal before the

law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.” This section clearly indicates that all practices and processes involving the citizens of South Africa should be equal and fair for all. Subsection (9) (2) defines equality as “the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms.” This section also makes provision for legislative and other measures to be designed to promote the achievement of equality and to protect or advance people who were disadvantaged by unfair discrimination. Subsection (9) (3) prohibits anyone or any entity, including the state, from discriminating against anyone regardless of their “race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.” Subsection (9) (4) states that “national legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination” (South Africa, 1996:06).

Erasmus et al., (2005:33-34) are of the opinion that the Constitution serves as a basis for ethical direction for every public servant, including public human resource practitioners. No person, regardless of the position they occupy (including the president of the country) may do anything that contradicts the obligations imposed by the Constitution. For the Constitution to effectively fulfil its function as an ethical guide it has to be accepted by general consensus among the citizens. The Constitution brands the Republic of South Africa as a democratic state with its foundations built firmly on a set of values that include, among many others, the achievement of equity. Public officials working in the human resources environment are often confronted with questions pertaining to the rights of staff and issues about equality within the workplace. The answers to these questions are clearly set out in chapter 2 of the Constitution.

Before the formulation of the Employment Equity Act, the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995) was introduced to regulate transformation in South Africa.

2.3.2 WHITE PAPER ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE (1995)

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (hereafter known as the White Paper) is arguably one of the most vital pieces of legislation that guided the process of transformation in South Africa. The researcher will review 6 of the 16 chapters contained in the White Paper that are directly related to the research topic, summarising each chapter in

order to highlight the important role it played in the transformation of the South African public service. Information is considered to be one of the most powerful tools and therefore the new government of South Africa decided to raise awareness among its citizens, which would ultimately lead to them exercising their rights to good service delivery (South Africa. The Public Service Commission, 2009:8).

Penceliah et al., (2013:148) are of the opinion that the purpose of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Sector is to create a framework which would guide the implementation of legislation aimed at the transformation of the South African public service. Its purpose is to provide a practical implementation strategy for transformation of the South African public sector. The transformed public sector will be judged on its ability to improve service delivery to meet the needs of all South Africans. The White Paper also aims to create a productive people-centered public service in which everyone has a sense of belonging, regardless of the characteristics that makes them different, such as race, gender or disability.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of the White Paper sets the scene for transformation by providing a brief background on the need for administrative transformation. Section (1.1) emphasises that the new government of national unity inherited a broken society marked by social and economic inequalities, a country politically and racially divided. To address these problems and to create equality among all, the government adopted the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The purpose of the White Paper is highlighted in this chapter and reads as follows: “The principle aim of this White Paper is to establish a policy framework to guide the introduction and implementation of new policies and legislation aimed at transforming the South African public service.” The chapter concludes by outlining the structure of the White Paper, which comprises: Part 1 that sets the scene for the transformation process, Part 2 that outlines a strategic framework for change, and Part 3 that draws a number of conclusions with regard to progressing with the transformation process (South Africa, 1995: 4-5).

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 contains the vision and mission of the White Paper. The importance for the need of an acceptable vision is emphasised in this chapter. Government has adopted the following vision and mission:

Vision

“The Government of the National Unity is committed to continually improve the lives of the people of South Africa through a transformed public service which is representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of all.”

Mission

“The creation of a people-centered and people-driven public service which is characterised by equity, quality, timeousness and a strong code of ethics.”

It should be noted that this vision and mission for the new public service is based on the state and its relationship with civil society. The vision would see the introduction of the concept of public-private partnerships (South Africa, 1995:6-7).

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 describes the issues and challenges need to be addressed and overcome before transformation of the country can be achieved. The challenges and opportunities originate from the apartheid era as well as the new democratic state in which the South Africa finds itself in. A fact that cannot be ignored is that despite all the negative publicity regarding the apartheid era there are strengths and achievements that are direct outputs from that era that can be maintained and that simply need to be built on in order to achieve the objectives of the newly-appointed democratic government. The parties who formulated the White Paper are of the opinion that South Africa is in need of a more positive, neutral visionary approach which both acknowledges and addresses problems while making full use of all opportunities and building on existing strengths (South Africa, 1995:8-9).

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 starts to broaden the outlook of the White Paper to an international context by acknowledging that while the problems of South Africa’s past were resolved internally, it would be beneficial and important to learn lessons from other successful countries. Recent years have seen several re-evaluations throughout developing and developed countries, and a number of themes have emerged that are applicable to the new South Africa. These themes include an increasing emphasis on human resource development and management and a change in organisational culture. This chapter also highlights the fact that internationally the

need to review the role of management in the public sector is growing (South Africa, 1995:14-15).

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 of the White Paper outlines in detail the need for representativeness and affirmative action. Within this chapter representativeness is claimed to be one of the main foundations of a non-racist government. Black people (who in this document comprise the Indian, coloured and African communities), women and people with disabilities are regarded as the categories of people disadvantaged by the previous employment system. The need for affirmative action is based on the clear discrimination that accrued against these groups. National and provincial departments would now need to formulate a detailed affirmative action plan whose main objectives are to meet the needs of black people, women and people with disabilities. To ensure that government departments meet these requirements, departments will also be required to formulate internal monitoring and evaluation of their affirmative action programmes, and present progress made annually for the scrutiny of Parliament and Cabinet for intervention where required (South Africa, 1995:42-45).

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 of the White Paper provides detailed insight into factors that previously characterised the public sector, such as: drastic pay differentials between high and low ranks, black people and people with disabilities being discriminated against in terms of recruitment, and the lack of career paths and training opportunities for the disadvantaged groups. The chapter then goes on to propose measures to address the situation:

- The introduction of equal pay benefits for work of equal value;
- The reduction of differentials in pay and benefits;
- The development of appropriate career paths for all public servants; &
- Improving conditions for women (South Africa, 1995:62-63).

After the Constitution, the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) can arguably be considered to be the piece of legislation that focuses most fully and authoritatively on the implementation of employment equity in the workplace.

2.3.3 THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT 55 OF 1998

The Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) forms the basis of this research study as it outlines the guidelines for equity and how it should be governed and implemented within the public and private sectors in South Africa. The researcher will discuss the content of the Employment Equity Act sequentially as it appears in the Act.

2.3.3.1 DEFINITION OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

The Employment Equity Act defines employment equity as “the promotion of equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination. *“The Act further defines employment equity as involving “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 workplace”* (South Africa, 1998:5).

Based on the definitions provided above the researcher defines employment equity as the promotion of the Constitutional right of citizens to be treated fairly and equally, and not to be discriminated against.

2.3.3.2 DEFINITION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Affirmative action can be defined as “the additional corrective steps which must be taken in order to ensure that those previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination are able to derive full benefit from an equitable employment environment” (South Africa,1998:4).

According to Erasmus et al., (2005:183-184) affirmative action can be succinctly defined as rectifying the wrongs of the past. The phrase affirmative action is generally used to refer to overcoming barriers and providing access to opportunities, with specific reference to equal employment opportunities. Affirmative action can therefore be defined as a conscious process of advancing the interests of particular groups of people such as black people and women.

Based on the definitions above, the researcher characterizes affirmative action as an extension of the Employment Equity Act, as it provides additional means to ensure that those people / groups who were disadvantaged by the wrongs of the past are provided with fair treatment, equal opportunities and protection against unfair discrimination.

2.3.3.3 PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION

Every employer needs to ensure that it takes the necessary steps to promote equal and fair opportunities in the workplace by eliminating all unfair discrimination in all employment processes. No organisation or person may directly or indirectly unfairly discriminate against an employee or group of employees in any policies and processes (South Africa, 1998:7).

The Employment Equity Act explicitly obliges every employer to introduce or make provision for promoting equal opportunity in the workplace by eliminating all unfair discrimination in all employment policies and practices (Nel, Gerber, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono & Werner. 2001:180).

It appears that the process of eliminating unfair discrimination means that if there is an under-representation of previously disadvantaged groups such as blacks, women and people with disabilities, then the employer needs to adjust the composition of its employees to meet the requirements set out in the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998).

2.3.3.4 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ACCORDING TO THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT (55 OF 1998)

The Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) has an entire chapter dedicated to affirmative action. Chapter 3, section 12 states that this chapter only applies to designated employers who in this context refer to as:

- a. *“A person who employs 50 or more employees;*
- b. *A person who employs fewer than 50 employees but has a total annual turnover that is equal to or above the applicable annual turnover of a small business in terms of schedule 4 of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998);*
- c. *A municipality referred to in chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996;*
- d. *An organ of state as defined in section 239 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 but excluding local spheres of government, the national defense force, the national intelligence agency and the South African secret service &*
- e. *An employer bound by collective agreement in terms of section 23 or 31 of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 which appoints it as a designated employer in terms*

of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998), to the extent provided for in the agreement” (South Africa, 1998:3).

For a designated employer to achieve a balanced staff composition for the purposes of employment equity, the employer has to implement certain affirmative action measures for people within designated groups (black people, women, and people with disabilities) in terms of Sections 13 and 15 of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998). These specific measures are designed to ensure that qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are impartially represented in all work-related categories and ranks within the organisation of a designated employer (South Africa, 1998:9).

The Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) provides for the following specific measures to be implemented by a designated employer:

- *“Measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers, including unfair discrimination which negatively affect people from designated groups*
- *Measures designed to further diversity in the workplace based on the equal dignity and respect of all people*
- *Providing reasonable accommodation for people from designated groups (black people, women and people with disabilities) so that they can enjoy equal opportunities and are equally represented in the workforce” (South Africa, 1998:9).*

2.3.3.5 EMPLOYMENT EQUITY PLANS

According to South Africa (1998:11) and Nel et al., (2001:181), having and effectively implementing an equity plan is one of the major requirements for a designated employer in terms of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998). Section 20 (i) of the Employment Equity Act states that designated employers have to prepare and implement an employment equity plan that will ensure reasonable progress towards employment equity within the organisation.

An employment equity plan should include:

- The objectives to be attained in each year of the plan;
- Affirmative Action measures to be implemented, as required by section 2 of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998);
- Where under-representation of people from designated groups has been identified by the analysis, the numerical goals to achieve the equitable representation of suitably

qualified people from designated groups within each occupational category and level in the workforce, the timetable within which to achieve this and the strategies intended to reach those goals;

- The timetable for each year of the plan for the achievement of goals and objectives other than numerical goals;
- The duration of the plan covering a period within five years but not less than a year
- The procedures that will be used to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan, and whether reasonable progress is being made towards implementing employment equity;
- The internal procedures to resolve any dispute about the interpretation or implementation of the plan; and
- The organogram of people who will be responsible for monitoring and implementing the plan.

2.3.4 COMMISSION FOR EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

The Commission for Employment Equity was established on 14 May 1999. The commission consisted of a chairperson and eight other members, all appointed by the Minister of Labour on a part-time basis. All members of the commission must:

- *“Have experience and expertise relevant to the functions contemplated in section 30 of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998);*
- *Act impartially when performing functions of the Commission;*
- *Not act in a way that will undermine the integrity of the Commission;*
- *Not participate in or advise on any matter of which they have a financial interest”*
(South Africa, 1998: 14).

The commission is equally represented by two representatives of: the state, organisations of community and development interest, organised labour and organised business. The commission’s functions include advising the Minister of Labour; it is at liberty to reward the achievements of employers who further the purpose of the Employment Equity Act and it submits an annual report to the Minister of Labour (Erasmus et al., 2005:189).

Penceliah et al., (2013:62) are of the opinion that the primary function of the Commission is to advise the Minister of Labour on codes of good practice, regulations and policy matters pertaining to the implementation of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998).

The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service was formulated to highlight the requirements with which government departments need to conform, so as to effectively implement affirmative action.

2.3.5 WHITE PAPER ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF 1998

The core purpose of the White Paper on Affirmative Action (1998) (hereafter referred to as the Paper) was to provide a policy framework that outlines the requirements and standards that government departments have to take to effectively implement their affirmative action programmes. The Paper also highlights the monitoring and reporting responsibilities of those involved in the affirmative action programmes. It should be noted that the formulation of the Paper bore testimony to the growing commitment that government was showing towards achieving the transformation of the public service to a model underpinned by equality. The Paper also aimed to eradicate the ambiguity in policies formulated prior to 1995 (South Africa. The Department of Public Service and Administration, 1998:2).

Chapter 2 of the Paper describes the goal of affirmative action in the public service as follows:

“The goal of affirmative action in the public service is to speed up the creation of a representative and equitable public service and to build an environment that supports and enables those who have been historically disadvantaged by unfair discrimination to fulfil their maximum potential within it so that the public service may derive the maximum benefit of their skills and talents to improve service delivery” (South Africa. The Department of Public Service and Administration, 1998: 4).

According to the Department of Public Service and Administration (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration, 1998:7), affirmative action should not be seen as a by-product or as a supplement, but as an important tool that to assist in achieving the organisation’s strategies and goals. For affirmative action to be successful it needs to be incorporated into every aspect of an organisation’s practice. National and provincial departments are required to formulate affirmative action programmes that conform to the requirements set out in the Paper. To ensure that government has consistent affirmative action policies across all spheres, all policies should contain the common compulsory elements as stipulated by the Paper: *“numeric targets; employee profile; affirmative action survey;*

management practice review; performance management; affirmative action plan; responsibilities and policy statements”.

Affirmative action can be described as the process of ensuring equality by rectifying imbalances. Dresang (2002:79-82) describes affirmative action by comparing it to a race in which one runner is shackled while the other is not. Affirmative action would be to remove the shackles so as to equalise the chances of the runners. In the employment environment affirmative action could even allow for people of designated groups to be under-skilled for an appointment, in order to prepare them to compete for higher level jobs. Employment equity informs the requirements set out in specific job advertisements, that indicate an organisation will use gender and race as factors when screening candidates with the same scores. Most of the bigger organisations have a designated unit to deal with the development and implementation of affirmative action.

With the introduction of transformation and affirmative action in South Africa came Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, known as BBBEE.

2.3.6 BROAD-BASED BLACK ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT ACT, ACT 53 OF 2003

Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (hereafter referred to as BBBEE) is a government initiative specifically formulated to ensure the inclusion of the bulk of South Africans in the social and economic transformation of South Africa. The BBBEE status of an organisation has become the strongest motivator of economic growth outside of general market conditions. In both the private and the public sectors it has become evident that BBBEE has been closely aligned with core business, not a formality but rather an important tool. Employment equity has been one of the key areas of the BBBEE point system, in terms of which companies are rated so to measure compliance with the BBBEE Act (AfrikaTikkun, 2016).

Table 2.2 Standard Weighting Points Compliance Targets

Criteria	Weighting points	Compliance targets
Black people with disabilities employed by the measured entity as a percentage of all full-time employees	2	4%
Black people employed by the measured entity at senior management level as a percentage of employees at senior management level	2	60%
Black women employed by the measured entity at senior management level as a percentage of employees at senior management level	2	30%
Black people employed by the measured entity at professionally qualified, experienced specialists and mid-management level as a percentage of employees at professionally qualified, experienced specialists and mid-management level	2	75%
Black women employed by the measured entity at professionally qualified,	1	40%

experienced specialists and mid-management level as a percentage of employees at professionally qualified, experienced specialists and mid-management level		
Black people employed by the measured entity at skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foremen, and superintendents as a percentage of employees at skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foremen, and superintendents level	1	80%

Source: South Africa (2003:4-6).

For the legislation discussed above to be implemented successfully, government departments would need to implement the Skills Development Act (Act 97 of 1998) to assist with the upskilling of individuals in South Africa.

2.3.7 THE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACT (97 OF 1998)

According to South Africa (1998:21), the Skills Development Act (97 of 1998) strives to provide a framework for the formulation and implementation of specific strategies to foster and upscale the skills levels of South Africans. The Act seeks to improve the standard of living and employment opportunities for the South African workforce in order to create a competitive and productive working environment. Chapter Three of the Act makes provision

for the establishment of a sector education and training authority (hereafter known as SETA) for any national economic sector. These SETAs' functions are to “develop a sector skills plan, establishing learning programmes, approving workplace skills plans and allocating grants in accordance with prescribed standards.”

Kleynhans et al., (2006:26) are of the opinion that the Skills Development Act is of great assistance to employees as it emboldens employers to ensure that the working environment is a place of learning, and that employees are enabled to develop and broaden their skills and knowledge so to improve their work performance and future work opportunities, which would inevitably assist with improving their standard of living. By creating these types of working environments an employer is also creating an enabling environment that serves to promote equality among all, an environment in which employees would want to strive to achieve their goals and the goals of the organization, which would ultimately improve performance and the quality of work.

The public sector and its institutions are currently changing, and they must improve if they are to maintain good service delivery standards for its citizens. To achieve this the workforce would need to be both flexible and willing to adapt to the needs of its beneficiaries, which would mean that they would constantly need to update and acquire new knowledge and skills. For the South African public service to become a globally recognized, leading service provider, it would need to incorporate training and skills development into its strategic planning. This would serve to enhance the performance of staff and the status of the public service holistically (Penceliah *et al.*, 2013:149).

With the Skills Development Act (97 of 1998) providing the framework for the implementation of strategies for up-skilling South Africans, there is a need to prevent unfair discrimination when implementing these strategies.

2.3.8 THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY AND PREVENTION OF UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION (ACT 4 OF 2000)

This Act sets out to eradicate unfair discrimination by promoting equality among all. To achieve the notion of a democracy in South Africa the public sector, the private sector as well as ordinary citizens need to eradicate all forms of inequality, especially those inequalities created by the apartheid regime which strategically segregated the people of South Africa. The objectives of the Act are to give effect to section 9 of the Constitution, which guarantees

all citizens the rights to freedom and equality; to develop and facilitate instruments to eradicate unfair discrimination and harassment due to race, gender or disability; to develop criteria to determine circumstances for unfair discrimination; to create public awareness regarding unfair discrimination and the need to promote equality (South Africa, 2000:6).

Chapter Two of the Act makes provision for the “Prohibition of unfair discrimination on the grounds of race” by stating that no individual is allowed to unfairly discriminate against anyone due to that person’s race, including the spreading of any propaganda, the exclusion of an individual from a particular activity, the provision of an inferior level of service, or the denial of opportunities. The “Prohibition of unfair discrimination on the grounds of gender” similarly affirms that no person may be unfairly discriminated against due to gender, including violence against women, the prevention of women from inheriting family property, any practice that demoralises the integrity of women, discrimination due to pregnancy and opportunities due to the division of labour. The Act also stipulates the “Prohibition of unfair discrimination on the grounds of disability”, on the grounds that no person may be discriminated against due to disability, including the refusal or confiscation from people with disabilities of equipment which ensures their adequate functioning in society, contravening the codes that govern accessibility and not eliminating obstacles that would restrict people with disabilities from receiving equal opportunities. Chapter Four of the Act states that every high court is also an equality court for the area of its jurisdiction, and should hold inquiry as per the prescribed manner to determine if unfair discrimination has taken place as alleged (South Africa, 2000:8).

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (2011:3) defines the equality court as a specialised court that is designated to deal with matters pertaining to unfair discrimination, harassment and hate speech. It confirms that in terms of the Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Act 4 of 2000), all High Courts are equality courts for their area of jurisdiction. It should be noted that even though the equality court follows the normal formal court process, the rules and procedure are not as strict as in the normal courts.

When promoting equality in the workplace, which includes the prohibition of unfair discrimination on the grounds of disability, it could be assumed that with the employment of people with disabilities employers would need to provide special equipment reasonably to accommodate these employees.

2.3.9 POLICY ON REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION AND ASSISTIVE DEVICES FOR EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The Employment Equity Act addresses matters such as the inclusion of people who are considered to be from previously disadvantaged backgrounds, acknowledging the need for their reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation includes the provision of special equipment catering for the needs of employees with disabilities so as to enhance their level of participation in the workplace. Every citizen of South Africa has a Constitutional right to equality. The Constitution highlights the fact that people with disabilities were one of the groups who were most disadvantaged and should therefore be major beneficiaries of affirmative action. The intention in implementing the vision of the Constitution in the public service is to ensure that matters regarding disability are approached from a human rights perspective. The public sector as a working environment needs to accommodate people with disabilities, and to create equal opportunities in terms of employment, skills development and career development and growth for them by:

- accelerating the transformation of the public service by employing more people with disabilities, thus efficiently reaching the disability targets;
- developing norms and standards for the adequate accommodation of people with disabilities, including access to buildings;
- forming a committee to effectively handle reasonable accommodation matters; and
- in the event that an employee leaves the department conduct an exit interview to determine if the lack of reasonable accommodation resulted in the employee leaving (Department of Public Service and Administration. n.d: 10-12).

In the buildings of the Department of the Premier various facilities have been adapted and numerous renovations have been made to adequately accommodate the needs of employees with disabilities. Ramps have been installed in front of the newly built entrance of the building, motorised platforms have been introduced at each entrance to take wheelchairs up and down the flight of stairs, and specially designed toilets with remotely operated doors have been built for employees in wheelchairs. The Department of the Premier also procured equipment such as special computers and software for employees with specific impairments to enable them to perform the functions of their jobs adequately. The Department also had to develop special training materials accommodating various disabilities, such as brail for blind employees and interpreters for deaf employees. An important factor to take into consideration

is that an employer is only obligated to provide reasonable accommodation and technology when employees willingly disclose their disabilities and indicate a need for special accommodation (Western Cape (South Africa). Department of the Premier, 2014:8).

2.3.10 CODE OF GOOD PRACTICES ON THE INTEGRATION OF EMPLOYMENT EQUITY INTO HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The Code of Good Practices for the Integration of Employment Equity into Human Resource Management Practices (hereafter known as the code) is used to assist human resource management departments to sustain growth while preventing unfair discrimination in the workplace. The code provides guidelines for the eradication of unfair discrimination and the effective roll-out of affirmative action in human resource practices. It enables employers to guarantee that their employment policies and practices are equal, fair and non-discriminating for all employees. “The code is issued in terms of Section 54 of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998)” and should be read together with the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). When developing a strategy for the implementation of employment equity an employer should embark on consultation with the staff of the company and their trade unions and ensure that all policies and processes are adequately analysed. They should also develop and implement an employment equity plan and ensure that the status of the implementation of employment equity is regularly reported to the Department of Labour. Employers should be cognisant of the fact that consultation between stakeholders plays a vital role in the success of employment equity. No party involved in the consultation should be undermined and any existing structures should not necessarily be dissolved but rather be adapted to suit the consultation process (South Africa, 2005:1-5).

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The literature review in any research study is ultimately the section that steers the research. The literature review in this study focused mainly on gathering together secondary data to provide the researcher with a more holistic understanding of the research topic before proceeding with the collection of primary data. The effective execution of the literature review enabled the researcher to access and provide accurate and reliable information about the regulations governing the equity composition of employees of the South African Government, including the Department of the Premier located in the Western Cape.

The literature review focused on two key areas:

- a. Conducting a theoretical review
 - The theoretical review allowed the researcher to determine what other researchers and authors have written on the topic.
- b. Conducting a legislative review
 - The legislative review assisted the researcher to determine what legislation governs the equity composition of employees in South Africa.

In the literature review chapter, the researcher provided definitions of key concepts relating to employment equity. He also consulted the work of various authors to determine what was written on the research topic and how the work of these authors could influence this research study to best achieve its objectives.

The theory pertaining to the need for the transformation of South Africa has been discussed so as to make clear the government's perception of the necessity of redressing the imbalances of the past by favoring previously disadvantaged, designated groups.

The legislation discussed portrays the efforts made by the government to transform the South African workforce by intervening in the equity composition of both the private and public sectors. This legislation provides the guidelines that an organisation needs to conform to effectively achieve employment equity. This chapter also sought to determine how employment equity is implemented in the public service and how the transformation of both society and the workforce can increase productivity.

The next chapter of the research study will highlight and discuss the research methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

What the reader will discover in this chapter is an account of the qualitative research methodology employed in the study, including some observations on the targeted research participants. Since the methodology was chosen to meet the research objectives, these are again listed here:

Research Objectives:

- provide a theoretical overview of the equity composition of employees of the South African government in general, and the Western Cape Government in particular;
- determine if the Department of the Premier's Employment Equity Plan is in line with the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998);
- present the research findings to the Department of the Premier for consideration to ensure the alignment of the above with its strategic goals and objectives; and
- formulate a set of conclusions and recommendations for improving the equity composition of employees in the Department of the Premier.

This chapter explains the methods of research, participant selection, data collection and data analysis, as well as the concepts of qualitative research and unstructured interviews. Detailed descriptions are given of the data collection and data analysis process from a content analysis perspective.

In qualitative research the researcher should be concerned with the validity of the data and should always remain objective while considering all ethical issues. For this reason, the researcher briefly discusses later in the chapter a philosophical perspective on research and the concepts of validity, objectivity and ethics, and how these were addressed.

3.2 RESEARCH STRATEGY: THE CASE STUDY

A key question that any researcher needs to face at the outset is that of which research strategy to use to conduct the research. Choosing the best suited research strategy is

important because it directly impacts on the way the research questions will be answered. This study used a case study strategy. Case studies can be explained as an expressive type of research that focuses on either individuals or a group of people (The WritePass journal, 2013). The researcher collects data using methods such as but not limited to observations, interviews and tests. With case studies the research is often relevant only to the unit or individuals being studied and therefore generalisation to a wider target group is not always possible. A useful way of characterizing a case study is to describe it as a method of observing how numerous variables interrelate, in an effort to holistically understand a given situation. Qualitative researchers find case studies useful as they allow the researcher to ask participants to further elaborate when collecting data, so as to capture the important context of the questions.

Interviews are often used in case study research. An interview is a discussion between the researcher and either a single participant or a group of participants, recorded by means of written notes, audio recording or video recording, to be analysed at a later stage of the study (The WritePass journal, 2013).

Depending on the research methodology used, interviews can be modeled on one of three approaches: strictly structured, semi-structured or unstructured. The flexibility of being able to interview either a single participant or a group of participants will allow the researcher to both gain personal and private information and foster interactive group discussions (The WritePass journal, 2013).

The researcher chose to conduct one-on-one interviews with the research participants. A more detailed discussion of the interviewing technique appears later in this chapter.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is fundamentally a thought process of interpreting accumulated facts and data, seeking to determine what the facts “say” and what the data means. Put differently, research is a method of action by means of which people solve problems and in the process extend the limits of their knowledge. It is a system by means of which an endeavor is made to obtain answers to questions and solve identified problems in a systematic manner with the support of verifiable facts. Hence research encompasses the interpretation of data which is used to draw conclusions (Brynard & Hanekom, 2006:2).

According to Welman et al., (2005:1-8) there are two main approaches to research, quantitative and qualitative. The purpose of each approach can be defined as follows:

- Qualitative research methods aim to establish the socially constructed nature of reality, to stress the relationship between the researcher and the concept of study, as well as to emphasise the value-nature of the inquiry.
- Quantitative research methods do not involve the investigation of processes but emphasise the measurement and analysis of casual relationships between variables within a value-free context.

Creswell (2007:388) notes that there is a third type of research, mixed method. Mixed-method research integrates quantitative with qualitative research. It has become increasingly popular among researchers as it allows the researcher to draw simultaneously on the benefits of both methods. The core assumption of this form of research is that the combination of the qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more holistic understanding of the research problem than either approach alone (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007:2).

In sum, research is a sequential procedure that is multidimensional and governed by its processes. It is a direct means of obtaining results that can be depicted either in words or in numbers. Research is conducted at every level in both the private and public sectors. Research forms the base for any task and is a key contributing factor to almost every decision that needs to be made.

3.3.1 DEFINITION OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Supino and Borer (2012:10) observe that quantitative research involves the measurement of factors such as morality, demographics and behaviours that have been acquired under specific conditions by either structured or semi-structured composition, and which may be subjected to prescribed statistical analysis. In quantitative research numerous subjects are usually studied, and researchers' contact with them is usually very brief and marginally interactive so that they can remain unbiased and neutral.

In quantitative research the most powerful tool that the researcher has at their disposal is the use of statistics. Without the support of statistics, quantitative data would simply be a

disordered set of numbers. A statistical method allows the researcher to make sense of the data and categorise it to enable interpretation (Brink et al., 2012:178).

3.3.2 DEFINITION OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Brynard and Hanekom (2006:37) note that qualitative research methodology refers to research that produces descriptive data, generally consisting of the participants own written or spoken words pertaining to their experience or perception. Usually no numbers or counts are assigned to these observations. The qualitative approach also allows the researcher to get to know the participant through face-to-face interaction. This helps the researcher to interpret and describe the actions of the participant.

Qualitative research involves the use of methods such as case studies, in-depth interviews, questionnaires and the perusal of personal documentation (such as life histories, diaries and autobiographies). Qualitative research methods respect the socially constructed nature of reality and emphasise the relationship between the researcher and the object of the research. Qualitative data is usually presented in language/words. Through the presentation of these words the researcher is able to change the data progressively in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the research problem/topic. Qualitative research allows the researcher to get an inside view by actively communicating with the participants, observing their behavior and recording their feelings toward particular topics. Qualitative research allows the researcher to gain a holistic overview of the research problem as it incorporates a wide range of data such as case studies, interviews, photographs and observations (Welman et al., 2005: 8-9).

Table 3.1, below, presents the basic assumptions that are typically made about these methodologies. The reader must be cautioned that in reality, the distinctions are seldom this clear cut (O'Leary, 2006:99).

Table 3.1: Qualitative research vs Quantitative research

Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Assumption: Subjective & Constructive	Assumption: Optimistic & Objective
Methodology: Intuitive, Face to Face, Action Research	Methodology: Hypothesis and Scientifically Driven
Scope: Small Scale	Scope: Large Scale
Analysis: Words	Analysis: Statistics

Source: O’Leary (2006:99).

3.3.3 DEFINITION OF MIXED-METHOD RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Johnson et al., (2007:3) maintain that mixed-method research incorporates and fully respects the viewpoints of both qualitative and quantitative research, while creating a synergy between them. The idea of triangulation can be used to characterize the use of the two traditional approaches to research in conjunction with the mixed-method approach to strengthen / create the validity of the data.

3.3.4 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Qualitative research is usually conducted when the researcher wants to obtain information directly from the identified participants in a flexible manner. The qualitative approach was chosen for this study because it offers the most direct method of attaining the research objectives.

In qualitative research participant selection is purposive. Research participants are generally selected because of their ability to contribute to answering the research questions and providing a better understanding of the research topic. Thus one of the key challenges in a qualitative research study is to identify appropriate research participants. The decision to include someone as a participant is based on, but not restricted to, the research questions, the knowledge they possess regarding the study, and theoretical perspectives. The participant must be able to relate to and influence the study positively by contributing their knowledge

and practical experience regarding the research topic. The participants should be made up from various categories representing diversity of rank and perspective. Qualitative research does not require a predetermined number of research participants: the number depends rather on when a point of saturation is reached (National Centre for Biotechnology Information, n.d.).

As stated in Chapter One, 20 participants were purposively selected to participate in the study.

3.3.5 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH CYCLE

Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011:5) are of the opinion that the cycle of qualitative research consists of three stages, the design cycle (stage 1), the ethnographic cycle (stage 2) and the analytic cycle (stage 3).

- The Design Cycle

The design cycle consists of four intertwined tasks: the formulation of the research question/s; a literature and theory review; formulating a conceptual framework for the research study and selecting a fieldwork approach.

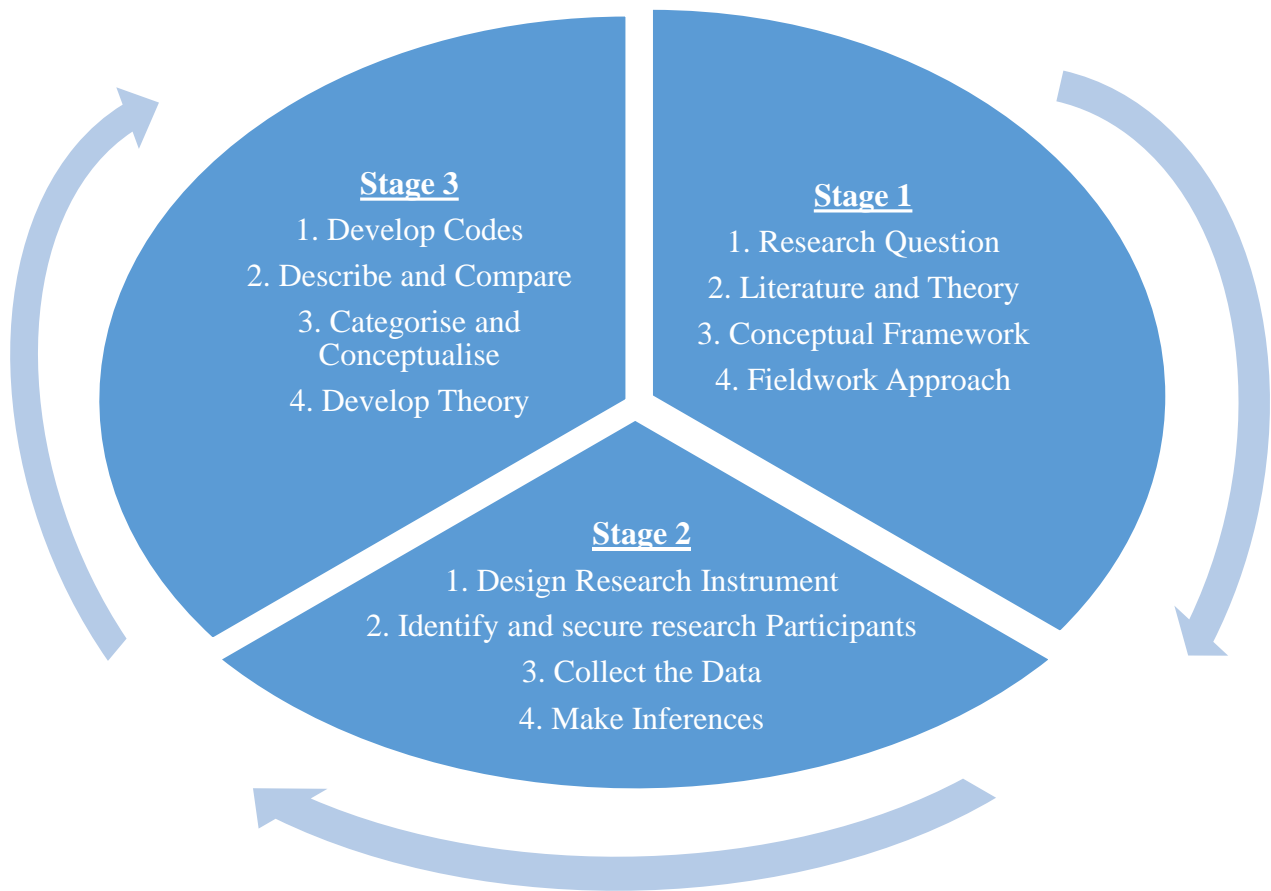
- The Ethnographic Cycle

The ethnographic cycle includes the core activity of data collection. It comprises four components: designing the research instrument based on the nature of the study; recruiting the relevant research participants from the target population; collecting the actual data and making the required inferences.

- The Analytic Cycle

The analytic cycle incorporates four elements that are conducted simultaneously at different points in the analysis: the development of codes; description and comparison; the categorizing and conceptualizing of data and theory development.

Diagram: 3.1 An illustration of the qualitative research cycle.



Source: Hennink et al., (2011:4)

The researcher used this model as a framework for this study. The three stages were followed sequentially and helped the researcher to remain focused and on point throughout the study. Stage one of the cycle guided the first two chapters of the study while stages two and three guided Chapters Three, Four and Five. The model also served as a checklist to ensure that all the required boxes pertaining to a qualitative research study were ticked.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is the gathering of data relevant to the research purpose or objectives (Supino & Borer, 2012:132). One of the challenges that a researcher faces is to select a system to collect and manage data. A well-designed data management method will help ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Reliability and validity are key factors to consider when reflecting on the trustworthiness of the research findings.

There is a difference of opinion between researchers regarding validity in qualitative research. One school of thought is that the researcher's personal involvement in the research and the fact that he or she physically conducts the interviews suffices to demonstrate the validity of the research, while a second school of thought argues that these are insufficient grounds to ensure validity. The second school of thought is of the opinion that the validity of the data depends upon the percentage of common ground held by the participant and the researcher, engaged to ensure minimum interference while simultaneously increasing the quality of the data (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2009:33-34). To increase validity researchers can choose to appoint external coders to verify their results.

Morse et al., (2002:13-15) claim that the past twenty years have seen the transformation of the qualitative research paradigm from one primarily focused on the validity and reliability of research to one driven by standards for evaluation of the holistic importance, relevance and usefulness of the completed research. Strategies that were used to ensure rigor are to a certain extent side-lined by these new standards, which focus rather on plausible and credible outcomes. A concern that emanates from the new approach of focusing on the end product of the research instead of specific processes of verification during the research is that the researcher may overlook serious threats to the validity and reliability of the research until it is too late to rectify them. With verification during the research process the researcher cross-references and confirms every piece of information to ensure the validity and reliability of the study.

The researcher ensured validity of the data by:

- Remaining unbiased for the entire duration of the research study, while cross-referencing information; and

Objectivity in research means that the finding and conclusions produced are independent of the researcher's personal prejudices. Objectivity means avoiding bias: the researcher should remain distanced from what is being studied to ensure that the findings are derived from what was studied and not based on his or her own values and perceptions. Objectivity can be summarised by the following statement: findings should not be dependent on who did the research, but on what was researched (SAGE, 2016).

The researcher remained objective by:

- Consciously striving for complete neutrality;

- Ensuring that information used for the research was taken from reliable sources; and
- Setting strict criteria for participant selection.

In research there is no one superior method of collecting data. The research techniques used depend on the nature of the research. Researchers should however take note of the following four important points in order to ensure the integrity of the data collection process and the data derived from it (The Office of Research Integrity, n.d.):

- **Appropriate Methods**

To effectively obtain reliable data the researcher has to make use of reliable methods. These methods must be in accord with the desired outcome of the research. The use of inappropriate data collection methods may negatively impact on the research data.

The researcher opted to make use of unstructured interviews as a data collection tool for this study. The unstructured interview schedule was vetted by the in-house statistician at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

- **Attention to Detail**

To ensure the quality of the data collected the researcher has to pay attention to detail while collecting the data. Researchers should also record and interpret results accurately to avoid mistakes or distorted representations of the data. When conducting the research, the researcher made a point of double-checking responses provided by respondents. All responses were captured in writing and cross-referenced against the vast body of knowledge that exists on the research topic.

- **Authorised**

Researchers are obligated to obtain permission to conduct their research when this is required. If research is conducted within a particular department then permission should be obtained from the department before the commencement of the research. The researcher obtained ethics approval from the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences' (Cape Peninsula University of Technology) Ethics Committee before commencing the research study. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Department of the Premier.

Recording

The recording phase, the last of the four points, is possibly the most crucial. During this phase, researchers have to physically record the data collected. The data is recorded to document the results of the study. The researcher developed a research instrument containing a list of questions that were posed to respondents. The researcher used a new copy of the research instrument for each interview to ensure that the data could be appropriately recorded at a later stage.

3.7 UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Dawson (2002:28) contends that researchers have the option to choose from among many types of interviews in social research, but that the most commonly used are structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Unstructured interviews are also known as in-depth interviews because they tend to favor lengthy responses. The researcher uses this type of interview to gain a holistic understanding of the respondents' views pertaining to the research topic.

Unstructured interviews are also referred to as interactive or informal interviews due to their flexibility. Because the questions are open-ended, the interviewer may ask them in any sequence; s/he may omit some of the questions on the list or schedule, and add others based on the progress of the interview. Simply Psychology (2014) holds that unstructured interviews have the following strengths and limitations:

Strengths

- The flexibility of the questions means that they can be adapted to the responses of the respondent. The interviewer can deviate from the original unstructured questions as long as the research objectives are achieved;
- Because of the face-to-face interaction that the unstructured interview requires the researcher is able to obtain additional data from the interviewee by asking for clarity or further elaboration on certain points of the discussion; and
- The fact that the researcher can allow the interviewee to steer the direction of the interview.

Limitations

- Organizing and analyzing the data of unstructured interviews is very time-consuming and is often dependent on the availability of the interviews;
- All the interviews may not be conducted in a single environment, incurring travel costs, which may not be the case with questionnaires that allow the respondents to answer the questions at any time.

Unstructured interviews are popular in qualitative research because they allow the interviewees to express themselves and tell their story, since the questions posed in the interview are not cast in stone. The setting for an unstructured interview should be tranquil and private, and the researcher should determine an appropriate time allocation for the interview and inform the participants of it timeously (Morse & Richards, 2002:91).

According to Welman et al., (2005:198), the unstructured interview can even be described as a process in which the interviewer simply suggests the general theme of discussion and poses further questions as they arise in the spontaneous development of the interaction between the interviewer and the research participant. In unstructured interviews an attempt is made to understand how individuals obtained certain experiences and how they make sense of what is happening to them. The interviewer's questions should therefore be directed at the participant's experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions about the topic at hand.

3.8 LIMITATIONS TO RESEARCH

All research studies face potential limitations, irrespective of how well the researcher has planned the study. When identifying potential limitations researchers should consider both the reliability and validity of the research instruments used to gather data, the access to information, ethical considerations and the ability to control unnecessary nuisances from both the environment and the research participants. Since problems can never be totally eradicated from a research study, researchers should be able to identify how these problems will be dealt with (De Vos et al., 2005:119).

The following factors are potential limitations in a qualitative research study:

- the quality of the research study is greatly dependent on the skills level of the researcher/s and can be easily influenced by the bias of the researchers;

- meticulousness needs to be constantly maintained, assessed and demonstrated throughout the study;
- collecting and interpreting the data can prove to be time-consuming;
- by its nature qualitative research requires face-to-face interaction with the research participants, and the presence of the researcher could negatively affect the responses; and
- serious consideration for the anonymity of the research participants could potentially create problems when presenting the data (Anderson, 2010).

In conducting this research study, the researcher experienced numerous challenges. The first hurdle was trying to obtain ethical clearance from the department in which the study was to be based. Due to its sensitive nature, the research topic received an ambivalent response when the researcher met with relevant officials to obtain the required approval. The researcher was asked a series of questions and only upon his successfully answering these questions was approval granted to conduct the research study. This encounter could easily have taken a wrong turn and the study could have been turned down by the department concerned.

The next challenge presented itself when the researcher set out to identify the research participants from each branch of the Department, all of whom were required to possess specific knowledge regarding the transformation process at the Department of the Premier. Once the participants were identified and interview times were set up, four participants decided to withdraw because of other commitments, which forced the researcher to go out once again and find replacement participants. Other challenges included but were not limited to choosing the best suited research methodology that would allow the researcher to effectively extrapolate the findings, keeping the research and the research participants focused on the objectives of the study, and effectively and efficiently interpreting the data while remaining unbiased throughout the study.

Regardless of limitations and challenges experienced during the research process researchers should always observe the best ethical conduct. The following section will explain the importance of ethics in research.

3.9 ETHICS

In Chapter One of this study the researcher introduced the concept of ethics, provided a definition of ethics, and emphasised the importance of ethics in research. The researcher promised to observe the highest possible ethical standards while conducting the research, only reporting information that is within the public and legal domain. Upon conducting the research, it was discovered that anonymity and consent were just two of many ethical issues that the researcher had to face. Other ethical issues include:

- Avoidance of harm

De Vos et al., (2005:56-63) stress the importance of protecting the research participants in a study. Respondents should be carefully briefed about every aspect of the study prior to their participation and given the option of withdrawing. It is important also for researchers to try and identify participants who might be vulnerable during the research process and exclude them timeously.

In this study, all the research participants were provided with a comprehensive briefing note when the interviews were requested, and all were given the opportunity to at any time of the research process either withdraw their participation or request further clarity on the research topic.

- Informed consent

According to The Research Ethics Guidebook (n.d.) researchers should at every stage of the research place emphasis on producing and acquiring accurate and complete information. By doing so the researcher ensures that participants will be able to understand the research study holistically, enabling them to make an informed decision whether or not to participate in the study. Consent is considered to be the cornerstone of research ethics. Consent should be given freely and research participants should not be pressured into giving consent by either persuasion or threats. Researchers should inform the research participants about the purpose and intended usage of the study.

To ensure that the research participants in this research study was aware of and fully understood the concept of granting consent the researcher explained it to them and included it in the interview schedule to further underline its importance to the participants.

- Deception of research participants

This concept involves deceiving the research participants in order to secure their participation in a research study. To accomplish this, researchers would need to withhold certain information or provide false information to the research participants – presumably in the knowledge that if they were to disclose the truth then participants would not agree to participate (De Vos et al., 2005:56-63).

To avoid deceiving the research participants in any way, the researcher ensured transparency of the content of the research at every stage. When consent was requested, the proposal for the study was presented to those participants who requested further information.

- Violation of anonymity

Research participants have the right to be protected, they have the right to privacy and they have the right to decide to whom they will grant consent, where they want to be interviewed and to what extent they will open up regarding their particular experiences. The promise of anonymity can be violated in many ways and it is important for the researcher to ensure that the identity of participants remains concealed (De Vos et al., 2005:56-63).

The right to privacy applies to every aspect of life. The researcher therefore made a concerted effort to protect the identity of the participants by giving them the option of allowing the researcher to capture their names on the interview schedule when conducting the interview or not. The researcher also ensured that all participants were interviewed individually and in the event that two interviews were scheduled at the same venue they were scheduled for different times.

- Actions and competence of the researcher

It is imperative that researchers are both competent and equipped to conduct the research study, or the result could be the production of invalid information. It is of utmost importance that the research process be conducted in an ethical manner from start to finish (De Vos et al., 2005:56-63).

To make sure that the researcher was properly prepared to gather data via a literature review and then via interviews, a highly qualified research supervisor was regularly consulted and

was at hand to clarify any uncertainties that the researcher might have had. Upon the development of the research instrument, the researcher obtained approval from both the research supervisor and qualitative research experts.

- Publication of findings

In order for the findings of a research study to be considered as research they need to be introduced to the public in written form. Researchers should therefore compile as accurate a report as possible, remaining completely objective (De Vos et al., 2005:56-63). The researcher has to the best of his ability tried to remain objective and neutral throughout the research study. He has accurately referenced all sources acknowledging the work of other researchers in an effort to create credibility and reliability.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher described qualitative research in more detail and explained the concepts of participant selection, data collection and data analysis.

This chapter showed how each concept of qualitative research requires a particular way of thinking, and explained how this particular research study will reach its investigative goals. The importance of ethics in research was highlighted, and some of the ethical and other challenges encountered in the research process outlined.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the capture, decoding and interpretation of the data collected from the unstructured interviews conducted within the Department of the Premier, and discusses the emerging findings. The findings are cross-referenced with the theory and related material presented in Chapters Two and Three of the study, enabling the researcher to respond effectively to the research questions posed in Chapter One.

The researcher developed an unstructured interview schedule that required the participants to provide detailed qualitative responses. Because the research participants were chosen from the five branches of the DOTP, the researcher had to set up the interviews according to the availability of the participants. He could not conduct all the interviews at a single venue as the participants wanted to be interviewed in the comfort of their own offices.

The researcher briefed the participants about the research topic when first making contact with them. If the participant agreed to be interviewed the researcher set up the interview for a time that was convenient for the participant. Three of the interviews had to be rescheduled due to the non-availability of the participants. The overall response rate was extremely good, however, as the researcher managed to set up interviews with 20 participants selected from the five branches of the DOTP, as indicated in Chapter One of this research study.

In accordance with the standard procedures for research, strict confidentiality was adhered to. The identity of the research participants was not recorded in the study. Tables and graphs were created to depict the diversity of the research participants used. Participants had the democratic right to withdraw their participation and data at any point in the research study. It should be noted, though, that no participants chose to withdraw.

This chapter analyses the unstructured interviews making use of content analysis. The content analysis technique involved counting regularities and the sequencing of particular words, phrases and/or concepts, in order to identify themes (Welman et al., 2005:21).

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is usually non-numerical and written in the form of words or recorded on video and audio tape. To analyse it therefore requires an examination of text rather than numbers. The qualitative data analysis process can be extremely time-consuming, depending on the amount of data gathered. Qualitative researchers spend hours trying to create patterns, themes and relationships among the collected data. This type of analysis is commonly referred to as the “hands-on process” as the researcher becomes intensely involved with the data (Brink et al., 2012:193).

In qualitative data analysis researchers often analyse open-ended/unstructured interviews by means of content analysis. Content analysis can be described as quantitative analysis of qualitative data. The basic technique involves counting frequencies and sequencing of particular words, phrases and/or concepts, in order to identify themes (Welman et al., 2005:21).

Although the process of data analysis enables the researcher to get very close to the data, it is important for him/her to note that the findings of the study should as far as possible relate to the initial research questions and objectives. Once the researcher is comfortable with the findings, they should be linked to literature and concepts related to the research topic which in essence will create the link between the findings and previous literature on the topic (Hennink et al., 2011:102).

4.2.1 CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis can be defined as the process of analytically encrypting and grouping to filter large amounts of data in such a way as to decipher patterns of words used, their occurrence and the structures of communications. The technique can be used to analyse transcripts, personal files, speeches, policy documents and, in the case of this study, unstructured interviews. The researcher’s creation of themes and coding frames make visible a logical flow within the data to enable a generalised view to emerge, instead of the various views of all the participants (Grbich, 2007:112).

Grbich (2007:112) explains the advantages and disadvantages of content analysis as follows:

Advantages

- a. Large amounts of documents can be simplified into enumerative information;
- b. Attitudes, emotions and aspects such as inequality can be identified using content analysis;
- c. Content analysis can be used to directly analyse interactions.

Disadvantage

- a. If not used correctly it might lead to only focusing on word counts.

The researcher conducted content analysis by reading through all the transcripts of the interviews. When coming across information that was pertinent to a specific theme the researcher used the side margins of the transcripts to capture this information and make comments before proceeding to the next piece of information. All the information captured in the margins was then revisited and categorised according to themes and categories. How the themes were selected and categories decided upon will be discussed in the next section of this study. The content of the various themes was then compared to determine its relevance, and the information reviewed to ensure that it was structured accordingly. The process of content analysis was indeed time-consuming and required the researcher to constantly read through the information to ensure that the analysis of the data was proving effective.

4.2.2 THEME IDENTIFICATION METHODS

Analytictech (n.d) observes that in qualitative research the process of theme identification is regarded as one the most important tasks when dealing with data. Themes in the context of qualitative research can be defined as the abstracts or constructs that researchers identify either before, during or after the data collection. Themes are derived from the reviewing of literature and from the distinguishing characteristics of the phenomena being studied. There are various techniques that can be used to discover themes, including the following:

- a. Word repetitions
- b. Counting keywords that appear more frequently than others, indicating their significance. Indigenous categories.

This method identifies words peculiar to the target population that make it unique, such as jargon or slang. Researchers should however be sure of the context in which these words are used to ensure the validity of the research.

c. Key-words-in-context

This method is based on the fact that if you want to understand the word, look at the context in which it was used.

d. Compare and contrast

This method looks at how texts are either different from or similar to each other.

e. Social science queries

This method deals with understanding how textual data can highlight questions of importance to social science.

f. Searching for missing information

This method is concerned with determining which themes are missing from the text instead of deriving themes from the text.

g. Metaphors and analogies

This method seeks to decipher the thoughts, behaviors and experiences of people that have been portrayed using analogies.

h. Transitions

This method looks for naturally occurring shifts in thematic content.

i. Connectors

This method looks for words that indicate relationships among things.

j. Unmarked texts

This method deals with marking obvious themes early, which then forces the researcher to search for new, and less conspicuous themes.

k. Pawing

This method deals with marking key phrases with different colored highlighter pens.

l. Cutting and sorting

This method requires the researcher to physically cut out important quotes and sort them into heaps of similar quotes.

In order to develop themes for this study the researcher made use of a combination of word repetition, comparing and contrasting, pawing and cutting and sorting.

The researcher developed three themes. The first theme was “awareness”, the second theme was “understanding” and the third theme was “recommendations”.

4.3 ETHICS

It is important for researchers to maintain the highest standards of ethics throughout a research study, especially when dealing with human subjects. The following are among the measures taken to ensure that ethical requirements were met:

- Communication regarding the interviews was in writing. The interview process was discussed with the respondents prior to the interview;
- To ensure that they felt at ease and relaxed, participants were asked to identify a venue for the interview that they felt most comfortable with;
- Confidentiality was always protected and participants were given the option of excluding their names from any documents and responses; and
- Permission was sought from all participants to use their responses for the data analysis chapter of a master’s thesis, to which they agreed (University of Glasgow, n.d).

4.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

An interview schedule is a reference resource to assist the researcher with gathering data from the research participants. The interview schedule serves as a guide for the interviewer by providing a standard set of questions, to prevent them from being posed haphazardly through the process of repetition. The wording of a question can influence the type of responses received. Researchers should follow these seven steps when developing an interview schedule: determine what information is essential to your study (this includes information required to achieve the research objectives); list potential questions in a draft format (at this point focusing on being comprehensive rather than formulating the exact wording); enhance the research question by molding it so that it makes sense to the reader, and to a point at which it would generate the appropriate response; develop an effective response format; list all the questions sequentially so that a logical flow is created; format the interview schedule to so as to include an introduction and instructions; then revise the whole process (B2B Market Research Specialist, n.d.).

The researcher accordingly developed the data collection tool for this research study by:

- determining what contents were required in the interview schedule;
- developing a draft interview schedule that contained questions to be posed to obtain responses required to meet the objectives of the study;
- developing themes for the interview schedule and grouping questions into those themes;
- sequentially listing all questions to ensure a logical flow of information; and
- piloting the interview schedule on two additional respondents to identify and eradicate any potential shortcomings.

4.5 PRE-TESTING OF INSTRUMENT

An integral part of the interview schedule development process is the piloting phase, often referred to as the pretesting phase. This phase requires the researcher to test the research instrument under conditions that resemble the research environment. Trial testing is not for reporting purposes but is used to identify any deficiencies in the phrasing of the questions, or to determine if there are any gaps in the interview schedule that might obstruct the research instrument's ability to obtain data in the required manner. It is important for the researcher to

consult a specialist in the field of question construction, so as to identify potential difficulties that may not be revealed in the pre-testing phase (Margaret Adolphus, n.d.).

The researcher conducted pre-testing on two additional research participants. Before administering the instrument, the researcher consulted with CPUT's in-house statistician and a qualitative research expert to attempt to eliminate any difficulties that might arise in the administration of the unstructured interview.

The data collection tool was administered in the following manner:

- the researcher set out to identify possible research participants who were then approached and asked to take part in the research study. When a respondent agreed to take part in the study, an interview was scheduled for a time and place that was convenient for both the research participant and the researcher;
- on the set date the researcher and the research participant met at the prescribed venue and an unstructured interview commenced which followed all the prerequisites of an interview;
- all questions that were posed during the interview were categorised into themes created by the researcher based on the literature reviewed in Chapter Two of this study. The themes assisted the researcher with controlling the responses given to the open-ended questions; and
- the researcher presented each research respondent with a copy of the interview schedule. It is important to note that at this stage that the qualitative research methodology and the unstructured interview schedule allowed the researcher to get the respondents to open up and lead the discussion within the boundaries set by the interview schedule.

The benefit of an unstructured interviews is that it is a particularly useful method for creating an understanding of a particular situation or setting. With unstructured interviews researchers can focus on the explanations provided by respondents in a way that encourages them to test their understanding of the topic, while still being able to direct them towards new ways of viewing the situation. Unstructured interviews allow researchers to focus the respondents' talk on a particular topic of interest, and may provide the researcher with opportunities to test out his or her preliminary understanding, while still allowing ample opportunity for new ways of seeing and understanding to develop (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008).

4.6 RESPONSE RATE

The researcher identified twenty (20) officials from the Department of the Premier, Western Cape Government, purposively chosen for their knowledge of the research topic, their race, rank, gender, age and experience.

The Department of the Premier is made up of five branches, and four officials from each branch were selected to ensure that the sample was representative of the population. Officials on various salary levels were identified, from managerial levels (Directors) down to operational staff, to create a sense of diversity that will ensure that the responses are unbiased and representative of all.

The researcher would only interview more employees if saturation was not reached with the initial sample.

TABLE 4.1: TABLE DEPICTING THE NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED.

Total number of interviews scheduled	Total number of interviews conducted	Response Rate
20	20	100%

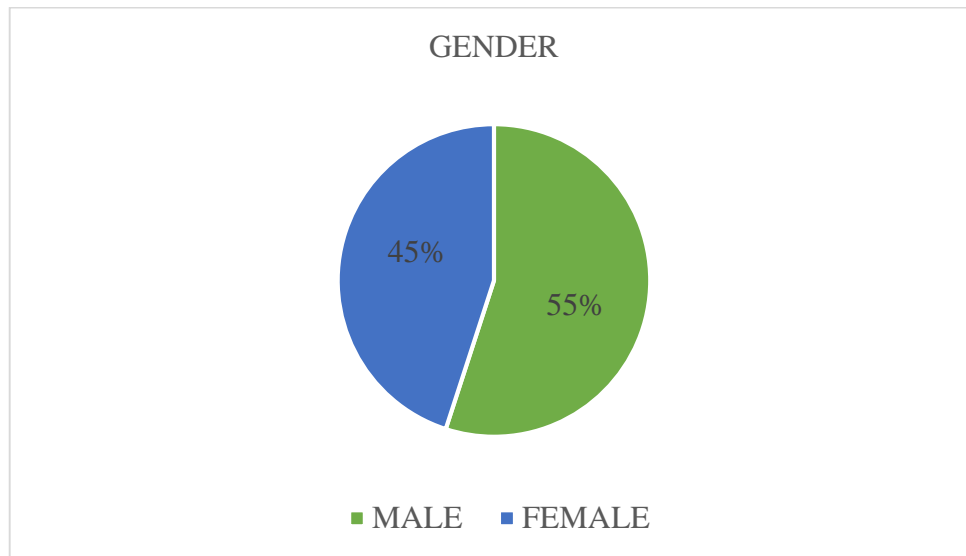
The research participants were discussed in detail in Chapters 1 and 3 of this study, and relevant biographical data appears below.

4.7 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Your Dictionary (2017) states that biographical information can be defined the information gathered about an individual either medically or professionally relating to that person's life, including factors such as gender, race and age.

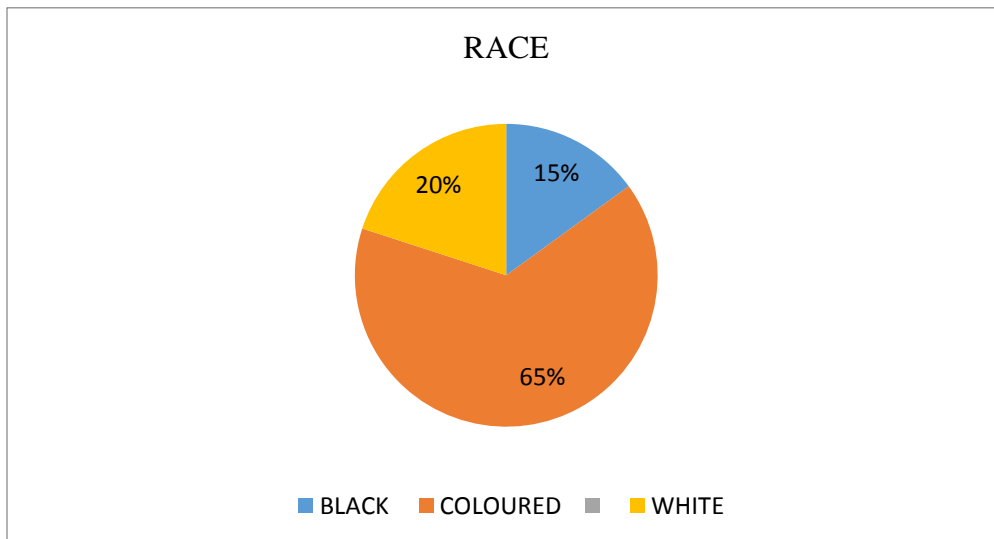
Since this study is based on equity and diversity the researcher felt it important that the sample be made up of employees from different categories of gender, race, age, rank and years of experience in the public service, as seen in the graphs below. The researcher also made sure that one of the female and one of the male respondents were people with disabilities.

Graph 4.1: Interviews conducted, according to the gender of participants



The researcher purposively chose to interview both women and men from different race groups to gather data, especially in respect of gender equality. The racial composition of participants is presented in the figure below.

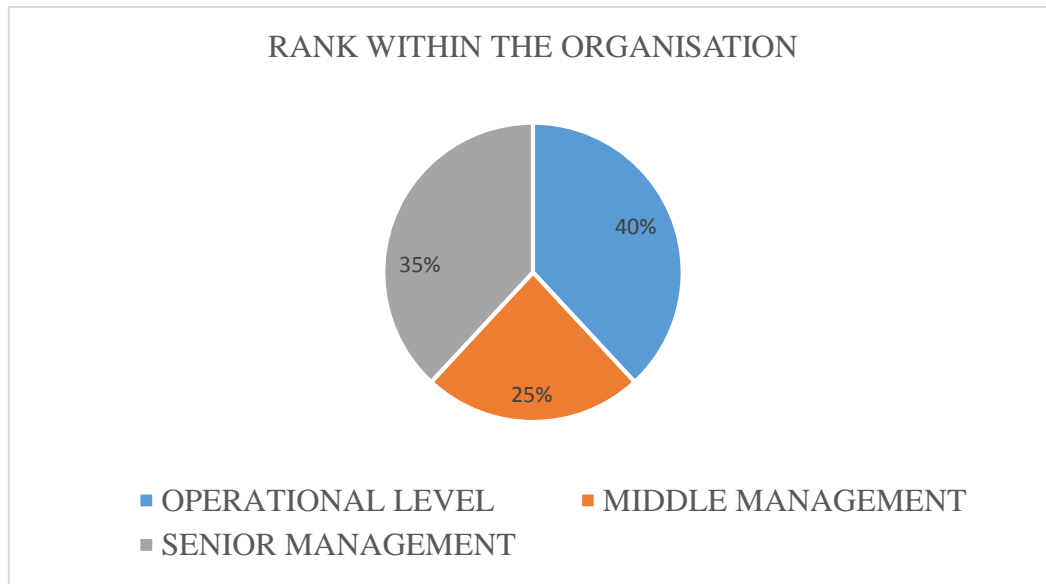
Graph 4.2: Interviews conducted, according to the race of participants



The figure above reflects the researcher's choice purposively to interview employees from different race groups, in order to determine whether or not all race groups were equally informed and aware of the laws, regulations and opportunities regarding employment equity.

The predominance of colored interviewees reflects the demographics of the Western Cape. The composition of the participants in terms of rank is depicted below.

Graph 4.3: Interviews conducted, according to the rank of participants



The graph above clearly reflects the researcher’s choice to interview employees who occupy posts at various levels within the DOTP. This was done to determine whether or not information regarding employment equity is only discussed at a certain level or if it is spoken about freely across all levels of the Department.

4.8 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In qualitative research, the process of theme identification is regarded as a task of central importance in data management (Analytictech, n.d). Themes in this context can be defined as the abstracts or constructs that researchers identify either before, during or after data collection. Themes are derived from the reviewing of literature and from the distinguishing characteristics of the phenomena being studied.

As mentioned above, three themes were identified. Findings in respect of the three themes and the questions that each theme comprised of will be discussed in the following sections.

4.8.1 THEME 1: AWARENESS

These questions sought to determine the level of awareness of the respondents pertaining to employment equity.

Question 1

Explain (based on your understanding) what the role of Employment Equity is within an organisation.

Response

The question was answered by all twenty respondents. The general understanding was that employment equity incorporates transformation of the recruitment and selection process to rectify the imbalances created by the previous administration. All respondents had knowledge of the groups categorised as “previously disadvantaged” and could elaborate on the various categories that made up these groups such as black people and women. Specific reference was made to people with disabilities and the need for their advancement and accommodation in the workplace, especially at a middle and top management level.

Interpretation

The researcher decided to pose this particular question to obtain an understanding of what the research participants knew about employment equity. It was envisaged that the outcome of this question would demonstrate whether or not the respondents had some sort of knowledge of employment equity. The researcher determined that a general consensus existed in the understanding of employment equity, which could be defined in terms of the points presented below:

- To rectify the imbalances of the past;
- To prevent and eventually eradicate all forms of discrimination;
- To promote fair treatment and equal opportunities;
- To employ staff according to the regional demographics of the province, thus creating a workforce that is representative of its environment;
- To promote and create diversity in the workplace; and
- To implement affirmative action policies.

This degree of detail shows that the respondents understood what employment equity entailed. An important point to note is that respondents with a disability made a point of emphasising that the DOTP should employ more people with disabilities.

The response that most neatly encapsulated the meaning of employment equity was as follows:

“Employment equity is a strategy geared to address the historic imbalances in the labour force by promoting access to job opportunities for those individuals of the previously disadvantaged groups.”

The researcher noted that both management and operational staff had the same understanding of employment equity.

Question 2

Explain how your department achieves its employment equity targets.

Response

The responses to this question can roughly be divided into two groups, as follows:

- a. Extremely knowledgeable on topic

The respondents who were extremely knowledgeable regarding the topic provided detailed explanations of how the department achieved its employment equity targets. These detailed explanations outlined the specific methods used by the department such as training initiatives, the fact that certain post are filled according to priority and with specific affirmative action requirements, and the financial considerations attached to achieving employment equity targets.

- b. Minimal knowledge on topic

The respondents who evinced a minimal amount of knowledge regarding the topic provided very similar responses that were based on the fact that they knew that an equity plan existed within the department but could not elaborate on the specific ways in which the department achieved its employment equity targets. The respondents who did not make reference to the employment equity plan alluded to the fact that the equity manager ensures that the targets are met while others agreed that the targets are met through the criteria set when advertising a post.

Interpretation

When the researcher posed the above question to the participants it was evident that those at the managerial level were exposed to more information regarding employment equity within the DOTP. There was a major difference in the responses received from those at operational level vs those at management level. To elucidate, a summary of responses received from both the operational respondents and the management respondents is set out below.

The response from the operational participants consisted mainly of the following:

- The department making vacant post available to all job seekers;
- The employment equity unit sees to it that targets are met;
- Through training; and
- By removing the barriers that restricts designated appointments.

The responses from the managerial respondents seemed to be answered with more confidence and awareness of strategy. The managerial participants' responses highlighted the following:

- Through the development of employment equity plans;
- Through organisational audits;
- Through employment equity drives that target specific groups or individuals for specific posts, in compliance with affirmative action requirements; and
- Through the development and implementation of affirmative action policies.

The response below best described how the DOTP achieves its employment equity targets:

“A designated unit exist within the DOTP whose primary focus is the achievement of employment equity. Certain posts are filled with specific requirements which allow the DOTP to conform to the regulations of employment equity. The success and failures of achieving the DOTP’s employment equity targets are reported in its annual reports.”

Based on the results of the first two questions, the researcher was keen to discover what the participants' responses would be when they were asked about a particular component of employment equity within the DOTP.

Question 3

Describe the impact and the importance of having an employment equity plan for your department.

Response

All 20 respondents agreed that it was of utmost importance for the department to have an employment equity plan. The respondents all made reference to the fact that it would help the department to ensure equality and fairness in the workplace. Respondents further suggested that the employment equity plan would create an environment in which people from previously disadvantaged groups would be developed and afforded opportunities to occupy top management positions in the future.

Interpretation

As discussed in Chapter Two, an employment equity plan is an integral part of employment equity within an organisation.

The researcher in this question decided to adopt a different approach. Instead of simply asking the respondents what the importance and impact of employment equity was within their department, the researcher presented the interviewees with a concept of employment equity and asked them to elaborate on its importance and impact, as it was felt that this would truly test the awareness levels of the respondents regarding employment equity.

The responses to the question once again indicated that respondents at the managerial level had been exposed to strategic discussions regarding employment equity, including the function of the employment equity plan. The general understanding among the respondents was that the importance of the employment equity plan was to guide the department and to enhance the department's drive to reach its equity targets, while being able to monitor and evaluate its progress at the end of a particular period. Some of the more strategic responses discussed how the employment equity plan assisted the department in ensuring that affirmative action was implemented effectively, thus ensuring compliance and accountability.

Respondents at top management level emphasised that the Constitution and the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) provide clear direction with regard to the importance of an employment equity plan. They believed that having and adhering to an employment equity plan is incumbent upon all government departments.

The Skills Portal (n.d.) is of the opinion that all senior management officials as well as ordinary employees have to be educated about issues relating to employment equity. What is equally important is knowledge of how to deal with these issues in the workplace, in order to maintain a congenial working environment. Section 16 of the EEA states that employees should be knowledgeable about the content and application of the Act. Equally, employers should educate their employees and create awareness regarding the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) and its purpose within the workplace.

Based on analysis of the responses regarding the awareness levels of employees pertaining to employment equity, the researcher is of the opinion that the department can increase its

efforts to create awareness regarding employment equity. These efforts should be directed at lower level employees of the department, as the data indicated that management had had sufficient exposure to the topic.

Commlab India (2017) observes that it is absolutely critical to train an employee in the processes, policies and systems that govern a company. Training an employee assists him/her to fathom the background, values, vision, mission and objectives of the company. The training will also assist the employee to efficiently and effectively adjust and adapt to the company's processes, resulting in rapid businesses continuity. It should however be noted that as the company grows, existing processes and policies may need to be modified in order to obtain better results. These modifications may require the employees to obtain new skills to implement new processes. Improving the skill sets of employees will also boost their morale, which will inevitably impact on achieving the company's goals.

The Department of the Premier has in the development of its employment equity plan highlighted its desire and determination to strive towards a diverse and equitable workforce. They have committed to establishing a working environment and culture that respects and honours all who work in it and those whom they serve: "This EE Plan 2016-2021 confirms the Department's commitment to employment equity and transformation" (South Africa. Department of the Premier, 2016:44).

It is recommended that the first step that an organisation needs to take when trying to ensure compliance to any sort of legislation is to educate staff regarding the requirements and importance of the legislation. It is of the utmost importance that all employees are aware of what management has set out to achieve. The easiest way to create awareness is to make use of communication platforms within the organisation. The more employees are exposed to the message being portrayed the better the chance of ensuring their buy in. In the context of employment equity compliance cannot merely be achieved by completing and submitting relevant reports. The crucial element of ensuring the successful implementation of legislation is to fully embrace it, resulting in compliance being achieved naturally (Progression, 2016).

The next section of the study will deal with Theme Two, which seeks to analyse the level of understanding of employees regarding employment equity in the workplace.

4.8.2 THEME 2: UNDERSTANDING

The following questions sought to determine the extent to which the respondents understood specific concepts pertaining to employment equity.

Question 1

Explain the role and functions of the department's Employment Equity Unit.

Response

The bulk of the respondents had an idea of the role and functions of the department's employment equity unit. Three of them knew of its existence but had no idea of its role and function.

Respondents were of the opinion that the unit's core functions were to ensure the effective implementation of the employment equity plan and the promotion of diversity in the workplace. A second opinion was that the core function of the unit was to report on employment equity matters and ensure that the department is meeting its employment equity targets.

Interpretation

The responses revealed the perception that the most conspicuous roles of the employment equity unit are to create awareness regarding employment equity, to effectively implement the employment equity plan, to meet the employment equity targets of the department, to create and foster a working environment that is representative of the diverse population, to play an oversight (watchdog) role, and to report on employment equity matters to the relevant entities.

Some of the more specific functions of the unit highlighted by the respondents included to:

- educate employees on their rights regarding employment equity;
- ensure that people who are appointed with disabilities are adequately accommodated;
and
- play an advisory role during the recruitment and selection process.

One particular participant responded to the question in some detail by stating that the role and functions of the employment equity unit were to: *“Ensure for the achievement of the strategic*

objectives of the employment equity plan in terms of culture, tolerance, diversity, opportunity, barriers and to monitor and report on these objectives were met”.

This level of response indicates that the roles and functions of the unit are understood by most employees of the various branches within the department. However, the fact that three respondents indicated that they did not know what the roles and function of the unit were indicates that more can be done to raise awareness of the unit and its functions.

Question 2

Explain how the department increases the awareness of diversity issues and fosters intercultural team building in the workplace, to create an environment that is sensitive to cultural diversity.

Response

The purpose of this question was to determine what the department was doing to create awareness of diversity and how it fosters intercultural team building in the workplace. The responses to this question were given with a great deal of enthusiasm. The respondents used the question as a platform to provide recommendations as to how the department could best create awareness and ensure cultural diversity in the workplace.

Interpretation

Respondents highlighted the following areas as the measures that the department was currently taking to create cultural diversity in the workplace:

- Regular team-building exercises;
- The department recognizes and commemorates specific cultural days and days commemorating diversity such the international day of disability;
- The department offers training courses to promote cultural diversity; and
- A specialised unit exists that the staff of the department can go to for advice, support and counselling for problems relating to both their private and professional lives, including but not limited to diversity in the workplace.

The one area about which the respondents expressed disappointment was that the department did not host any cultural events in the workplace that promoted each other's cultures.

The respondents made the following recommendations that they felt would assist with creating cultural diversity in the workplace:

- The department should communicate the code of good practice on Employment Equity in the workplace;
- The department should allow staff to tell their cultural stories and publish these in the departmental magazines and newsletters;
- The department should host events to promote and commemorate days important in the various cultures of the staff.

Question 3

Explain how the department provides reasonable accommodation in the workplace for people with disabilities.

Response

All the respondents could relate to this question by either having a person with a particular type of disability accommodated for in their workplace or being a person with a disability being appropriately accommodated for.

The respondents all felt that the department was indeed accommodating people with disabilities in the workplace and were able to identify conspicuous renovations accomplished and infrastructure being put in place to ensure that this accommodation was adequate.

Interpretation

It was learned from the respondents that the department was indeed striving to provide reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities. The respondents reported that the most outstanding achievement in this regard can be seen when one enters the departmental buildings: all buildings are wheelchair friendly and include the following facilities:

- Special motor-operated lifts at the entrances for staff and visitors who are in wheelchairs and cannot walk up the stairs;
- Special lighting in the offices for staff who are visually impaired;
- Special toilets;
- Special computers (accommodating various disabilities); and
- Special evacuation chairs used to evacuate people in wheelchairs down numerous flights of stairs during emergency procedures when lifts cannot be used.

Two impressive facilities that the researcher was exposed to in these buildings was to experience how the lifts are operated via voice activation, and to observe during a fire drill how a trained guide dog led a blind person out of the building and through the chaos of the fire drill evacuation. The department has developed a disability disclosure form which encourages staff with disabilities to identify their needs to help ensure that they are reasonably accommodated.

Respondents suggested that the department review the needs of the staff with disabilities annually, as their needs might differ from year to year based on the improvement or deterioration of their condition.

According to the findings presented above, it is evident that the department is indeed striving toward providing reasonable accommodation in the workplace for staff with disabilities.

Question 4

Explain what strategies are used to promote equal opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace in order to eliminate unfair discrimination.

Response

The responses to this question were somewhat alarming, as 50% of the respondents were not able to answer the question. Instead they indicated that they were not aware of any strategies currently being used to promote equal opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace. The remaining 50% was split into two groups, those who responded positively and those who had a negative response to the question.

Interpretation

It was observed from the inability of respondents to respond that, if any strategies existed within the department to promote equal opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace, they were not being clearly communicated to employees. This statement is based on the fact that half the respondents could not answer the question, either simply saying they did not know of any strategies, or providing more detail: *“According to my knowledge there is no clear strategy. However, communications and changes are happening in terms of creating awareness, leadership is very involved and starting to work on it.”*

About 35% of the respondents were able to answer the question, while the remaining 15% used the question to voice their opinion regarding the absence of strategies for promoting equal opportunities within the department.

The difference in responses by each group can be seen in the following examples:

A response from an employee with a disability:

“I think this is a work in progress. I do not feel comfortable attending training as the majority of the time I do not have the means to get there.”

A response from an employee who was able to answer the question:

“Employment equity guidelines such as the job access framework and the gender equality framework are strictly adhered to.”

From this response it can be deduced that although some employees are aware of the strategies being used to create equal opportunities the majority of the employees within the Department of the Premier are still not aware of the strategies being employed, nor of their purpose.

Question 5

Explain what systems or processes are used to monitor employment within your department to ensure fairness, accessibility and transparency in the recruitment and selection process.

Response

The responses received for this question saw the respondents who were able to answer far outnumber those who could not. 75% of the respondents could identify one or more strategies currently in place to monitor equity in the recruitment and selection process, while 25% could not.

Interpretation

The results from this question show that the majority of employees in the department were at some point in their careers exposed to some sort of system that monitors employment. The participants evinced a positive attitude when answering this question, indicating that they were satisfied with the systems introduced to achieve fairness and transparency in the

recruitment and selection process. They identified various systems that included but were not limited to:

- *“The existence of a specially formulated unit called the People Management Unit (whose core functions are to ensure that the human resource aspect is adhered to);*
- *The introduction of an online application system that automatically sifts through applications and shortlists candidates based on the percentage of requirements met;*
- *A representative from the human resource department is always present on the panel and the panel is representative of all race groups;*
- *The department has an employment equity plan that helps to monitor employment; and*
- *Annual reporting to the Department of Labour and in the Annual Report.”*

Those respondents who were not able to answer merely stated that they did not know of any such systems.

The responses recorded once again indicate that the majority (75%) of the respondents were aware of the systems in place, which raised concern as to why the remaining minority (25%) were not aware of any systems. The issue of communication and awareness regarding these systems should be highlighted.

When answering this question many of the respondents referred to the employment equity plan. The researcher was therefore interested in determining what the opinion was of the respondents regarding the success of its implementation.

Question 6

Would you agree or disagree that for the employment equity plan to be implemented effectively there should be consultation with all stakeholders to identify and eradicate issues that may affect the desired outcome of the implementation. Please justify your answer.

Response

The reason the researcher chose to pose this question was to obtain the opinions of the respondents regarding the need for consultation with relevant stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of the employment equity plan.

Nineteen of the twenty respondents strongly agreed that in order for the employment equity plan to be implemented effectively, and in order to assist with the eradication of issues that may affect the effective implementation thereof, relevant stakeholders should indeed be consulted.

Interpretation

The results indicate that most of the respondents agree that consultations with stakeholders are necessary. The respondents motivated their responses by claiming that:

- *“An organisation can only fully understand the culture and needs of a diverse group of employees through consultation with relevant stakeholders (e.g. how will an organisation plan for people with disability without consulting the various disability sectors);*
- *Consultation is required to prevent future disruptions due to non-consultation;*
- *Through consultation all questions and confusions can be resolved;*
- *Respondents with disability mentions that consultation is necessary because of the slogan “nothing about us, without us”; and*
- *Consultation is required to prevent discrimination.”*

The one respondent who disagreed about the need for consultation was of the opinion that:

“The first step to any process is the political will, and with it a political champion. Only thereafter will consultation have any meaning in the institutional sense.”

The relevant literature, however, tends to lean towards the need for consultation all along the way, as highlighted in Chapter 3 of the Employment Equity Act (South Africa, 1998:9).

The Harvard Business Review (2017) is of the opinion that a gap exists between the strategic goals of a company and the performance of its employees. This gap emanates from a disconnection between strategy formulation and strategy implementation. Employees often do not understand how to implement the strategy of the company as it has been formulated. Corporate communication is the key to effectively executing strategy, ensuring that top management level plans are filtered into the plans of all the units within a company, resulting in the achievement of the company’s strategic goals, with all employees’ key responsibility areas being linked to these goals.

The five questions contained in the following theme differ from the questions in the previous themes in that they were not based on any current systems and processes but rather encouraged the respondents to come up with innovative ideas. Respondents were given the opportunity to present ideas by providing recommendations regarding the monitoring and implementation of employment equity in the department. The rationale for posing these questions was to determine what the attitude of the respondents would be toward employment equity if they were given the chance to respond freely and from a position of power (as equity manager). The interpretation will therefore only provide a summary of each question based on the data gathered during the interviews, and will not include percentages of respondents as in the previous questions.

4.8.3 THEME 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

Question 1

Briefly explain (in your opinion) what challenges the department is facing regarding equity and how this affects the implementation of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998).

Interpretation

The data gathered from the respondents indicated that the department was indeed introducing various systems and building infrastructures that would suitably accommodate all employees, including those who were previously discriminated against and those with disabilities.

The researcher was eager to determine what the respondents would identify as a challenge, as this would indicate the level of knowledge and exposure the respondents had regarding the topic of employment equity.

Respondents were keen to answer this question and gave extensive thought to the challenges the department was facing before answering.

The responses predominantly revolved around suitable accommodation for people with disabilities, the fact that decisions regarding people with disabilities were being made by those who were not disabled or did not possess the necessary understanding of their needs, and the fact that top management positions within the department were still occupied by whites.

Some of these challenges were highlighted as follows:

“The department as well as the government motor transport department have recently purchased vehicles for those employees with wheelchairs; however, people with other type of disabilities are not accommodated for as they are not allowed to drive so they remain dependent on others for assistance.”

“The implementation of the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) is not being promoted enough and as a result staff remains uninformed regarding the topic. The political system still seems to be impacting on the effective implementation of the Act. The concept of employing people who are fit for purpose is used loosely. How do you gain experience if you are not given an opportunity?”

A major challenge identified is that employees who occupy the lower levels in the department are not given opportunities to up-skill themselves to a point at which they would be considered to be “fit for purpose” for promotion. Training opportunities exist but are restricted to specific levels of employment.

Question 2

If you were the equity manager for your department how would you ensure that the employment equity plan is integrated into business strategies?

Interpretation

The respondents once again showed great enthusiasm when answering this particular question. Based on their attitudes throughout the interview it seems that if they were to be given the opportunity in reality to comment on matters related to employment equity the department would obtain a very opinionated response from its employees.

The respondents all felt that the department should ensure a greater level of awareness regarding the topic of employment equity and the policies and processes that govern it. They highlighted the fact that training in the form of workshops should be hosted throughout the department across all levels of employment. Respondents further emphasised the importance of transparency and accountability, and that employment equity should be understood and reported on annually or quarterly by each unit of the department, and not merely in terms of general statistics. The respondents felt that this type of responsibility would encourage a more serious stance regarding employment equity.

Some of the more frequently mentioned areas were as follows:

- *“Creating exclusive awareness regarding employment equity;*
- *Creating and providing specifically developed training programmes regarding equity;*
- *Setting clear annual objectives;*
- *Make employees across all levels of government responsible and accountable for different aspects of employment equity to achieve a total buy-in from staff;*
- *Keeping staff informed of reporting requirements and achievements regarding employment equity; and*
- *Adopting a more vigorous approach to employment equity to ensure compliance.”*

This experiment-type question certainly encouraged the respondents appeared to rekindle their desire to respond to the interview questions.

Question 3

What recommendations would you give your equity manager regarding using employment equity to positively impact on business results?

Interpretation

The rationale for posing this particular question was to indirectly determine if the respondents felt that employment equity could positively impact the overall performance of the department. The data gathered from this question and the following question will assist both the researcher when making recommendations on the basis of this study as well as the department, if it is to improve on any areas of its employment equity practices.

The recommendations provided by the respondents focused on aspects such as:

- *“Creating awareness regarding the advantages of employment equity and highlighting all regulations that governs it;*
- *Workshops on the plans for implementation of employment equity in the department;*
- *Extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders;*
- *Link relevant employment equity requirements to the key performance areas of employees;*
- *Up-skill employees from previously disadvantaged groups to be more competitive for senior positions;*

- *Providing each employee with either a hard copy or access to an electronic copy of the department's equity plan;*
- *Create an environment in which diversity is used as a tool instead of being seen as a problem;*
- *Create monitoring and evaluation systems to report on progress; and*
- *Strive to understand the business needs and do not simply play the numbers game. Management should predict the business direction and link it to the workplace skills plan.”*

The data has once again indicated that employees within the department have given extensive thought to how the department can use employment equity to improve business performance. The results obtained from the data also indicated that all the respondents were in agreement that the performance of the department can certainly be improved through the effective implementation of employment equity. Compliance with the requirements of employment equity within the department will also enable the department to comply with many national regulations, such as annual reporting to the Department of Labour.

Question 4

What recommendations would you give your equity manager regarding the promotion of information pertaining to employment equity within your department?

Interpretation

The results from this question as well as the previous question will assist both the researcher in making recommendations arising from this study, as well as the department in any attempt to improve on its employment equity practices.

In response to this question, the participants highlighted numerous ways for the department to promote and distribute information regarding employment equity. What was encouraging was to see that the respondents all now seemed to have a desire to drive the process of effectively implementing employment equity in the department.

The recommendations made by the respondents focused mainly on the fact that the department should make better use of the tools that it currently has at its disposal, such as the intranet, the better together magazines, the email system through its communications unit as well as its walk-in centers.

Respondents made the following further recommendations:

- *“The department should realise that the promotion of information in terms of employment equity must be in line with the guidelines provided by the Human Rights Commission;*
- *Information regarding employment equity should be made publicly available on all media platforms;*
- *Create workshops and awareness sessions to sensitise employees;*
- *Clearly indicate the strategic alignment to goals of the department;*
- *Introduce quarterly newsletters containing statistics and information on employment equity to the entire department; and*
- *Create awareness around the topic and in turn this awareness will help to create acceptance and compliance.”*

The final question of the interview sought to determine how the respondents would create an environment that was welcoming for all. This question was based on the fact that in order for the department to fully comply with the requirements of employment equity, special consideration would need to be given to people with disabilities in terms of accommodation, as well as to the ability of employees to perform successfully in a multi-cultural and multi-racial working environment.

Question 5

How would you create an environment that is welcoming for all within your department?

Interpretation

An important factor to take into consideration when dealing with employment equity is that it does not only revolve around race and gender, but also includes aspects such the provision of adequate accommodation for people with disabilities. The respondents were of the opinion that equity is complex in South Africa as the history of the country created certain imbalances that now need to be eradicated through processes such as employment equity.

Respondents presented the following ideas on how the department could create an environment that is welcoming for all:

- *“Create awareness among staff for the need to respect one another’s diversity;*

- *Create an environment in which everyone is treated and seen as equal;*
- *Create an environment in which employees are able to both comment on and partake in the formulation of policies; and*
- *To provide settings where different business units can get to know each other and the roles that each unit plays in achieving the objectives of the department in a more social or informal setting.”*

One respondent presented the following idea:

“I would conduct a survey asking all employees to write down what would make them feel welcome in the workplace. Using this data, I would identify similarities and try and implement it in order to create a positive and welcoming environment for all”.

CareerCast (2017) is of the opinion that what sets ordinary leadership aside from great leadership is the leader’s desire to constantly reinforce the direction of the organisation. Great leaders are not afraid to effectively involve employees on all levels in decision-making procedures, as this promotes a sense of ownership among them. If management includes employees in decision making or at least considers their recommendations, then employees are likely to take ownership and responsibility for the effective implementation and improvement of these policies and processes. In the modern workplace employees are constantly looking for ways to improve themselves through continual training to improve their skill sets. Companies should also be willing to be flexible regarding their policies, to ensure that all employees are made to feel secure.

The researcher agrees that in order to create an environment that is welcoming for all, the department would need to determine what systems and practices to put in place and delegate accordingly to ensure the establishment of a serene environment in which each employee feels they belong.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter Four of this research study sought to capture, decode and interpret the data collected from the unstructured interviews conducted with the sample within the Department of the Premier, in order to achieve the objectives identified in Chapter One of this study.

Despite the department's having made numerous efforts to reasonably accommodate all employees, including those with various disabilities, not all needs have been met nor principles adhered to. An assertive leadership style should be adopted to establish closer compliance with the regulations set out by legislation and policy, as buy-in by the top management of the department would greatly impact on the way the rest of the department views employment equity.

The top management of the department should therefore ensure that all roles and responsibilities linked to employment equity are delegated accordingly and understood by all. In addition to the current system of implementing employment equity the department should create a better awareness of the subject by publishing pertinent information in all its communication platforms, such as email, intranet and the internal publications. Three themes were developed from the responses of participants, and these were discussed above.

The following chapter will conclude the research study and provide recommendations on ways to possibly improve the implementation of employment equity within the Department of the Premier.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the study and makes recommendations for consideration by the Department of the Premier in the Western Cape for the improvement of employment equity.

This research study has met its primary objectives, which were to:

- Provide a theoretical overview of the equity composition of employees of the South African government, and of the Western Cape government in particular;
- Determine if the Department of the Premier's Employment Equity Plan is in line with the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998); and
- Develop research findings and present these to the Department of the Premier for review and alignment with its strategic goals and objectives.

5.2. REVIEW OF STUDY AND CONCLUSIONS

The first chapter of this study provided background information and introduced the case study approach. It presented, inter alia, the problem statement, the research objectives and the research methodology employed, a tentative literature review, an ethics statement. It also suggested the significance of the study and it indicated how it was organised.

The second chapter of the study presented the literature review, comprising a theoretical and a legislative overview. The literature review focused primarily on secondary data so as to provide a more holistic understanding of the research topic before proceeding with the collection of the primary data. The effective execution of the literature review enabled the researcher to provide information about the regulations governing the equity composition of employees of the South African government in general, and of the Department of the Premier in the Western Cape in particular. The literature review also canvassed previous research on the topic, both to learn from it and to ensure that there would be no duplication.

The literature review focused on both the technical aspects of the equity composition of employees of the South African Government, as well as the application thereof in the public sector, and comprised two key areas:

- A theoretical overview, which allowed the researcher to determine what other researchers and authors had written on the topic.
- A legislative overview, which determined what legislation governs the equity composition of employees in South African organisations.

Definitions of key concepts relating to employment equity were introduced. Theory pertaining to the need for the transformation of South Africa was discussed to provide the reader with a clear perspective on the need to redress the imbalances of the past by enhancing opportunities for the previously disadvantaged, designated groups.

The legislation discussed portrays the efforts made by government to transform the South African workforce by addressing the equity composition of employees in both private and public sectors. This legislation provides guidelines for an organisation to achieve employment equity. Chapter Two also sought to determine how employment equity was implemented in the public service, and how by transforming society through the workforce government could increase productivity.

Chapter Three described qualitative research and the procedures for participant selection, data collection and data analysis. There was discussion of how ethical issues were addressed in the study. Data collection involved conducting unstructured interviews with the research participants – employees of the Department of the Premier – which were then subjected to content analysis. The researcher used current literature on the research topic to formulate a set of questions that was used to develop an interview schedule.

Chapter Four presented the capture, decoding and interpretation of the data in order to achieve the objectives identified in Chapter One.

The researcher concluded the following: despite the department having made numerous efforts to reasonably accommodate all employees (including those with various disabilities), not all categories and issues had been addressed. An assertive leadership style should be

adopted to enable the department to fully comply with the regulations set out by legislation and policy. Buy-in by top management would have a great impact on the way the rest of the department views employment equity.

Top management of the department should therefore ensure that the roles and responsibilities linked to employment equity are delegated accordingly and understood by all. In addition to the current system of implementing employment equity, the department should create a better awareness of the topic by publishing relevant information in its communication platforms such as email, intranet and internal publications.

Three themes were identified as arising from interpretation of the interviewees' responses, and these were discussed.

Each government department and all its employees have a role to play in the effective implementation of employment equity. Reflection on the history of racial segregation in South Africa and the formulation of legislation to eradicate exclusion, leads to recognition that the effective implementation of employment equity still remains a concern and high priority for the South African government

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this section is to present recommendations formulated for consideration by the Department of the Premier, with a view to improving methods of implementing the employment equity practices within the organisation.

- The researcher recommends that a special training workshop regarding employment equity be organized by the director of the People Management Practices Unit. The training workshop should be approved by top management of the Department of the Premier and then presented to all staff. The putative content of this workshop should comprise:
 - The definition of employment equity;
 - The importance of and the role of employment equity with the Department of the Premier;
 - The impact and importance of having an employment equity plan for the Department of the Premier;

- Explanation of the roles and functions of the employment equity unit; and
 - Explanation of how the Department of the Premier sets its employment equity targets and how these are to be achieved.
- According to the research it was evident that lower level employees within the Department of the Premier were not as knowledgeable as senior employees on the topic of employment equity. The researcher therefore recommends that the department's People Management Practices Unit should try different or additional methods (listed below) to communicate the importance and requirements of employment equity to employees on all levels, thus creating awareness on the topic.

These methods could include:

- Email;
- Publications on the intranet;
- Publications in the departmental magazines;
- Publications via corporate communication; and
- Publications in the departmental newsletters.

The People Management Practices Unit should approach the corporate communications unit to disseminate the information to create awareness regarding employment equity. This information can be distributed as part of the monthly newsletter send out by the corporate communications unit of the Department of the Premier.

- The data gathered from respondents indicated the need for team building, both within individual units and across the various units within the department, to enhance understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each unit within the department.

The researcher therefore recommends that the People Management Practices Unit host a series of information sessions in which each unit of the department makes a presentation on their core business to attendants, backed up by pamphlets for them to take away.

It is recommended that employees from designated groups who were previously disadvantaged be up-skilled in tasks and jobs by the department's training unit, in order to make them more employable and able to apply for higher profile jobs such as middle and top management.

It can be deduced from the research study that considerable effort (for example the installation of voice activated lifts installed by the department in all its buildings) has been

made to ensure that people with disabilities are adequately accommodated. It is therefore recommended that the department's human resource unit increases the intake of people with disabilities at the deputy director, director and head of department level. The intake of those with disabilities should be increased to at least 2% of total employees, as set out by the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998).

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ANNEXURE 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

ANNEXURE 2: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

ANNEXURE 3: PROOF OF EDITING